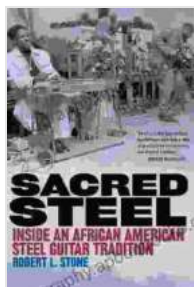


Inside an African American Steel Guitar Tradition: Music in American Life

Origins and Roots

The steel guitar, with its ethereal sound and evocative slide techniques, has played a pivotal role in the development of American music. Its origins can be traced back to the late 19th century, when African American musicians in Hawaii began experimenting with the traditional Hawaiian lap steel guitar, creating a unique and poignant sound that resonated with their cultural experience.



Sacred Steel: Inside an African American Steel Guitar Tradition (Music in American Life (Paperback))

by Alex Forrest

★★★★☆ 4.3 out of 5

Language	: English
File size	: 3830 KB
Text-to-Speech	: Enabled
Enhanced typesetting	: Enabled
Word Wise	: Enabled
Print length	: 323 pages
Screen Reader	: Supported



These early innovators, often referred to as "slack-key guitarists," developed a distinctive approach characterized by the use of open tunings, a slide or bottleneck, and a percussive tapping technique. Their music served as a bridge between the traditional melodies of Hawaii and the vibrant musical traditions of their African roots.

Masters of the Steel

Over the decades, a pantheon of African American steel guitarists emerged, each contributing their unique style and virtuosity to the tradition. Among them, Robert Randolph stands as a true master, his fiery playing and soulful vocals capturing the essence of the blues and gospel music that shaped his upbringing. His innovative use of the pedal steel guitar has earned him international acclaim and collaborations with icons like Eric Clapton and Carlos Santana.

Other notable steel guitarists include Buddy Guy, who blended the styles of blues, rock, and funk to create a signature sound; Sonny Landreth, whose slide technique and songwriting prowess have earned him critical praise; and Roosevelt Sykes, known as the "King of Barrelhouse Piano," who seamlessly incorporated the steel guitar into his boogie-woogie blues style.

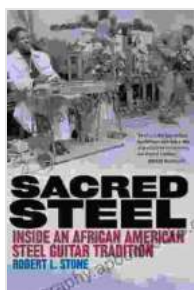
Musical Legacy and Influence

The African American steel guitar tradition has left an indelible mark on the landscape of American music. Its influence can be heard in a wide range of genres, from blues and soul to rhythm and blues and country. Artists from all walks of life have been drawn to the evocative sound of the steel guitar, including Bob Dylan, Bonnie Raitt, and Ry Cooder.

The steel guitar has served as a vehicle for expressing the joys, sorrows, and complexities of the African American experience. In the hands of master musicians, it has spoken to the struggles of a people, the resilience of a community, and the triumph of the human spirit.

"Inside an African American Steel Guitar Tradition" is a captivating exploration of this rich and vibrant musical legacy. Through interviews with

master musicians, historical research, and evocative storytelling, this book sheds light on the origins, development, and cultural significance of the African American steel guitar tradition. It is a testament to the power of music to transcend boundaries, unite cultures, and shape the very fabric of our societies.

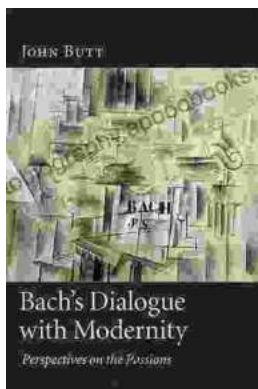


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