

HEALING SONGS and WORK SONGS

By Ted Gioia

New from the bestselling author of *The History of Jazz*

While the first healers were musicians who relied on rhythm and song to help cure the sick, over time Western thinkers and doctors lost touch with these traditions. In the West, for almost two millennia, the roles of the healer and the musician have been strictly separated. Until recently, that is. Over the past few decades there has been a resurgence of interest in healing music. In the midst of this nascent revival, Ted Gioia offers the first detailed exploration of the uses of music for curative purposes from ancient times to the present. Gioia's inquiry into the restorative powers of sound moves effortlessly from the history of shamanism to the role of Orpheus as a mythical figure linking Eastern and Western ideas about therapeutic music, and from Native American healing ceremonies to what clinical studies can reveal about the efficacy of contemporary methods of sonic healing.

All societies have relied on music to transform the experience of work. Song accompanied the farmer's labors, calmed the herder's flock, and set in motion the spinner's wheel. Today music blares on the shop floor; the radio keeps the trucker going on the long distance haul.

Now Ted Gioia tells the story of work songs from prehistoric times to the present. Vocation by vocation, Gioia focuses attention on the rhythms and melodies that have attended tasks such as the raising and lowering of sails, the swinging of hammers, the felling of trees. In an engaging, conversational writing style, he synthesizes a breathtaking amount of material, not only from songbooks and recordings but also from travel literature, historical accounts, slave narratives, folklore, labor union writings, and more. He draws on all of these to describe how workers in societies around the world have used music to increase efficiency, measure time, relay commands, maintain focus, and alleviate drudgery.

Together, these two books are an impassioned tribute to the extraordinary capacity of music to enter into day-to-day lives, to address humanity's deepest concerns and most heartfelt needs.

Work Songs

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Healing Songs

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