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**Michael Dregni**

**Django: The Life and Music of a Gypsy Legend**



Title: Django: The Life and Music of a Gypsy Legend

Author: Michael Dregni

Format: Paperback

Language: English

Pages: 326

Publisher: , 0

ISBN: 0195304489

Format: PDF / Kindle / ePub

Size: 6.5 MB

Download: allowed

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## Description

Django Reinhardt was arguably the greatest guitarist who ever lived, an important influence on Les Paul, Charlie Christian, B.B. King, Jerry Garcia, Chet Atkins, and many others. Yet there is no major biography of Reinhardt.

Now, in *Django*, Michael Dregni offers a definitive portrait of this great guitarist. Handsome, charismatic, childlike, and unpredictable, Reinhardt was a character out of a picaresque novel. Born in a gypsy caravan at a crossroads in Belgium, he was almost killed in a freak fire that burned half of his body and left his left hand twisted into a claw. But with this maimed left hand flying over the frets and his right hand plucking at dizzying speed, Django became Europe's most famous jazz musician, commanding exorbitant fees--and spending the money as fast as he made it. Dregni not only chronicles this remarkably colorful life--including a fascinating account of gypsy culture--but he also sheds much light on Django's musicianship. He examines his long musical partnership with violinist Stephane Grappelli--the one suave and smooth, the other sharper and more dissonant--and he traces the evolution of their novel string jazz ensemble, Quintette du Hot Club de France. Indeed, the author spotlights Django's amazing musical diversity, describing his swing-styled Nouveau Quintette, his big band Django's Music, and his later bebop ensemble, as well as his many compositions, including symphonic pieces influenced by Ravel and Debussy and his unfinished organ mass inspired by Bach. And along the way, the author offers vivid snapshots of the jazz scene in Paris--colorful portraits of Josephine Baker, Bricktop, Louis Armstrong, Coleman Hawkins, and countless others--and of Django's vagabond wanderings around France, Europe, and the United States, where he toured with Duke Ellington.

Capturing the extraordinary life and times of one of the great musicians of the twentieth century, *Django* is a must-read portrait of a true original."

## Insightful reviews

Jay Allan Storey: A fascinating window not only into the life of a musical genius, but into the world of early twentieth century Paris, the beginning of the second world war, and the gypsy culture.

UncleMark: Great if you're into Gypsy swing.....Can be difficult for newbies into jazz and Manouchejazz.....

Kevin: Django Reinhardt is a compelling figure. How could a gypsy who with a maimed left hand became one of the most important guitarists ever not be? But because many of his early biographical details are murky at best -- the author admittedly takes best guesses and expounds on them -- and Django himself was a quiet sort, even after reading this book he remains a mute character. (The author's somewhat intellectually lazy caricature of him as "child-like" doesn't help.) This is, however, a good accompaniment to listening to the recordings of Django himself. Ultimately, it's through those recordings that Django comes fully alive and "talks."

David: *Django, The lifestyles and track of a Gypsy Legend*, through Michael Dregni (Oxford

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college Press 1994)(780.92), is an impeccably researched e-book into the lifetime of self-taught guitarist Django Reinhardt, who's extensively acclaimed as the best jazz guitarists of all time. Born in 1919 in a gypsy caravan in Belgium, he was once there in Paris at the start of jazz, and performed with the various greats together with Louis Armstrong. most sensible identified for his collaboration and partnership with jazz violinist Stephane Grapelli, this can be a interesting read. My rating: 7/10, entire 1.18.11.

Derek: Dregni did loads of nice examine for this bk yet his prose is bland. stable try. The definitive bio of this great is but to be written.

Kurt: This ebook used to be a true page-turner. a lot of Django's lifestyles reads like an outlandish screenplay.

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