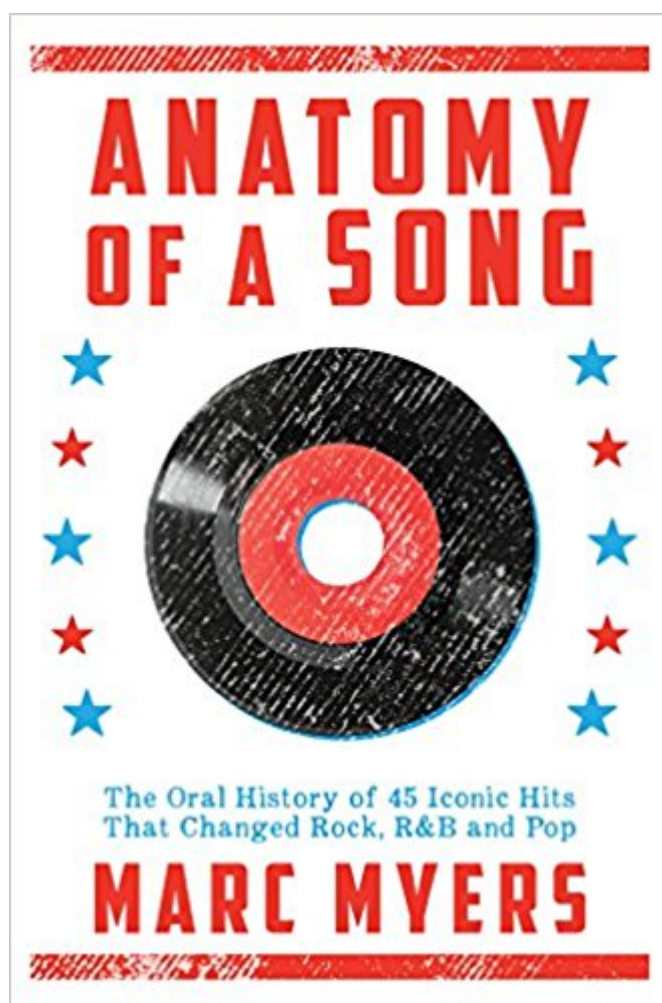


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Anatomy Of A Song: The Oral History Of 45 Iconic Hits That Changed Rock, R&B And Pop



Synopsis

Every great song has a fascinating backstory. In *Anatomy of a Song*, based on the ongoing Wall Street Journal column, writer and music historian Marc Myers brings to life five decades of music through oral histories of forty-five transformative songs woven from interviews with the artists who created them. Bringing readers inside the making of a hit, *Anatomy of a Song* includes the Isley Brothers' memorable song "Shout," Led Zeppelin's "Whole Lotta Love," Janis Joplin's "Mercedes Benz," and R.E.M.'s "Losing My Religion." After receiving his discharge from the army in 1968, John Fogerty does a handstand and reworks Beethoven's Fifth Symphony to come up with "Proud Mary." Joni Mitchell remembers living in a cave on Crete with the "mean old daddy" who inspired her 1971 hit "Carey." Elvis Costello talks about writing "(The Angels Wanna War My) Red Shoes" in ten minutes on the train to Liverpool. And Mick Jagger, Jimmy Page, Rod Stewart, the Clash, Jimmy Cliff, Roger Waters, Stevie Wonder, Keith Richards, Cyndi Lauper, and many other leading artists reveal the emotions, inspirations, and techniques behind their influential works. *Anatomy of a Song* is a love letter to the songs that have defined generations of listeners.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Praise for *Anatomy of a Song*: An Best Book of the Month in Nonfiction A finalist for The Association for Recorded Sound Collections Awards for Excellence "In these pieces . . . songwriters and performers speak in their own voices, edited from interviews with Myers, about one of their signature songs. Because of Myers's skill as an interviewer, their pride and enthusiasm come

