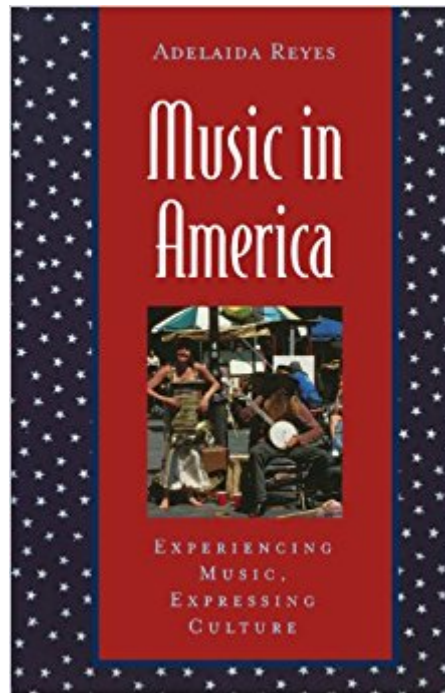


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Music In America: Experiencing Music, Expressing Culture (Global Music Series)



Synopsis

Music in America is one of several case-study volumes that can be used along with Thinking Musically, the core book in the Global Music Series. Thinking Musically incorporates music from many diverse cultures and establishes the framework for exploring the practice of music around the world. It sets the stage for an array of case-study volumes, each of which focuses on a single area of the world. Each case study uses the contemporary musical situation as a point of departure, covering historical information and traditions as they relate to the present. America's music is a perennial work in progress. Music in America looks at both the roots of American musical identity and its many manifestations, seeking to answer the complex question: "What does American music sound like?" Focusing on three themes--identity, diversity, and unity--it explores where America's music comes from, who makes it, and for what purpose. Rather than chronologically tracing America's musical history, author Adelaida Reyes considers how musical culture is shaped by space and time, by geography and history, by social, economic, and political factors, and by people who use music to express themselves within a community. Introducing the diversity that dominates the contemporary American musical landscape, Reyes draws on a dazzling range of musical styles--from ethnic and popular music idioms to contemporary art music--to highlight the ways in which sounds from various cultural origins come to share a national identity. Packaged with a 65-minute CD containing examples of the music discussed in the book, Music in America features guided listening and hands-on activities that allow readers to become active participants in the music.

Book Information

Series: Global Music Series

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Average Customer Review: 3.0 out of 5 stars See all reviews (2 customer reviews)

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Customer Reviews

I assigned this book as a text for a university class called American Culture, American Music based on the preview pages available, the publisher's description, its format as a small intro-type book, and the inclusion of a CD. I made a big mistake. The author selects only the most arcane genres and musicians, satisfying, I believe, only her own esoteric tastes. You will find nothing of bluegrass, very little of blues, nothing of rock and roll, nothing of jazz. She establishes the themes of American identity (from many, one) and the influence of immigration, but her writing style obscures rather than sheds light on these themes. Her prose is obtuse. The photographs are amateurish and the several of the recordings are very low fidelity. If this book is a representative sample of the series, I would have serious reservations about assigning any of them.

This book focuses on the multiple ethnic musics that have contributed to the identification of American music from the time of the originating migrations that founded the North American states. It stands as a challenge to histories that identify American music as having its origins in the hegemonic cultures of English, then German, Protestant American societies to which later immigrants contributed. According to the historian Ron Takaki, African, Catholic, and Jewish migrations simultaneously occurred in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries--sometimes they occurred on the same ships, sometimes on other ships. Adelaida Reyes draws attention to the musical interactions that began in colonial settlements. The book is a fine introduction to a complex and splendid aspect of American life and culture, in which Americans can justifiably take pride.

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