

# History: How Pilgrims and African American Slaves Brought Music to America

Music is an integral part of American culture, but its origins are surprisingly diverse. The Pilgrims, who arrived in the New World in 1620, brought their own musical traditions with them, which were based on the music of the English Renaissance. African American slaves, who were brought to America against their will, also brought their own musical traditions, which were based on the music of West Africa.

Over time, these two musical traditions blended and evolved to create the unique sound of American music. The Pilgrims' hymns and the slaves' spirituals are both essential elements of the American musical landscape.

## The Pilgrims' Music



## HISTORY HOW PILGRIMS, AND AFRO-AMERICAN SLAVES BROUGHT MUSIC TO AMERICA, Part 2: Chants, Harp Singing, Hymns, Psalms, Spirituals, Railroad, Gospels, Sea ... (America musical heritage and treasures) by Hilton Als

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The Pilgrims were a group of English Puritans who left England in 1620 to escape religious persecution. They settled in Plymouth, Massachusetts, where they struggled to survive in the harsh New England climate.

Despite their hardships, the Pilgrims never forgot their love of music. They sang hymns and psalms as a way to worship God and to express their hopes and fears. The Pilgrims' music was simple and unadorned, but it was heartfelt and sincere.

One of the most famous Pilgrim hymns is "The Bay Psalm Book." This book was published in 1640 and contained 150 psalms that were translated into English. The Bay Psalm Book was used by Pilgrims for generations and helped to shape the sound of American music.

### The African American Slaves' Music

African American slaves were brought to America against their will and forced to work on plantations. They were subjected to unimaginable hardships, but they never lost their love of music.

The slaves' music was a way to express their pain and suffering, but it was also a way to celebrate their culture and their faith. The slaves' music was full of rhythm and soul, and it was often used to accompany work songs and spirituals.

One of the most famous slave spirituals is "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot." This song was first sung by slaves in the American South and has since

become a beloved classic. *Swing Low, Sweet Chariot* is a song of hope and redemption, and it has inspired generations of Americans.

## The Blending of Musical Traditions

The Pilgrims' music and the African American slaves' music were two very different traditions, but they eventually blended together to create the unique sound of American music.

The first major blending of these traditions occurred in the early 19th century, when white musicians began to incorporate elements of African American music into their own music. This led to the development of new genres of music, such as jazz, blues, and rock and roll.

The blending of musical traditions has continued to this day, and it is one of the reasons why American music is so diverse and vibrant.

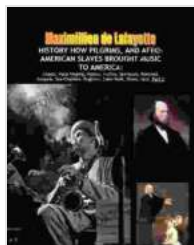
## The Legacy of the Pilgrims and African American Slaves

The Pilgrims and African American slaves made a profound contribution to American music. Their music has shaped the sound of American music and has inspired generations of Americans.

The Pilgrims' music was a simple and sincere expression of their faith and their hopes for a new life. The African American slaves' music was a powerful and soulful expression of their pain and suffering, but it was also a celebration of their culture and their faith.

The blending of these two musical traditions created the unique sound of American music. American music is a testament to the resilience and

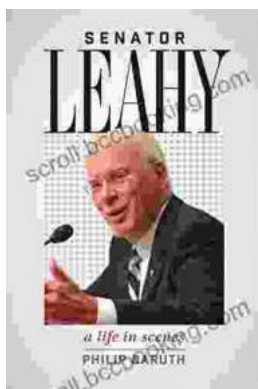
creativity of the American people.



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