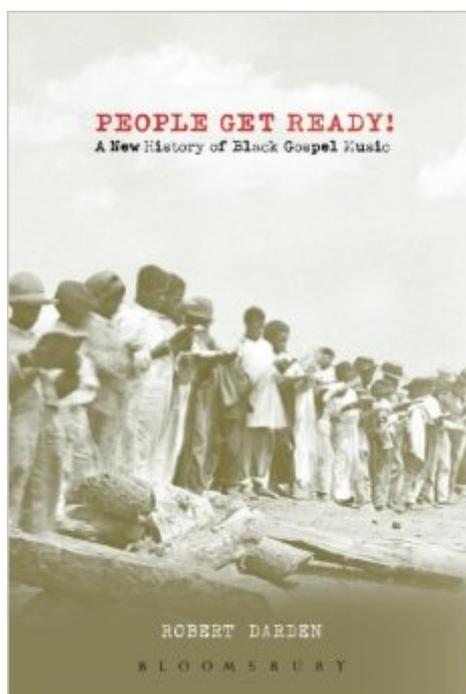


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# People Get Ready!: A New History Of Black Gospel Music



## Synopsis

People Get Ready!: A New History of Gospel Music is a passionate, celebratory, and carefully researched chronology of one of America's greatest treasures. From Africa through the spirituals, from minstrel music through jubilee, and from traditional to contemporary gospel, People Get Ready! shows the links between styles, social patterns, and artists. The emphasis is on the stories behind the songs and musicians. From the nameless slaves of Colonial America to Donnie McClurkin, Yolanda Adams, and Kirk Franklin, People Get Ready! provides, for the first time, an accessible overview of this musical genre. In addition to the more familiar stories of Thomas A. Dorsey and Mahalia Jackson, the book offers intriguing new insights into the often forgotten era between the Civil War and the rise of jubilee-that most intriguing blend of minstrel music, barbershop harmonies, and the spiritual. Also chronicled are the connections between some of gospel's precursors (Blind Willie Johnson, Arizona Dranes, and Sister Rosetta Tharpe) and modern gospel stars, including Andrae Crouch and Clara Ward. People Get Ready! knits together a number of narratives, and combines history, musicology and spirituality into a coherent whole, stitched together by the stories of dozens of famous and forgotten musical geniuses.

FROM THE INTRODUCTION"Among the richest of the lavish gifts Africa has given to the world is rhythm. The beat. The sound of wood on wood, hand on hand. That indefinable pulse that sets blood to racing and toes to tapping. It is rhythm that drives the great American musical exports, the spiritual (and, by extension, gospel), the blues, jazz and rock 'n' roll. But first you must have the spirituals-religion with rhythm. In this book, I will show the evolution of a musical style that only occasionally slows down its evolution long enough to be classified before it evolves yet again. In historical terms, spirituals emerged from African rhythm, work-songs, and field hollers in a remarkably short time-years, perhaps days-after the first African slaves landed on American shores. From the spirituals sprang not just their spiritual heir jubilee, but jazz and blues. And gospel music in its modern understanding morphed from the spirituals, the blues, jubilee and-of course-African rhythm. What today's gospel music is and what it is becoming is part of the continuing evolution of African American music. Religion with rhythm."

## Book Information

Paperback: 440 pages

Publisher: Bloomsbury Academic (October 5, 2005)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0826417523

ISBN-13: 978-0826417527

Product Dimensions: 6 x 0.9 x 9 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.2 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.7 out of 5 stars See all reviews (17 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #599,308 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #97 in Books > Arts & Photography > Music > Musical Genres > Gospel #486 in Books > Christian Books & Bibles > Christian Living > Music #802 in Books > Arts & Photography > Music > Musical Genres > Religious & Sacred Music

## Customer Reviews

"To truly understand American music, you must first attempt to understand the spirituals and gospel music," says former gospel music editor of Billboard magazine and author Robert Darden. "And it begins where it all began-Africa, a thousand years ago." Darden, an Assistant Professor of Journalism at Baylor University has done his homework.\* His research is extensive. *People Get Ready!* is informative and cites multiple sources. "The aim of African music has always been to translate the experiences of life and of the spiritual worlds into sound, enhancing and celebrating life." Samuel Floyd "Praise songs, songs of insult, boasting songs, litigation songs, mourning songs, topical songs, story songs, love songs, heroic songs and religious songs, and the repertoire of drum language constitute an important part of literature of African peoples created, developed, maintained and transmitted through music." J.H.Nketia, "The Musical Languages of Subsaharan Africa." Work songs, also known as hollers, cries or whoops, contained rhythmic quality making work seem easier, be it rowing, picking cotton, or laying railroad ties. Many were performed as the "call and response". Then there were the 'spirituals' and plantation hymns with the master's whip keepingtime... Eventually, America became fascinated with African-American music, which spread because of the exodus of blacks from the deep South to Chicago. From the spirituals came ragtime, followed by the blues, then jazz. Some time during the migration, jubilee music, using quartets sang spirituals in harmonized verse chorus arrangements.

This is a reprint of a review Published in the December 19 issue of Blueswax, the worlds biggest blues publication at [...] It is reprinted with permission. By: Bob Gersztyn In *People Get Ready! A New History of Black Gospel Music*, Robert Darden traces the evolution of America's Black music from the first spirituals that were created by the displaced African slaves to the Gospel music industry as it exists at the beginning of the twenty-first century. He demonstrates how the songs, which

expressed a codified secret language, survived because they were essential to the race's continued existence. The author further demonstrates how the displaced Black race kept the essential elements for their survival in the form of a complex mythology that replaced their own native symbols. They used their new white masters' religion because it provided them with the only form of freedom available to them for nearly four hundred years. The resulting version of Christianity that they created was nearly identical to the original first century model, not because of fashion, but necessity. They understood one of the core messages of Christianity, that of freedom in the midst of injustice and oppression. Christianity not only provided all the theological elements necessary for their survival, but also included archetypal images like David and Goliath, and Moses leading the children of Israel out of captivity, which then provided the stories that fueled their spirituals. The messages of these songs were compatible with their oppressors' worldview, while providing hope where none could be seen. The author demonstrates how the spirituals spawned both the jubilee singers and minstrelsy after the Civil War.

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