



Kennedy's Blues: African-American Blues and Gospel Songs on JFK (American Made Music Series)

Guido van Rijn

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Kennedy's Blues: African American Blues and Gospel Songs on JFK collects in a single volume the blues and gospel songs written by African Americans about the presidency of John F. Kennedy and offers a close analysis of Kennedy's hold upon the African American imagination. These blues and gospel songs have never been transcribed and analyzed in a systematic way, so this volume provides a hitherto untapped source on the perception of one of the most intriguing American presidents.

After eight years of Republican rule the young Democratic president received a warm welcome from African Americans. However, with the Cold War military draft and the slow pace of civil rights measures, inspiration temporarily gave way to impatience.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Medgar Evers, the March on Washington, the groundbreaking civil rights bill--all found their way into blues and gospel songs. The many blues numbers devoted to the assassination and the president's legacy are evidence of JFK's near-canonization by African Americans. Blues historian Guido van Rijn shows that John F. Kennedy became a mythical hero to blues songwriters despite what was left unaccomplished.

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