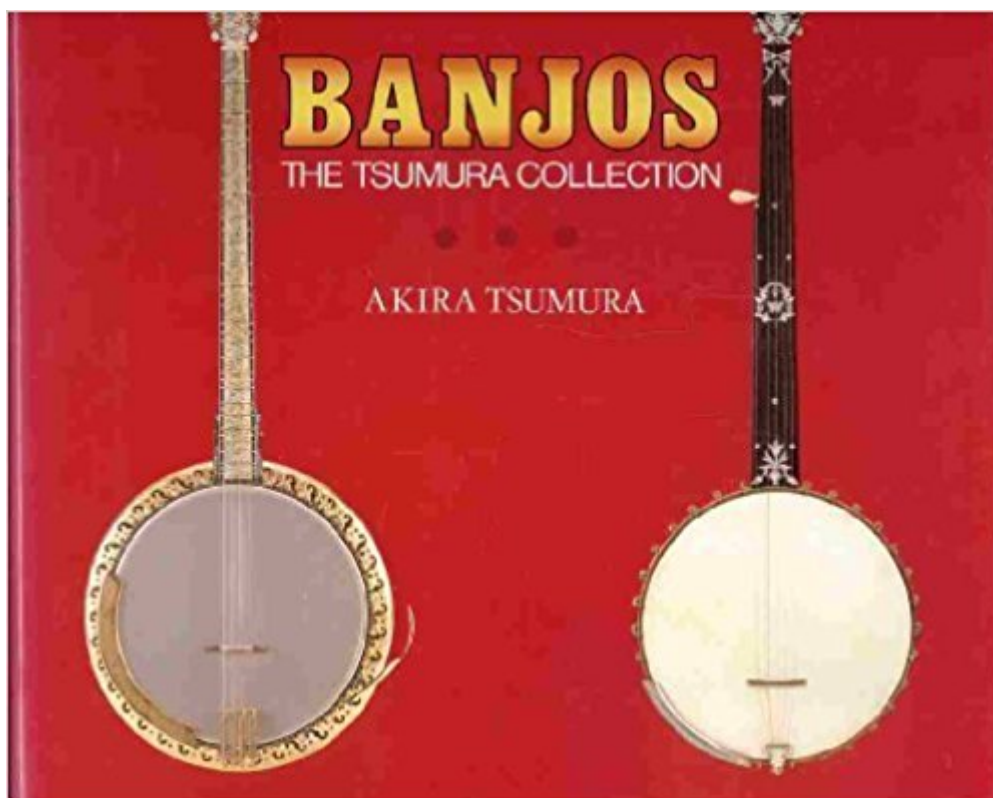


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Banjos: The Tsumura Collection



Synopsis

Book by Tsumura, Akira

Book Information

Hardcover: 132 pages

Publisher: Kodansha Amer Inc; 1st edition (April 1984)

Language: English

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Customer Reviews

Book by Tsumura, Akira

"Banjos: The Tsumura Collection" was Akira Tsumura's first banjo collection book, published in 1984. Tsumura covers a great deal of his early collection (one that would grow much more). Often this book, at least at my writing this review in 2014, will go for \$150-\$400. Often referred to as "the red book" (for obvious reasons) by the banjo-collecting world, the book does a great job at identifying and describing some highly sought banjos. "Banjos: The Tsumura Collection" to my knowledge, comes in one edition, and at least two printings. I had one first edition, second printing, that was just the hardcover red book (with the dust jacket in most photos). I found out later that there is also a copy with the red book (same cover image) in a red slipcover box and a Japanese supplemental book. The copy I have of this book is a first edition, first printing. I'm not aware if all first edition, first printings have the red box and Japanese supplemental book, or if this is a special edition. I was told the edition with the box and Japanese supplemental book was created by Akira Tsumura for his Japanese colleagues, but I've never been able to confirm that. The red book should not be confused with the huge "One Thousand and One Banjos: The Tsumura Collection" which typically commands \$1,500 or more and was published in 1993. Only 2,500 copies of "One Thousand and One Banjos" were produced. Also, the red book should not be confused with the even more rare "Banjo: The Tsumura Collection (1920-1940)", self-published in 1993 and

sometimes referred to as "the brown book." That book, of which only 250 were produced, was created to complement to the larger "One Thousand and One Banjos" book. Of the three the red book is the most available, but also has earlier elements of the now dispersed, banjo collection. While the red book's larger relatives are truly impressive, that does not take away from the amazing instruments presented in the red book.

This famous "catalog" of the early banjo collection of Akira Tsumura is also familiarly known as the "Red Book". Published in 1984 and originally sold for \$28, it is now long out of print and frequently brings more than \$200 at online auction and private sales. The first half of this 168-page book is a highly illustrated history of 4-string resonated banjos entitled "Banjos of the Jazz Age". It devotes sections to each important brand name, with historical charts showing the introduction and characteristics of the various available models. Next follow a strong section on ukuleles and banjo ukuleles, historical catalog covers from banjo manufacturers, and a short section on classical 5-string banjos, primarily S.S. Stewart, Tsumura's favorite. The following section on the Jim Bollman banjo collection, included because of the importance of its banjos not available in the Tsumura collection, is a rare and enticing glimpse into the phenomenal collection by this long-time zealous collector. Thereafter follows brief sections on early banjo related music covers, banjo recordings and postcards. Finally there are strong sections on Minstrel Era banjos, curios, and a very important section on banjo related patents. In all, it is one of the very few compendiums of useful and necessary photographic information for the banjo enthusiast, collector and player. It is an aid to identifying and placing specific instruments in their historical perspective. It is a superb "dream" book for those of us consumed by love of the instrument and dreaming about our next favorite possession. The only other books of comparable importance in providing a visual understanding of the banjo are Tsumura's gigantic tome "1001 Banjos, the Tsumura Collection" (out of print and soon unavailable, at \$500) and Webb's wonderful "Ring the Banjar", the highly illustrated and informative catalog of the 1984 MIT Museum exhibition. I highly recommend buying all 3 books, but if you can only choose 2, get Webb and then Tsumura's Red Book.

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