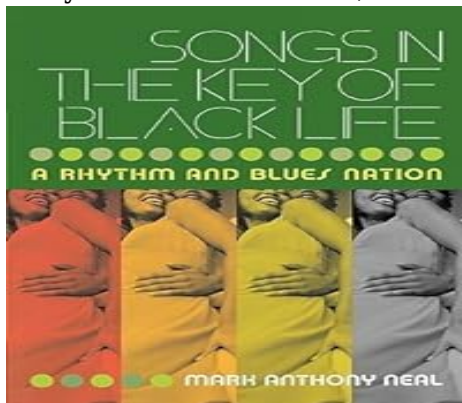


Songs in the Key of Black Life By Mark Anthony Neal Works both as a straight-up guide to the R&B artists of the early 2000s (contextualized with an encyclopedic knowledge of American pop music history) and as a political and economic commentary on the music business and debates about race and gender in the post-9/11 U. He argues that R&B-often dismissed as just a bunch of love songs yet the second most popular genre in terms of sales-can tell us much about the dynamic joys apprehensions tensions and contradictions of contemporary black life if we listen closely. In the first section of the book Rhythm he uses the music of Meshell N'degeocello Patti Labelle Jill Scott Alicia Keys and others as guideposts to the major concerns of contemporary black life-issues such as gender feminist politics political activism black masculinity celebrity and the fluidity of racial and sexual identity. The second part of the book Blues uses the improvisational rhythms of black music as a metaphor to examine currents in black life including the public dispute between Cornel West and Harvard President Lawrence Summers and the firing of BET's talk-show host Tavis Smiley:

This book presented some interesting concepts but there were way too many parenthetical asides and casual shout-outs for it to be either taken seriously or read easily, 9780415965712 Some of the best music criticism you can read about contemporary R&B: Hyper-conscious of contemporary scholarship but written in a pop style: I'd use many chapters for teaching undergraduates or grad students. Includes nuanced discussions of gender and sexuality from Marvin Gaye to Macy Gray and many lesser known artists, 9780415965712



In *Songs in the Key of Black Life* acclaimed cultural critic Mark Anthony Neal turns his attention to Rhythm and Blues. With a voice as heartfelt and compelling as the best music Neal guides us through the work of classic and contemporary artists ranging from Marvin Gaye to Macy Gray. *Songs in the Key of Black Life* is a remarkable contribution to the study of black popular music and valuable reading for anyone interested in how race is lived in America. S. *Songs in the Key of Black Life*.