

7 guitars august wilson

Book Concept: 7 Guitars, August Wilson

Concept: This book isn't just a biography of August Wilson, though it certainly incorporates his life. Instead, it uses seven iconic guitars – each representing a distinct thematic element from Wilson's ten-play cycle – as a lens through which to explore the profound complexities of the African American experience in the 20th century. Each guitar's story intertwines with a specific play, revealing the music, history, and human spirit that fueled Wilson's masterpiece.

Compelling Storyline/Structure:

The book will follow a non-linear structure. Each chapter focuses on one guitar and its associated play, exploring the historical context, the characters' struggles, the musical influences, and the enduring legacy of the play. The guitars themselves become almost allegorical characters, each with its own unique "voice" that echoes the themes and emotions of the corresponding play. The narrative will weave together biographical details of Wilson's life, excerpts from his plays, interviews with actors and scholars, and reflections on the enduring power of his work. The book concludes by considering the legacy of Wilson's work and its continued relevance in today's world.

Ebook Description:

Are you captivated by the power of storytelling, the richness of African American history, and the enduring legacy of August Wilson? Do you struggle to fully grasp the depth and complexity of Wilson's ten-play cycle? Are you looking for a fresh, engaging way to explore his monumental contribution to American theatre?

Then 7 Guitars, August Wilson is the book for you. This insightful exploration uses the metaphor of seven iconic guitars to unlock the heart of Wilson's masterpiece, making his profound work accessible and captivating to a wide audience.

Author: [Your Name]

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Conclusion: The Enduring Legacy of August Wilson and the Sounds of His Plays

Article: 7 Guitars, August Wilson - A Deep Dive into Each Chapter

Introduction: The Power of Music and Memory in August Wilson's Plays

August Wilson's ten-play cycle is a monumental achievement, chronicling the African American experience throughout the 20th century. However, the sheer volume and thematic complexity can be daunting for newcomers. This book, *7 Guitars, August Wilson*, uses the metaphor of seven guitars – each representing a distinct musical genre reflecting the emotional core of a specific play – to provide a more accessible entry point into Wilson's profound work. Music, as Wilson understood, was inextricably linked to the cultural memory and lived experiences of his characters, providing the emotional backbone of his narratives. This introduction sets the stage, establishing the central metaphor and the overall approach to exploring Wilson's work through a musical lens.

Chapter 1: "Jitney" - The Blues Guitar

"Jitney," set in 1970s Pittsburgh, centers around a group of Black men who work driving jitneys, a form of unlicensed taxi service. The blues guitar perfectly encapsulates the play's atmosphere: melancholic, yet resilient. The characters, weathered by years of struggle and discrimination, express their frustrations, dreams, and regrets through the subtle nuances of their interactions. The blues music of this era reflects the weariness and the enduring hope inherent in the community's survival. This chapter delves into the blues' influence on the play's themes of community, resilience, and the

fading legacy of a generation, exploring how the melancholic tones and repetitive structures mirror the characters' cyclical struggles.

Chapter 2: "Fences" - The Jazz Guitar

"Fences," arguably Wilson's most famous play, explores the complexities of fatherhood, masculinity, and racial injustice in 1950s Pittsburgh. Jazz, with its improvisational spirit and emotional depth, embodies the play's internal conflicts. Troy Maxson, the protagonist, is a powerful but flawed character, whose dreams and limitations are reflected in the improvisational nature of jazz music. The chapter analyses how the turbulent harmonies and passionate solos of jazz mirror Troy's internal struggles, his longing for a better life, and the tragic consequences of his choices.

Chapter 3: "Two Trains Running" - The Gospel Guitar

"Two Trains Running," set in a 1969 diner, focuses on a community grappling with systemic racism and economic hardship. The gospel guitar, with its uplifting melodies and spiritual resonance, represents the hope and faith that sustains the characters amidst adversity. The rhythm and repetition of gospel music reflect the enduring spirit of survival and the power of collective resilience. This chapter explores the role of faith and spirituality in the characters' lives and how the gospel tradition shapes their perspectives on justice, hope, and the ongoing struggle for equality.

Chapter 4: "Joe Turner's Come and Gone" - The Ragtime Guitar

"Joe Turner's Come and Gone," set in 1911 Pittsburgh, focuses on individuals who have migrated from the rural South to the industrial North during the Great Migration. Ragtime, with its syncopated rhythms and unique blend of European and African influences, reflects the complex blend of cultures and identities that defined the time. This chapter examines the themes of displacement, identity, and the search for belonging, drawing parallels between the fragmented nature of ragtime's rhythms and the characters' fragmented sense of self as they navigate the challenges of adapting to a new life.

