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Book Review: Words Without Music: A Memoir

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Liveright

The following review appeared in the September 2015 issue of CHOICE:

Music

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Glass, Philip. **Words without music: a memoir.** Liveright, 2015. 416p index ISBN 9780871404381, \$29.95.

Written with humor, this memoir/autobiography offers insights into Glass's music, philosophy, and life choices. Glass recalls his collaborations with prominent artists—Allen Ginsberg, Ravi Shankar, Robert Wilson, Doris Lessing, Martin Scorsese, to name just a few. Glass reveals in these pages a life lived to the max—from his childhood in post-WW II Baltimore to his student days (at University of Chicago, Peabody Music Conservatory, Julliard), his first journey to Paris (where he studied under Nadia Boulanger), his life-altering trip to India, his return to New York (where he worked day jobs as furniture mover, cabbie, and unlicensed plumber), and his ultimate success. This is a true epic journey of an artist across four continents.

Success did not come easily, but Glass refused to sacrifice his vision of an integrated artist's life, which eventually resulted in important works such as *Einstein on the Beach* (1976), to cite just one work in a vast oeuvre. Glass lets the reader feel the thrill that results from artistic creation and the power of music as a way of life. Readers will have difficulty putting down this riveting, touching book by a musician turned storyteller.

--D. B. Levy, *Touro College, Lander College for Women*

Summing Up: Essential. Lower-division undergraduates through faculty and professionals; general readers.