blasting through. Each story is a pleasure to read and will deepen your listening experience . . . Myers bears down hard on these songs and the artists rise to the standards he sets. [Anthony DeCurtis, New York Times Book Review](#) “A first-rate playlist . . . A rich history of both the music industry and the baby boomer era. [Los Angeles Times Book Review](#) 147; Marc Myers [Anatomy of a Song](#) [is] a winning look at the stories behind 45 pop, punk, folk, soul and country classics . . . A smart, gracious book. His interviews yield some fascinating details. [Washington Post](#) “Candid conversations with stars like Stevie Wonder, Keith Richards and Rod Stewart are collected in a new book called *Anatomy of a Song* . . . In the pre-digital age of analog recording, Myers discovered some remarkable examples of mechanical ingenuity. Two of my favorites: Kinks guitarist Dave Davies had just learned how to shave when he bought a new amp and decided to use a razor blade to slash the amp’s speaker cone. And when the Doors were told to shorten the seven-minute version of *Light My Fire* for a single that would get more radio play, their producer Paul Rothchild wrapped Scotch tape around the spindle holding the pickup reel, so the tape would turn a fraction faster. . . . Myers is particularly good on the competition within bands and between them to produce the best possible songs . . . [A] splendid volume. [Charles Kaiser, Guardian \(UK\)](#) “A music lover’s dream book. [Cleveland Plain Dealer](#) “*Anatomy of a Song* . . . reads like a dream karaoke playlist. Not a dud in sight. [Huffington Post](#) “The most revealing and entertaining compilation of short stories on popular music we have seen this decade. [Goldmine](#) “*Anatomy Of A Song* . . . gets the lowdown on about forty years of hits straight from the artists’ mouths . . . It’s always cool to hear how the musical sausage gets made, especially when it’s made by geniuses in the field. But Myers also does an outstanding job of unearthing the moments of humor and heartbreak that accompanied the creation of these songs. [American Songwriter](#) “Who would’ve ever guessed the inspiration behind Gladys Knight’s soul-stirring *Midnight Train to Georgia* was ’70s pinup queen Farrah Fawcett? That’s just one of the fascinating song histories revealed in the new book *Anatomy of a Song*. [New York Post](#) “Myers . . . uncovers the fascinating backstories behind many legendary songs that changed the trajectory of music . . . Culling together anecdotal revelations about happy accidents, deliberately vague lyrical choices and unexpected lapses of confidence, the book manages to both demystify and humanize so many of its iconic subjects. . . . Filled with surprises for music fans and aspiring songwriters alike. [BMI](#)

Music“Who doesn't like to listen to musicians tell their stories about the genesis of a song? Or to hear them laugh at the deep meaning that listeners often invest in it when for them it was, well, just a song about a breakup? Myers's book has something for everyone.

•No Depression

“The short, sharp chapters breeze by like a particularly well-curated jukebox . . . Fast, fun and informative.

•Houston Press

“The critical ability of Marc Myers shows in his selection of topics and his persistence in hunting down the right people to talk about their songs. But his talent as a writer shows in his willingness to get out of the way and let them talk about their songs . . . Myers pushes his subjects to recollect what had really happened that day in the studio, that moment when the song first came to mind, that instant when the radio began to play it.

•Washington Free Beacon

“Countless fun facts dot Anatomy of a Song.

•Billboard

“Myers's book succeeds as a collection because he reveals the paradox of popular music: the magical change that transpires once the personal becomes public . . . Perhaps the greatest gift of Anatomy of a Song is its range . . . This is a book that encourages you to go back into your record collection, to the hits you think you remember well.

•Las Vegas Weekly

“Myers' . . . work is archival. It is important. It is illuminating.

•Under the Radar

A detailed look at 45 iconic popular songs . . . This will entice general readers and music lovers alike. In his introduction, Myers calls the book an “oral history jukebox,” and popular-music fans everywhere will want to be ready with a pocketful of dimes.

•Booklist

“A compelling compendium of behind-the-scenes shop talk that will excite even the most casual music geek.

•Bookreporter

A cultural history of the elusive hit single, focused on artists' recollections and studio alchemy . . . The book's strength lies in thoughtful, wry reflections from artists including Elvis Costello, Jimmy Cliff, Stevie Wonder, Booker T. Jones, Dr. John, and Debbie Harry. An entertaining record of the soundtrack of the baby boomer era.

•Kirkus Reviews

Music fans will enjoy the behind-the-songs stories.

•Publishers Weekly

Marc Myers is a regular contributor to The Wall Street Journal, where he writes about rock, soul, and jazz, as well as the arts. He is the author of the critically acclaimed book *Why Jazz Happened*, and posts daily at JazzWax.com, two-time winner of the Jazz Journalists Association's award for Blog of the Year."

I thought the book was a good read. Not sure if those 45 Songs would have been my choice, although several would have been on my list too. I find it always interesting to hear the songwriters' perspective as to how they came up with their lyrics & what other musicians influenced their work as musicians. I do recommend the book to those that love the story behind the music.

Surprisingly good collection of stories about how the songs were actually made. The basic ideas, the creative changes that happened in the studio, the false starts, changes in direction and little additions that make up the creative process. All told by musicians and producers who actually made the records. This book is not focused on musicians or celebrity. And it's not a book of music criticism. It's an inside look at the creative process and how the songs were actually made. If you are interested in how the magic happens, this book is highly recommended.

I had a lot of fun reading this book. The individual chapters were short enough to make it an easy read while, at the same time, providing enough information to make the stories interesting. If you have any interest in the behind-the-scenes efforts that went into making these great songs you will probably enjoy this book. It was interesting to see what inspired these songs but it was also an education for me to read about the technical side of the recordings -- layering, laying down tracks, overdubbing, chord changes, etc.

Wonderful background information for aspiring songwriters. Great pictures, great oral interviews. A very well-written book.

I bought it for a friend who has a small recording studio. He made a point of telling me how much he has enjoyed reading it. Lots of "so that's how they did such and such" details.

Minimally impactful bands...minimally deep analysis....minimally interesting information...nothin, how they got together, et

Witty and insightful - and a great read. I actually think this would be interesting for a non-songwriter to read, but I really think it should be required reading for anyone who has written songs for a living or would like to write songs professionally.

A fun read to learn about the creative inspiration that resulted in memorable songs.

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