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Essays on Rhythm
in German Modernism

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- Modernity, as has often been observed, was fundamentally concerned with questions of temporality. The period around 1900, in particular, witnessed numerous efforts both to rationalize time and to liberate non-rational temporal experience. Within this broader framework, rhythm came to form the object of an intense and widespread preoccupation. Rhythmical research played a central role not only in the reconceptualisation of human physiology and labour in the late 19th century, but also in the emergence of a new leisure culture in the early 20th. The book traces the ways in which ideas about rhythm were mobilised both to conceptualise modernity and to forge a new understanding of temporal media that came to mark the mass-mediated experience of the 1920s: a conception of artistic media as mediators between the organic and the rational, the time of the body and that of the machine.
- **Michael Cowan** is Professor in Film Studies at St Andrews University and former William Dawson Associate Professor of German and Film at McGill University. He is an award-winning author of numerous books and essays on German modernity, visual culture and film history.