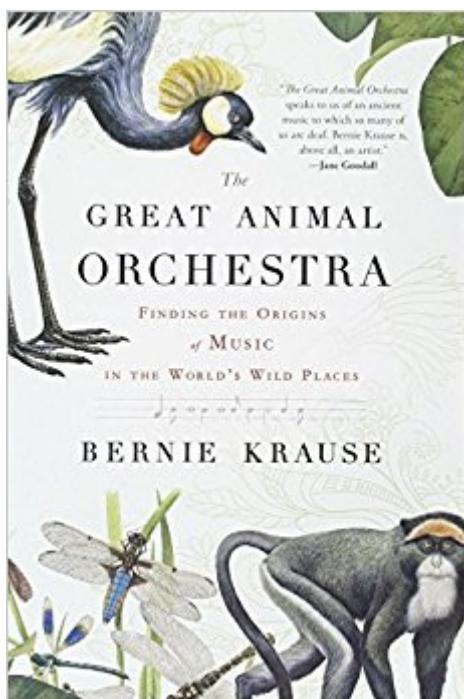


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The Great Animal Orchestra: Finding The Origins Of Music In The World's Wild Places



Synopsis

Musician and naturalist Bernie Krause is one of the world's leading experts in natural sound, and he's spent his life discovering and recording nature's rich chorus. Searching far beyond our modern world's honking horns and buzzing machinery, he has sought out the truly wild places that remain, where natural soundscapes exist virtually unchanged from when the earliest humans first inhabited the earth. Krause shares fascinating insight into how deeply animals rely on their aural habitat to survive and the damaging effects of extraneous noise on the delicate balance between predator and prey. But natural soundscapes aren't vital only to the animal kingdom; Krause explores how the myriad voices and rhythms of the natural world formed a basis from which our own musical expression emerged. From snapping shrimp, popping viruses, and the songs of humpback whales—whose voices, if unimpeded, could circle the earth in hours—to cracking glaciers, bubbling streams, and the roar of intense storms; from melody-singing birds to the organlike drone of wind blowing over reeds, the sounds Krause has experienced and describes are like no others. And from recording jaguars at night in the rain forest to encountering mountain gorillas in Africa's Virunga Mountains, Krause offers an intense and intensely personal narrative of the planet's deep and connected natural sounds and rhythm. *The Great Animal Orchestra* is the story of one man's pursuit of natural music in its purest form, and an impassioned case for the conservation of one of our most overlooked natural resources—the music of the wild.

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Customer Reviews

Featured in The New York Times Book Review's Paperback Row "The Great Animal Orchestra is about the symphony of beasts that surrounds us, a vast orchestra in the process of being silenced....A fascinating life, and devotion to a fascinating topic...Krause wakes up your ears, gives you a desire to experience these wild soundscapes." -- Jeremy Denk, New York Times Book Review "Forty years travelling the world to record more than 15,000 species have given Krause a rare insight into the importance of 'biophony'." -- Nature "This passionate amalgam of science and autobiography argues that in the wild, animals vocalize with a musicianly ear." -- New York Times Editors' Choice "Krause...has recorded the sounds of more than 15,000 animal species and their natural ambience. This often poetic and thoroughly entertaining book reflects his passion." -- San Francisco Chronicle "The Great Animal Orchestra speaks to us of an ancient music to which so many of us are deaf. Bernie Krause is, above all, an artist. I have watched him recording the calls of chimpanzees, the singing of the insects and birds, and seen his deep love for the harmonies of nature. In this book he helps us to hear and appreciate the often hidden musicians in a new way. But he warns that these songs, an intrinsic part of the natural world and essential to human well being, are vanishing, one by one, snuffed out by human actions. Read The Great Animal Orchestra, tell your friends about it. And as Bernie urges, let us all do our part to preserve the age old sounds of nature." -- Jane Goodall "This fascinating book awakens our ancient ears to the source of all music. Read it, and you'll yearn to muffle our din-and hear anew." -- Alan Weisman, author of THE WORLD WITHOUT US "Bernie Krause and his niche theory are the real thing. His originality, research, and above all basic knowledge of the sound environments in nature are impressive. The idea of music originating in the sound communication systems of wild animals is a sound and provocative hypothesis. I admire also his attention to the preservation of ancestral-level cultures for their own value but also as a testing ground for theory on human behavioral evolution." -- E.O. Wilson "Krause always reveals wondrous stories of the meaning of music and sounds of our natural environment. Bernie's research into the subtleties of animal and insect sounds is unparalleled, but it is his description of the radical changes that are taking place on this planet that really makes one stop and wonder... Listen carefully, for the sounds you hear may never be the same again." -- Sir George Martin "Krause shows us the music of the natural world - long may his work continue!" -- Pete Seeger "Bernie Krause has admirably produced not only a comprehensive overview of the art of nature recording, but also shows his heartfelt understanding and appreciation of natural soundscapes, a threatened heritage in our modern world." -- Dr. Roger Payne, author of Songs of the Humpback Whale "This book will get you to wake up and listen to the natural world." -- San Francisco Chronicle "If a picture is worth a thousand words, what is a sound recording worth?"

