

The Forgotten Originals: Pioneers and Mega Stars of America's Musical Heritage



Buried History of American Music, Songs and Showbiz Since 1606: The Forgotten Originals, Pioneers, and Mega Stars (America's Musical Heritage and Treasures)

by Eileen Sorg

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American music is a vibrant and diverse tapestry woven from the threads of countless artists who have left their mark on the nation's cultural fabric. However, many of the early pioneers and mega stars who shaped the sound and style of American music have faded into obscurity, their names and contributions forgotten by time. This article will shine a light on these

forgotten originals, celebrating their lives, their music, and their lasting influence on the American musical heritage.

The Early Pioneers

The roots of American music can be traced back to the early 19th century, when a wave of immigrants from Europe and Africa brought their own musical traditions to the New World. These diverse influences blended together to create a new and unique sound that would become the foundation of American popular music.

One of the most important early pioneers was Stephen Foster. Born in Pennsylvania in 1826, Foster wrote over 200 songs, many of which became instant hits and are still popular today. His songs, such as "Oh! Susanna" and "My Old Kentucky Home," captured the spirit of the American frontier and helped to define the nation's musical identity.

Another early pioneer was Francis Scott Key. Key wrote the lyrics to "The Star-Spangled Banner" in 1814, after witnessing the British bombardment of Fort McHenry during the War of 1812. The song quickly became a patriotic anthem and has been sung at countless events throughout American history.

The Mega Stars of the Early 20th Century

The early 20th century saw the rise of several mega stars who would forever change the face of American music. These artists were not only talented musicians, but also charismatic performers who captivated audiences with their stage presence and showmanship.

One of the most popular mega stars of the era was Al Jolson. Jolson was a vaudeville performer who became a sensation in the early 1900s. His signature song, "The Swanee River," was one of the biggest hits of the decade and helped to popularize jazz music.

Another mega star of the early 20th century was Louis Armstrong. Armstrong was a trumpet player and singer who is considered one of the most important figures in jazz history. His unique style of playing, known as scat singing, helped to define the sound of jazz and inspired generations of musicians.

The Forgotten Originals

While many of the early pioneers and mega stars of American music are still remembered today, there are countless others who have been forgotten by time. These forgotten originals played a vital role in shaping the sound and style of American music, but their names and contributions have been lost to history.

One of the most forgotten originals is Elizabeth Cotten. Cotten was a folk singer and guitarist who wrote and recorded some of the most beloved folk songs of the 20th century, including "Freight Train" and "Shake Sugaree." Her songs have been covered by countless artists, including Bob Dylan and Joan Baez, but her name is not as well-known as it should be.

Another forgotten original is Huddie Ledbetter, better known as Lead Belly. Lead Belly was a blues singer and guitarist who wrote and recorded some of the most important blues songs of the 20th century, including "Goodnight Irene" and "The Midnight Special." His songs have been covered by

countless artists, including Eric Clapton and the Grateful Dead, but his name is not as well-known as it should be.

The forgotten originals of American music are a testament to the rich and diverse history of the genre. These artists played a vital role in shaping the sound and style of American music, but their names and contributions have been lost to time. It is important to remember these forgotten originals and celebrate their legacy, so that their music can continue to inspire and entertain generations to come.

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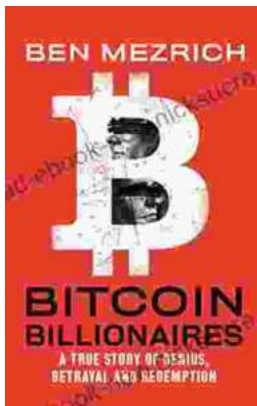
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