Chapter 5: "The Piano Lesson" - The Spirituals Guitar

"The Piano Lesson" deals with the lasting legacy of slavery and its impact on a Black family in 1930s Pittsburgh. The spirituals guitar, deeply rooted in the traditions of enslaved people, mirrors the powerful history and emotional weight carried by the characters. This chapter analyzes how the haunting melodies and poignant lyrics of spirituals reflect the family's complex relationship with their past, the burden of inherited trauma, and the struggle to reconcile with their history.

Chapter 6: "King Hedley II" - The Funk Guitar

"King Hedley II," set in 1980s Pittsburgh, explores themes of violence, redemption, and the corrosive effects of poverty and systemic racism. The funk guitar, with its rhythmic intensity and rebellious spirit, embodies the play's raw energy and frustration. This chapter explores how funk's often confrontational style aligns with the harsh realities faced by the characters, their struggles with anger and despair, and their search for a path towards self-improvement.

Chapter 7: "Gem of the Ocean" - The Soul Guitar

"Gem of the Ocean," set in 1904 Pittsburgh, delves into the search for ancestral healing and the power of the past. The soul guitar, with its emotional depth and capacity for both sorrow and hope, is ideal for illustrating the play's themes. This chapter examines the mystical elements of the play and how the search for identity and healing resonates with the rich emotional range of soul music.

Conclusion: The Enduring Legacy of August Wilson and the Sounds of His Plays

This concluding chapter revisits the seven guitars and their corresponding plays, tying together the overarching themes and highlighting the enduring power of Wilson's work. It emphasizes how Wilson's exploration of music's influence helps us understand the cultural landscape and the struggles of the Black community throughout the 20th century. The conclusion posits that by understanding the music inherent in his plays, we gain a deeper appreciation for the profound beauty and enduring relevance of August Wilson's legacy.

FAQs:

1. What makes this book different from other books about August Wilson?
This book uses a unique, metaphorical approach – seven guitars representing different musical genres – to explore the ten-play cycle, making Wilson's work more accessible and engaging.
1. Is this book only for academics or theatre enthusiasts? No, it's written for a broad audience interested in American history, culture, and compelling storytelling.

1. What is the level of detail provided about each play? Each chapter provides a thorough yet accessible analysis of the selected play, focusing on its key themes and musical connections.
1. Does the book include excerpts from the plays themselves? Yes, selectively chosen excerpts are woven into the narrative to illustrate key points.
1. What kind of background knowledge is required to read this book? No prior knowledge of August Wilson or his plays is required.
1. Is the book suitable for casual readers? Absolutely! The writing style is engaging and accessible, making it perfect for casual readers interested in learning about August Wilson.
1. How does the book use the metaphor of the guitars? Each guitar represents a specific musical genre reflecting the themes and atmosphere of a particular play.
1. What is the ultimate goal of this book? To make August Wilson's work more accessible and to deepen readers' understanding and appreciation of his profound contribution to American theatre.
1. Where can I buy this book? [Specify where the ebook will be sold: Amazon Kindle, etc.]

Related Articles:

1. The Blues in August Wilson: A Deep Dive into "Jitney": Examines the use of blues themes and imagery in "Jitney" and its connection to the

characters' lives.

1. Jazz and Identity: Exploring Masculinity in August Wilson's "Fences": Explores the role of jazz music as a metaphor for the internal conflicts and identity struggles in "Fences".
1. Gospel and Resilience: Faith and Community in "Two Trains Running": Focuses on the role of gospel music in providing hope and sustaining the community in "Two Trains Running".
1. Ragtime and the Great Migration: Exploring Displacement and Identity in "Joe Turner's Come and Gone": Analyzes how ragtime music reflects the displacement and cultural blending of the Great Migration in "Joe Turner's Come and Gone".
1. Spirituals and Legacy: The Burden of the Past in "The Piano Lesson": Examines the powerful use of spirituals to depict the lasting effects of slavery in "The Piano Lesson".
1. Funk and Rebellion: Exploring Violence and Urban Decay in "King Hedley II": Analyzes the use of funk music to convey the raw energy and frustration of the characters in "King Hedley II".
1. Soul and Ancestral Healing: Exploring Mysticism and Identity in "Gem of the Ocean": Explores the mystical elements of "Gem of the Ocean" and the role of soul music in representing the search for identity and healing.
1. August Wilson's Use of Music as a Dramatic Device: A broader look at how music functions as a dramatic element in all ten plays of the cycle.

1. Comparing and Contrasting the Musical Themes Across August Wilson's Ten Plays: A comparative analysis of the various musical influences across Wilson's complete ten-play cycle.

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