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About the Book

This powerful book covers the vast and various terrain of African American music, from bebop to hip-hop. Guthrie P. Ramsey, Jr., begins with an absorbing account of his own musical experiences with family and friends on the South Side of Chicago, evoking Sunday-morning worship services, family gatherings with food and dancing, and jam sessions at local nightclubs. This lays the foundation for a brilliant discussion of how musical meaning emerges in the private and communal realms of lived experience and how African American music has shaped and reflected identities in the black community. Deeply informed by Ramsey's experience as an accomplished musician, a sophisticated cultural theorist, and an enthusiast brought up in the community he discusses, *Race Music* explores the global influence and popularity of African American music, its social relevance, and key questions

regarding its interpretation and criticism.

Beginning with jazz, rhythm and blues, and gospel, this book demonstrates that while each genre of music is distinct—possessing its own conventions, performance practices, and formal qualities—each is also grounded in similar techniques and conceptual frameworks identified with African American musical traditions. Ramsey provides vivid glimpses of the careers of Dinah Washington, Louis Jordan, Dizzy Gillespie, Cootie Williams, and Mahalia Jackson, among others, to show how the social changes of the 1940s elicited an Afro-modernism that inspired much of the music and culture that followed.

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About the Author

Guthrie P. Ramsey, Jr., is Assistant Professor of Music at the University of Pennsylvania.

Reviews

“To an outsider it is an eye opener to read just how varied the musical scene was in the 1960s in the black experience, just in religious context alone The idea that it all stems from the blues from the southern states and that the newly migrated black population in places like Chicago simply carried on that tradition - could it be that Afro American music is just a hybrid of all it encounters? These issues and many others are debated in this serious, informative yet very readable volume.”—*Brian Dalton Beat Scene Magazine*

“Race Music . . . provides a framework for rethinking the facets of African-American music and the ethnocentric energy that birthed it.”—*Black Beat*

“A very interesting treatment of African-American music of the last half of the 20th century.”—*Jack McCray Charleston Post & Courier*

“Prodigious in range and detail.”—*Jazz Journal International*

“Race Music is a powerful study -- sweeping and yet scrupulous -- of how black communities have transcended time, change, and genre by passing down musical knowledge and tradition between generations that have created a succession of globally influential musics.

Equally appropriate for both music and cultural studies collections, this masterwork belongs on the shelves of every academic library." —*Library Journal*

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IASPM - US Book Award, International Association for the Study of Popular Music - US Branch

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