

Music in the USA: A Documentary Companion



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Music in the USA: A Documentary Companion charts a path through American music and musical life using as guides the words of composers, performers, writers and the rest of us ordinary folks who sing, dance, and listen. The anthology of primary sources contains about 160 selections from 1540 to 2000. Sometimes the sources are classics in the literature around American music, for example, the Preface to the Bay Psalm Book, excerpts from Slave Songs of the United States, and Charles Ives extolling Emerson. But many other selections offer uncommon sources, including a satirical story about a Yankee music teacher; various columns from 19th-century German American newspapers; the memoirs of a 19th-century diva; Lottie Joplin remembering her husband Scott; a little-known reflection of Copland about Stravinsky; an interview with Muddy Waters from the Chicago Defender; a letter from Woody Guthrie on the "spunkfire" attitude of a folk song; a press release from the Country Music Association; and the Congressional testimony around "Napster." "Sidebar" entries occasionally bring a topic or an idea into the present, acknowledging the extent to which revivals of many kinds of music play a role in American contemporary culture. This book focuses on the connections between theory and practice to enrich our understanding of the diversity of American musical experiences. Designed especially to accompany college courses which survey American music as a whole, the book is also relevant to courses in American history and American Studies.

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