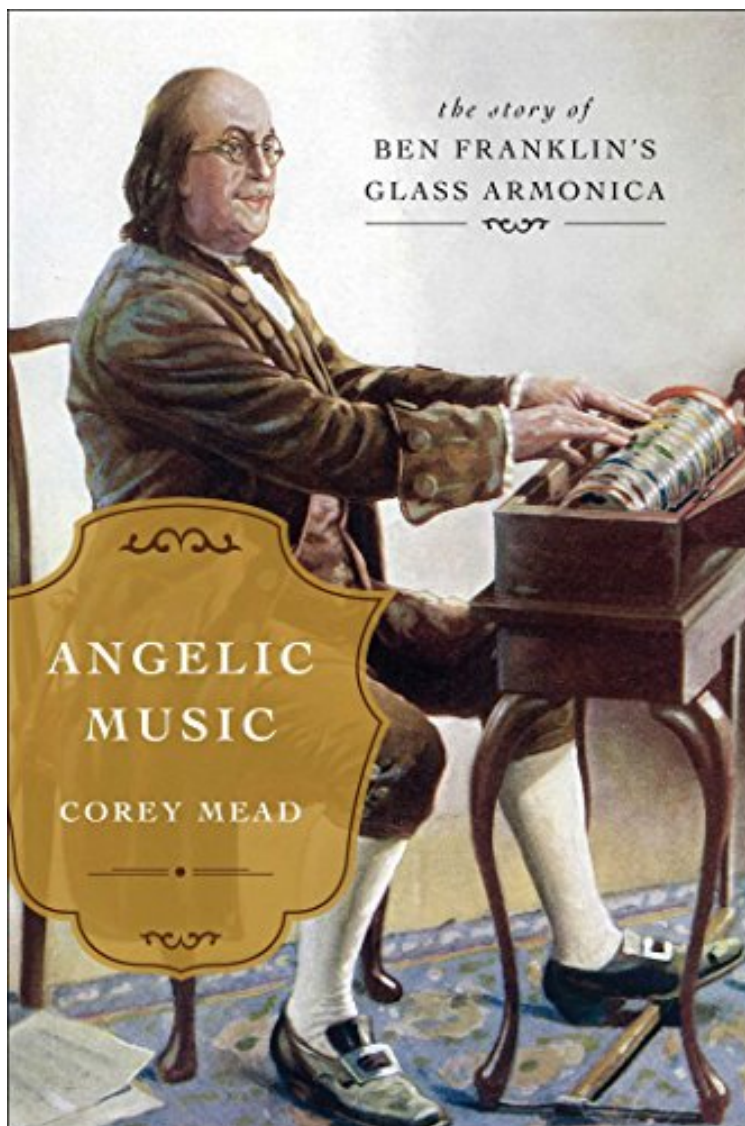


(Download pdf) Angelic Music: The Story of Benjamin Franklin's Glass Armonica

## Angelic Music: The Story of Benjamin Franklin's Glass Armonica

Corey Mead

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**Corey Mead : Angelic Music: The Story of Benjamin Franklin's Glass Armonica** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Angelic Music: The Story of Benjamin Franklin's 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. Vituosos 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 ensambles to large symphonic orchestras in halls the Armonica fell out of favor, relegated to being a museum curiosoiy. But in the last twenty years it has found a revival, electronically enchanced, 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 comissioning an opera from Mozart, the decline and revival of the instrument. When German glassblower Gerhard Finkenbeiner saw a Glass Armonica in a musem 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 instruemtent 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.

ldquo;With spirited charm, Mead weaves history, music, science, and medicine into the story...Fascinating, insightful, and, best of all, great fun.rdqquo; mdash;The Washington Post A jewel of musical historymdash;the story of Ben Franklin's favorite invention, the glass armonicamdash;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 inventionmdash;the one he said gave him the ldquo;greatest personal satisfactionrdquo;mdash;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 onersquo;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.