



# Music and the Origins of Language: Theories from the French Enlightenment (New Perspectives in Music History and Criticism)

*Downing A. Thomas*

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The search for the origins of language was one of the most pressing philosophical issues of the eighteenth century. It has escaped notice, however, that music figured prominently in that search. This study analyzes reflections on music and music theory as they appear within the logical and narrative structure of texts by, for example, Rousseau, Diderot, Rameau and Condillac, and considers the ways in which music facilitates links between language and meaning, between conceptions of an original society and an ideal social order.

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