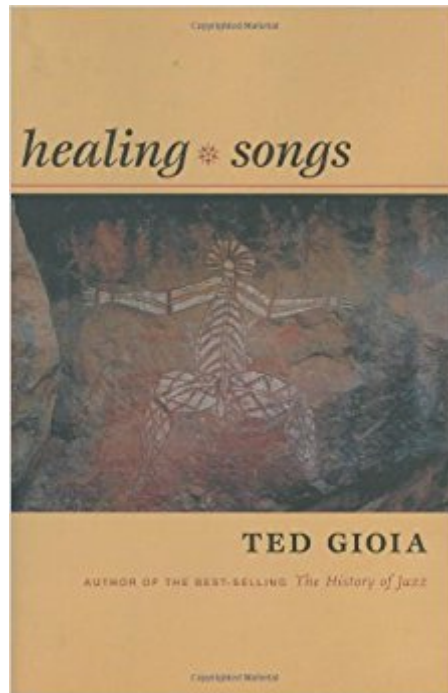




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Healing Songs



Synopsis

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, a musician, composer, and widely praised author, 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. Gioia considers a broad range of therapies, providing a thoughtful, impartial guide to their histories and claims, their successes and failures. He examines a host of New Age practices, including toning, Cymatics, drumming circles, and the Tomatis method. And he explores how the medical establishment has begun to recognize and incorporate the therapeutic power of song. Acknowledging that the drumming circle will not and should not replace the emergency room, nor the shaman the cardiologist, Gioia suggests that the most promising path is one in which both the latest medical science and music with its capacity to transform attitudes and bring people together are brought to bear on the multifaceted healing process. In *Healing Songs*, as in its companion volume *Work Songs*, Gioia moves beyond studies of music centered on specific performers, time periods, or genres to illuminate how music enters into and transforms the experiences of everyday life.

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Customer Reviews

“Ted Gioia enriches and makes real the powerful message that music is, and has always been, an integral part of the toolkit that ordinary humans have used to navigate life. He shows that, far from being a pastime to fill idle moments or a distraction from everyday preoccupations, music addresses fundamental issues of human existence, survival, and liberation. Gioia’s work offers hope to those who fear that the corporate mass media may have suffocated the age-old impulse of ordinary people to make music their own.”—John Sloboda, author of *Exploring the Musical Mind* “Healing Songs provides a penetrating look at therapeutic music. . . . Healing Songs is the type of book which will certainly have a wide reading appeal among those who enjoy jazz, music, sonic techniques, and wish to know about music as a tool for healing. It is well-written, concise, and enjoyable. It will undoubtedly find a welcome spot on your bookshelf, frequently revisited in order to savor its contents. Healing Songs takes readers on a transcendent journey. Educational and enjoyable. Highly recommended.” (Lee Prosser JazzReview.com)

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Gioia is a well-respected musicologist who has researched a number of topics from a thoughtfully academic perspective, and *Healing Songs* is no exception. Providing us with a cultural and historical overview of how healers of many traditions use music in their rituals, Gioia is able to put things into context without catering what might be seen as the “hocus-pocus” of folk religions. The book should be utilized as a supplement for those undertaking the study of music therapy, as it provides much validation of the practical side of music in healing. At no time does Gioia imply or even seem to believe that these songs are “magic” or that there is a spirituality that accompanies the effectiveness thereof, but he instead looks at the effectiveness of placebos and compares the benefits of the spiritual and social elements with the conviction that there will be success. It’s a fairly

easy read, and is not exceedingly long. I feel that the book is certainly deserving of a place on my bookshelf as well as on that of any doctor, music therapist, ethnomusicologist or religious musician. As a Christian worship leader, the book helps me to understand the positive power that music can have in the life and body of believers, and how I can best provide an atmosphere that will encourage the positive changes.

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