

Let the World Listen Right: The Mississippi Delta Hip-Hop Story (American Made Music Series)

Ali Colleen Neff



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In the Mississippi Delta, creativity, community, and a rich expressive culture persist despite widespread poverty. Over five years of extensive work in the region, author Ali Colleen Neff collected a wealth of materials that demonstrate a vibrant musical scene.

Let the World Listen Right draws from classic studies of the blues as well as extensive ethnographic work to document the "changing same" of Delta music making. From the neighborhood juke joints of the contemporary Delta to the international hip-hop stage, this study traces the musical networks that join the region's African American communities to both traditional forms and new global styles.

The book features the words and describes performances of contemporary artists, including blues musicians, gospel singers, radio and club DJs, barroom toast-tellers, preachers, poets, and a spectrum of Delta hip-hop artists. Contemporary Delta hip-hop artists Jerome "TopNotch the Villain" Williams, Kimyata "Yata" Dear, and DA F.A.M. have contributed freestyle poetry, extensive interview materials, and their own commentaries. The book focuses particularly on the biography of TopNotch, whose hip-hop poetics emerge from a lifetime of schoolyard dozens and training in the gospel church.

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