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Kika Kila: How The Hawaiian Steel Guitar Changed The Sound Of Modern Music



Synopsis

Since the nineteenth century, the distinct tones of kika— kila, the Hawaiian steel guitar, have defined the island sound. Here historian and steel guitarist John W. Troutman offers the instrument's definitive history, from its discovery by a young Hawaiian royalist named Joseph Kekuku to its revolutionary influence on American and world music. During the early twentieth century, Hawaiian musicians traveled the globe, from tent shows in the Mississippi Delta, where they shaped the new sounds of country and the blues, to regal theaters and vaudeville stages in New York, Berlin, Kolkata, and beyond. In the process, Hawaiian guitarists recast the role of the guitar in modern life. But as Troutman explains, by the 1970s the instrument's embrace and adoption overseas also worked to challenge its cultural legitimacy in the eyes of a new generation of Hawaiian musicians. As a consequence, the indigenous instrument nearly disappeared in its homeland. Using rich musical and historical sources, including interviews with musicians and their descendants, Troutman provides the complete story of how this Native Hawaiian instrument transformed not only American music but the sounds of modern music throughout the world. The Organization of American Historians named Kika Kila the winner of the 2017 Lawrence W. Levine Award for the Best Book in American Cultural History. The Association for Recorded Sound Collections named Kika Kila the winner of the 2017 Award for "Best Historical Research in Recorded Popular Music."

Book Information

Hardcover: 392 pages

Publisher: The University of North Carolina Press (May 16, 2016)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1469627922

ISBN-13: 978-1469627922

Product Dimensions: 7.3 x 1.3 x 9.3 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.6 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 5.0 out of 5 stars 3 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #286,337 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #87 in Books > Arts &

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Customer Reviews

"John W. Troutman's *Kika Kila* is a deeply researched, definitive history of the Hawaiian steel guitar, but more than that, it is an eloquent and convincing argument for the influence and centrality of Hawaiian music--and, in particular, Hawaiian musicians--in the broader history of American music."--Elijah Wald, author of *Escaping the Delta: Robert Johnson and the Invention of the Blues*

"*Kika Kila* is a tour de force, documenting the steel guitar's indigenous Hawaiian roots, while also challenging longstanding conventions in the music industry and in scholarship on American popular music. Exhaustively researched and elegantly written, Troutman's book is a gift of insight and appreciation for the steel guitar, arguably the most endearing sonic icon of Hawaiian music."--Amy Kuuleialoha Stillman, Professor of American Culture and Music, University of Michigan

"*Kika Kila* is a magisterial work. John W. Troutman eloquently links the steel guitar with the arrival of white missionaries and the dispossession of indigenous Hawaiian people from their land in the nineteenth century. The instrument became a powerful voice for the Hawaiian people and inspired music throughout North America in the twentieth century."--William Ferris, author of *Give My Poor Heart Ease: Voices of the Mississippi Blues*

"A model of richly detailed yet accessible narrative history, John W. Troutman's book will force scholars and lovers of popular music in the United States to change some of their most basic and long-held assumptions."--Karl Hagstrom Miller, University of Virginia

"John W. Troutman's compelling and lovingly written book cements the centrality of the steel guitar, Kanaka Maoli musicians, and Hawaiian history in the evolution of American cultural history. Deeply informed by scholarship on music, expressive culture and performance, diaspora, imperialism, resistance, politics, economics, and more--all informed and reinvented through the lens of Indigenous studies--this is one of the most surprising and challenging cultural histories I've lately seen. Read here and learn that Kanaka Maoli people and the steel guitar are at the heart of it all."--Rayna Green, Curator Emerita, National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution

"A 'landmark contribution...' An 'illuminating and insightful' book that 'challenge[s] much of the received wisdom on American music history.'" --The Journal of Social History

"Superbly written, beautifully illustrated and packed with anecdotes . . . this remarkable book is a gem and should find a readership far beyond guitar obsessives."--The Blues Magazine

"Expose[s] . . . innovations and the rich, transnational context in which they occurred."--Journal of Social History

"Well written, insightful and beautifully illustrated, *Kika Kila* is an excellent addition to the world music library."--Songlines

"[A] treasure chest of impassioned investigation [that] tracks the steel-stringed guitar's signature 'glissando swoop' as it sparks a global explosion of composition and performance."--Honolulu Magazine

"If you've ever felt the lure of slide guitar, *Kika Kila* is a fantastic book that offers new

listening material, colorful stories, and vibrant history, and exposes you to great guitarists who made history.--Acoustic GuitarPresents a stunning example of the nation's cultural melange.--Oxford AmericanDeeply researched. . . . Essential for anyone who wants to know more about the tremendously fertile--and horribly imperialistic--world of 19th and early-20th century Hawaii, when new ideas and poured in and amazing music poured out.--Ukulele

"K&299;k&257; Kila is a magisterial work. John W. Troutman eloquently links the steel guitar with the arrival of white missionaries and the dispossession of indigenous Hawaiian people from their land in the nineteenth century. The instrument became a powerful voice for the Hawaiian people and inspired music throughout North America in the twentieth century.--William Ferris, author of Give My Poor Heart Ease: Voices of the Mississippi BluesA model of richly detailed yet accessible narrative history, John W. Troutman's book will force scholars and lovers of popular music in the United States to change some of their most basic and long-held assumptions.--Karl Hagstrom Miller, University of Virginia"John W. Troutman's K&299;k&257; Kila

Fascinating, well-researched and even somewhat mind-blowing in many aspects! Highly recommended. This book fills an enormous gap in the written history of popular music.

very happy with the book and service

Great book!

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