Perhaps much more... We say we want peace and quiet, but Bernie knows better. What we really want is something worth listening to. There is plenty of it out there. Nobody knows how to find it better than Bernie Krause." -- Jean Michel Cousteau

Dr. Bernie Krause is both a musician and a naturalist. During the 1950s and 60s, he devoted himself to music and replaced Pete Seeger as the guitarist for The Weavers. For over 40 years, Krause has traveled the world recording and archiving the sounds of creatures and environments large and small. He has recorded over 15,000 species. He lives in California.

Ages ago, the Pythagoreans discovered the mathematical basis of music. Their ideas inspired astronomers like Kepler to believe in the existence of a *musica universalis*, the notion that the movement of the celestial bodies reflected a divine harmony, which could be perceived by the human intellect. Today, the musical scholar Bernie Krause is exploring a complimentary frontier; the musical properties of soundscapes created by wildlife in their natural environments. If Krause is right - and he makes a persuasive case in his impeccably argued and lovingly crafted "The Great Animal Orchestra" - then our natural habitats are suffused with soul-stirring symphonies composed from the voices of crickets, the rumble of streams, the beat of waves brushing up against the shore, and counterpoint melody of literally thousands of species expressing themselves. The soundscapes emerging from our biospheres are not mere random noise. There is order, interplay, and a deep harmony within these sonic landscapes, though we must be attentive and good listeners to hear the subtle musical joys that surround us. Unfortunately, the everyday music of birds chirping, the wind rustling through trees, and the rain splattering on the ground is being drowned out by leaf blowers, airliners overhead, and the ever increasing din from our machines. It is not just our peace of mind that is being shattered; human generated noise is destroying the great animal orchestras which perform in our midst. Global warming and the encroachment of man-made sound are just two of the factors threatening our biodiversity. Krause calls attention to what is at stake: as natural soundscapes are silenced we will lose touch with source of our musical heritage. Natural music has a way of attuning us to the universe. In a way, if we lose these natural soundscapes we will lose our souls. That is one of the lessons I gleaned from Krause thoughtful and very humane book. But thankfully, Krause book has also taught me to listen to the sound of the wind as it brushes against the grass; the melody of birds singing from their lofty perches; and the gentle pitter-patter of leaves falling to earth. The order and harmony is exquisite, if we would just train our ears for it. Scott O'Reilly is the author of: "Yes and Philosophy."

I had the good fortune to join Bernie Krause in field recording expeditions all over the planet in the 1980's and 1990's. These trips were always both exhausting and exhilarating, as we captured endangered sounds from before dawn well into the night. We traveled together not only in the U.S., but also to Central and South America, Africa, and Asia. The sounds we gathered are sadly from places now largely swallowed by development, a record of lost worlds. We both hope the recordings we have archived will help to preserve these vanishing voices. When I met Bernie I had been studying animal behavior and ecology for years, but my interest in animal vocalizations was largely scientific. With his musical background, he opened my ears to a whole new world of sound. I have always been struck by his ability to bring together disparate threads, and this book develops a richly beautiful portrait of life's orchestra. From ideas we first discussed in the jungles of Borneo, he has developed complex theories of communication. He reveals how animals form their own symphonies, the percussive beat of insects blending with the melodies of birds. Each animal has its own sonic space, but like an orchestra they join together to form a haunting sonata unique to each place on earth. It has been a pleasure to work with Bernie. From gathering sounds in the field, to the creative process of putting recordings together for environmental albums and exhibits, I have learned from him how to really focus my listening. I am delighted he has written this book to share his insights on nature's harmonies. The music we enjoy today owes a debt to thousands of wild songs. These connections can only be translated for us by a man who is both a musician and scientist, steeped in decades of really listening to everything from the singing of a sand dune to the moans of a mourning beaver. Enjoy this book as a passport to tune your ear and really hear the world in an entirely new way."

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