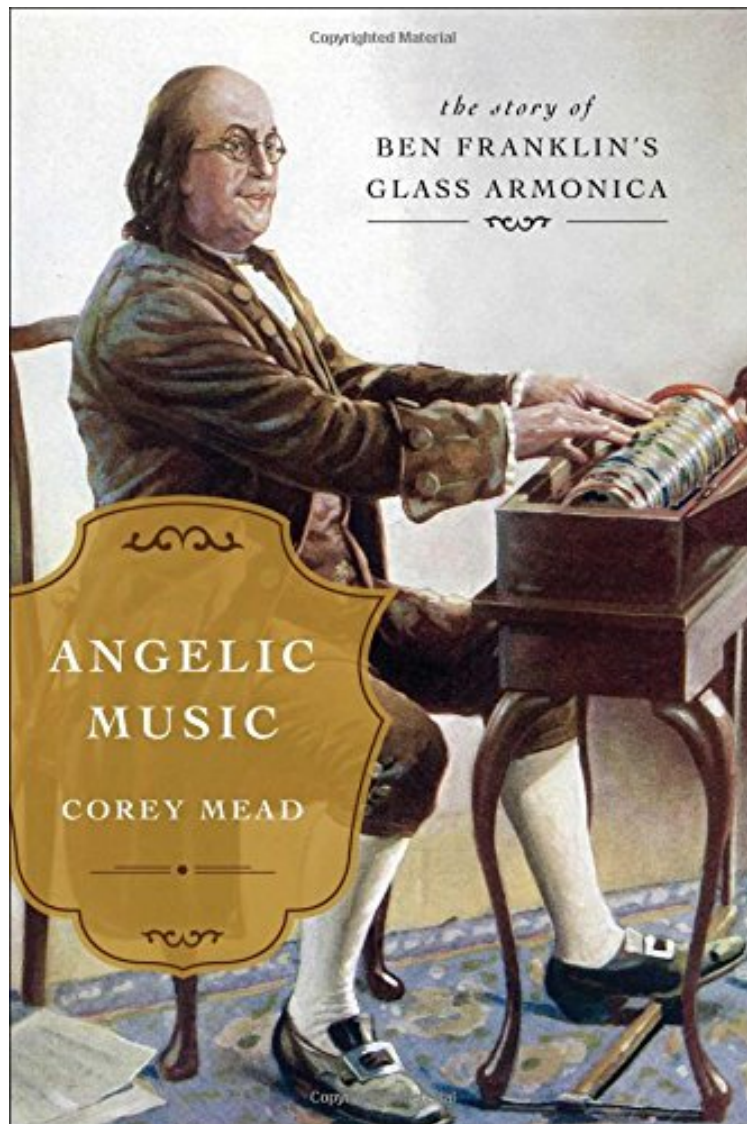


(Download free ebook) Angelic Music: The Story of Benjamin Franklins Glass Armonica

## Angelic Music: The Story of Benjamin Franklins Glass Armonica

Corey Mead

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**Corey Mead : Angelic Music: The Story of Benjamin Franklins Glass Armonica** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Angelic Music: The Story of Benjamin Franklins Glass Armonica:

5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. The Rise and Fall of the Glass Armonica By Nancy Adair B Angelic Music by Corey Mean is the story of Ben Franklin's Glass Armonica, the invention that gave him the "greatest personal satisfaction." When we lived in Philadelphia in the mid-1970s to late 1980s we saw the Glass Armonica at the Franklin Institute. And we had heard a man perform on musical glasses in several venues around the time of the

