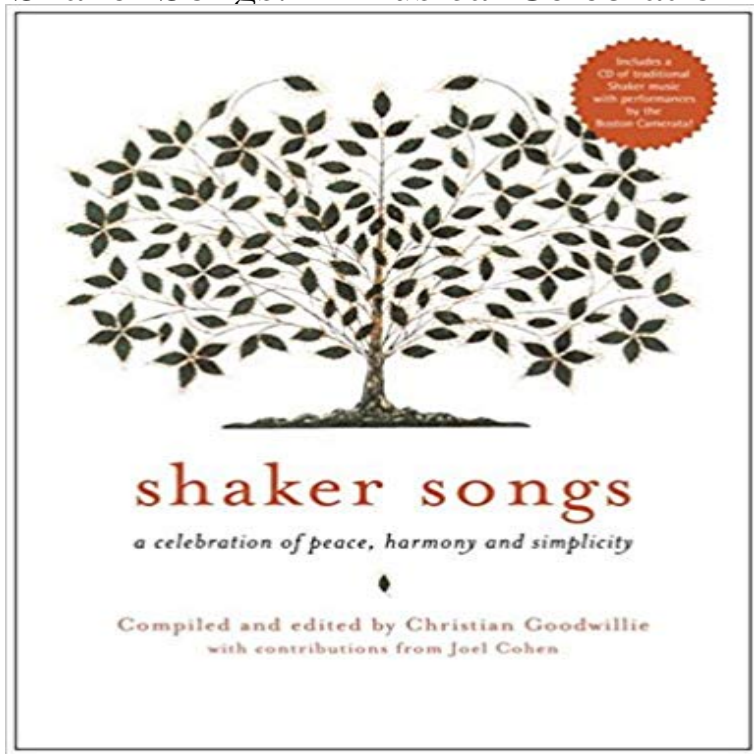


Shaker Songs: A Musical Celebration of Peace, Harmony and Simplicity



'Tis the gift to be simple, and the United Society of Believers, or Shakers, bestow this gift upon us in *Shaker Songs*, a compendium of radiant, heart-rousing hymns that comes with a beautiful full-length CD. Over the last 200 years, Shaker congregations have been wellsprings of remarkable creativity in many branches of human endeavor, including religion, architecture, agriculture, industry, art, social welfare, education, and, of course, music. Music has long played a central role in Shaker worship--from the early songs that expressed pure, wordless feeling, to the later hymns and anthems, which reflected some of the musical modes of the day. The Shaker sect was founded in 1774 by Ann Lee, a blacksmith's daughter who emigrated to America from England with a handful of followers. This communal, devout group celebrated their love of God in the stirring dance worship that gave the Shakers their popular name. At their peak in the mid-nineteenth century, the Shakers were the largest and most successful religious collective in existence. Some communities lasted for more than 150 years, others for only a few, and one, at Sabbathday Lake, Maine, still exists today. Because of the Shakers' longstanding commitment to the documentation of their songs, their musical tradition is very much alive and well. The Shakers at Sabbathday Lake--who annotated some of the music in this book and can be heard on the accompanying CD--continue to maintain this musical heritage as an important component of their everyday lives. *Shaker Songs* contains the distillation of more than two centuries of Shaker music and art--their remarkable power and quiet beauty is a testament to the Shaker vision of simplicity, proportion, and harmony.

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