



# Appalachian Dulcimer Traditions (American Folk Music and Musicians Series)

*Ralph Lee Smith*

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The Appalachian dulcimer is one of America's major contributions to world music and folk art. Homemade and handmade, played by people with no formal knowledge of music, this beautiful instrument entered the post-World-War-II Folk Revival with virtually no written record. *Appalachian Dulcimer Traditions* tells the fascinating story of the effort to recover the instrument's lost history through fieldwork in the Southern mountains, finding of old instruments, and listening to the tales of old folks.

After reviewing the instrument's distinctive musical features, Ralph Lee Smith presents the dulcimer's story chronologically, tracing its roots in a Renaissance German instrument, the *scheitholt*; describing the early history of the *scheitholt* and the dulcimer in America; and outlining the development of distinctive dulcimer styles in Virginia, West Virginia, North Carolina, and Kentucky. The story continues into the 20th Century, through the final group of tradition-based Appalachian makers whose work flowed into the national scene of the Folk Revival.

This fully revised edition provides expanded information about the history of the *scheitholt* and the dulcimer before the Civil War and discusses traditions and types that are still being discovered and documented. Smith also adds his personal adventures in searching for the dulcimer's history. A new final chapter describes types and styles that do not fit conveniently into the mainstream development of the instrument. The book concludes with several appendixes, including measurements of representative dulcimers and listings of dulcimer recordings in the Archive of Folk Culture of the Library of Congress.

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