Bicentennial. So I had heard the ethereal, angelic music of the musical glasses. I had not realized that the Glass Armonica was all the rage in the 18th c and early 19th c. Chamber music including the instrument was written by Mozart, Beethoven, and Handel. Virtuosi toured Europe playing the music that made women swoon. It gained a tarnished reputation in the early 19th c when people believed the music could drive one mad and cause illness, or summon the dead with magical powers. Mesmer used it in his seances. As music changed from small ensembles to large symphonic orchestras in halls the Armonica fell out of favor, relegated to being a museum curiosity. But in the last twenty years it has found a revival, electronically enhanced, and used in pop music, movies, opera, and chamber music. I was fascinated by this book. Corey covers the rise and fall of the musical glasses, the development of glassmaking, early musical glasses, Franklin's musical background and development of the Armonica, the hey-day of the Glass Armonica, and Mesmer's career and his use of the instrument, including his commissioning an opera from Mozart, the decline and revival of the instrument. When German glassblower Gerhard Finkenbeiner saw a Glass Armonica in a museum in 1960 it was a curiosity. He rediscovered how to create the glass and instrument and the instrument found a revival. Today a few people are experts, including Dennis James whose collaboration with Linda Ronstadt on six CDs revived an interest in the instrument. A boy he saw Franklin's instrument at the Franklin Institute; in music school he asked what it sounded like and his professor answered, "No one knows. It hasn't been played for two hundred years." Now he leads the world's first known glass music studies program at Rutgers University. I received a free ebook from the publisher through NetGalley in exchange for a fair and unbiased review.

With spirited charm, Mead weaves history, music, science, and medicine into the story... Fascinating, insightful, and, best of all, great fun. The Washington Post A jewel of musical history the story of Ben Franklin's favorite invention, the glass armonica including the composers who wrote for it (Mozart, Beethoven, Handel, among others); Dr. Mesmer who used it to hypnotize; Marie Antoinette and the women who popularized it; its decline and recent comeback. Benjamin Franklin is renowned for his landmark inventions, including bifocals, the Franklin stove, and the lightning rod. Yet his own favorite invention the one he said gave him the greatest personal satisfaction is unknown to the general public. The glass armonica, the first musical instrument invented by an American, was constructed of stacked glass bowls and played by rubbing one's fingers on the rims. It was so popular in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries that Mozart, Beethoven, Handel, and Strauss composed for it; Marie Antoinette and numerous monarchs played it; Goethe and Thomas Jefferson praised it; Dr. Franz Mesmer used it for his hypnotizing Mesmerism sessions. Franklin himself played it for George Washington and Thomas Jefferson. In *Angelic Music*, Corey Mead describes how Franklin's instrument fell out of popular favor, partly due to claims that its haunting sounds could drive musicians out of their minds. Some players fell ill, complaining of nervousness, muscle spasms, and cramps. Audiences were susceptible; a child died during a performance in Germany. Some thought its ethereal tones summoned spirits or had magical powers. It was banned in some places. Yet in recent years, the armonica has enjoyed a revival. Composers are writing pieces for it in genres ranging from chamber music and opera to electronic and pop music. Now Mead brings this instrument back to the public eye, telling the compelling, fascinating story of its origins.

Enchanting . . . With spirited charm, Mead weaves history, music, science and medicine into the story. . . . Fascinating, insightful and, best of all, great fun. (The Washington Post) Charming and fascinating . . . part musicology and part cultural history . . . Mead's lively storytelling opens a window into a (as it were) mesmerizing chapter of music history. (Publishers Weekly) Benjamin Franklin's most beloved invention was the glass armonica, and this book shows how its combination of art and science is a key to understanding the many aspects of his creativity. Like Franklin and his instrument, this book has a spirit of fun. It will take you on an enchanted journey through the life of Franklin, the tenor of his times, and the timeless resonance of music. (Walter Isaacson author of *Benjamin Franklin: An American Life*) "Marvelously ingratiating music history." (Booklist) The genesis, rise, fall, and rise again of Benjamin Franklin's mid-18th-century rub-the-glasses device, whose enormous popularity led to wild claims about both its salutary and detrimental effects on listeners. Mead returns with a highly readable and informative account of the research and tinkering by Franklin . . . the author is a genial historical guide. Mead keeps the current swift, removing rough rocks that might disrupt our pleasant, engaging trip downstream with him. (Kirkus s) About the Author Corey Mead is an Associate Professor of English at Baruch College, City University of New York. He is the author of *Angelic Music: The Story of Benjamin Franklin's Glass Armonica* and *War Play: Video Games and the Future of Armed Conflict*. His work has appeared in *Time*, *Salon*, *The Daily Beast*, and numerous literary journals. Excerpt. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved. *Angelic Music*