

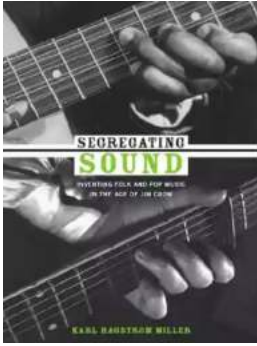
Inventing Folk And Pop Music In The Age Of Jim Crow: Refiguring American Music

When we think about the history of American music, certain genres immediately come to mind. They have become deeply ingrained in our cultural identity and have influenced countless generations. However, the origins and development of these genres, particularly folk and pop music, have been shaped by a complex historical backdrop that many people are not aware of. In the age of Jim Crow, when racial segregation and discrimination were at its height, African American artists played a pivotal role in reconfiguring American music and creating a legacy that continues to thrive today.

During the era of Jim Crow, which spanned from the late 19th century to the mid-20th century, African Americans faced intense racial violence, systemic oppression, and limited opportunities for economic and social advancement. Despite these significant challenges, African American musicians persevered and found ways to express their creativity and enrich American music with their unique perspectives.

One of the key contributions made by African American musicians during this time was the invention and popularization of folk music. Folk music refers to traditional songs that are passed down through generations and often reflect the experiences, struggles, and cultural heritage of a particular community. African American folk music originated from the deep roots of slavery and evolved as a form of resistance and cultural expression.

Segregating Sound: Inventing Folk and Pop Music in the Age of Jim Crow (Refiguring American Music) by Karl Hagstrom Miller (Kindle Edition)



★ ★ ★ ★ ☆	4.4 out of 5
Language	: English
File size	: 668 KB
Text-to-Speech	: Enabled
Screen Reader	: Supported
Enhanced typesetting	: Enabled
Word Wise	: Enabled
Print length	: 450 pages



Artists like Lead Belly, Bessie Smith, and Son House were among the pioneers of African American folk music. Through their powerful lyrics and soulful melodies, they shed light on the injustices faced by their communities and provided a voice for the voiceless. Their songs resonated with people from all walks of life, transcending racial boundaries and uniting them in their shared experiences.

Another significant development during the Jim Crow era was the invention of pop music as an art form that blended various musical styles and attracted a wide audience. African American artists like Louis Armstrong, Ella Fitzgerald, and Nat King Cole rose to prominence during this time and captured the hearts of millions with their captivating performances.

Pop music, with its catchy melodies and relatable lyrics, became a means for African American artists to assert their artistic prowess and challenge prevailing stereotypes. It served as a platform that transcended racial barriers and brought people together, fostering a sense of unity and commonality.

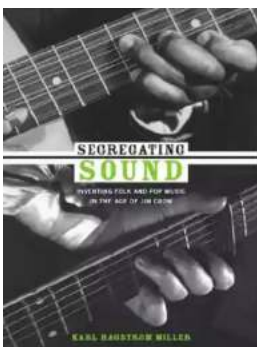
However, it is important to note that the success of African American musicians during the Jim Crow era was not achieved without significant obstacles. Despite their undeniable talent, they faced immense racial prejudice and discrimination in

the music industry. Segregated performance venues, limited recording opportunities, and unequal pay were just some of the hurdles they had to overcome.

The perseverance and resilience of these artists in the face of adversity speak volumes about their determination to reshape American music. They refused to be confined by societal expectations and used their creativity to challenge the status quo. By doing so, African American musicians paved the way for future generations and ensured that their contributions would never be forgotten.

The impact of African American musicians in the age of Jim Crow can still be felt today. Folk music continues to resonate with people from all walks of life, with contemporary artists drawing inspiration from its rich history. Pop music, too, has evolved and become a global phenomenon, with diverse artists pushing boundaries and captivating audiences worldwide.

, the invention and reconfiguration of folk and pop music during the age of Jim Crow highlight the resilience and creativity of African American musicians. In the face of racial segregation and discrimination, they forged a path that continues to shape American music today. Their legacy serves as a reminder of the power of music to transcend boundaries, foster unity, and bring about social change.



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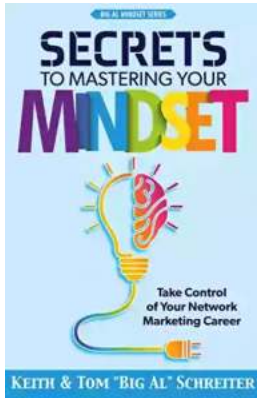
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In *Segregating Sound*, Karl Hagstrom Miller argues that the categories that we have inherited to think and talk about southern music bear little relation to the ways that southerners long played and heard music. Focusing on the late nineteenth century and the early twentieth, Miller chronicles how southern music—a fluid complex of sounds and styles in practice—was reduced to a series of distinct genres linked to particular racial and ethnic identities. The blues were African American. Rural white southerners played country music. By the 1920s, these depictions were touted in folk song collections and the catalogs of “race” and “hillbilly” records produced by the phonograph industry. Such links among race, region, and music were new. Black and white artists alike had played not only blues, ballads, ragtime, and string band music, but also nationally popular sentimental ballads, minstrel songs, Tin Pan Alley tunes, and Broadway hits.

In a cultural history filled with musicians, listeners, scholars, and business people, Miller describes how folklore studies and the music industry helped to create a “musical color line,” a cultural parallel to the physical color line that came to define the Jim Crow South. Segregated sound emerged slowly through the interactions of southern and northern musicians, record companies that sought to penetrate new markets across the South and the globe, and academic folklorists who attempted to tap southern music for evidence about the history of human civilization. Contending that people’s musical worlds were defined less by who they were than by the music that they heard, Miller challenges assumptions about the relation of race, music, and the market.



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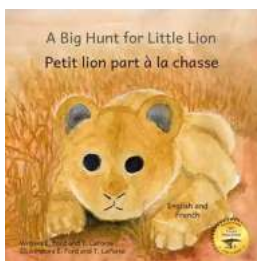
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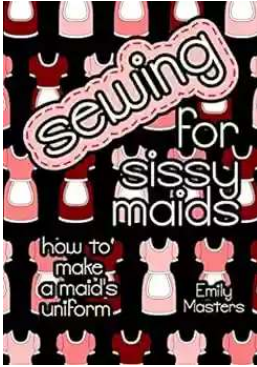
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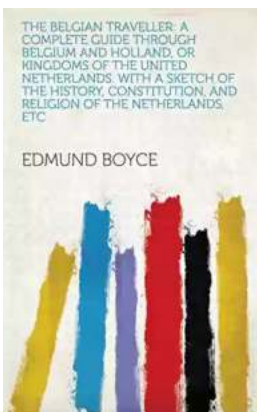
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