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The Songs Of John Lennon: The Beatle Years



Synopsis

(Berklee Press). An essential guide for all songwriters and Beatles fans, this book explores John Lennon's songwriting genius with a guided tour through 25 of his Beatles-era hits. Author John Stevens explains Lennon's intuitive talent from a technical point of view, through the lens of songwriting's three basic elements: melody, harmony and lyric. He shows how Lennon fashioned songs that were at once politically and socially relevant during the '60s, yet remain ageless and timeless today. Features in-depth musical analysis of: A Hard Day's Night * Ticket to Ride * Norwegian Wood * Strawberry Fields Forever * Come Together * and more. John Stevens is a songwriting professor at Berklee College of Music. For more than 20 years, he has taught "The Music of John Lennon," one of the most popular courses in the Berklee curriculum. "You've got the Beatles' records and the John Lennon records; now with this book, you can have the Owner's Manual. This will tell you how the songs are built and how they work. Good stuff." Marshall Crenshaw, Singer/Songwriter

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Customer Reviews

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had this book years ago and needed to replace it.

Book binding faulty. Entire sections of book fell out. It was a gift so no time to reorder for Christmas. It really doesn't even deserve 1 star.

Songwriting, much like painting, sculpting and dancing, is an art form. The ability to construct a series of repetitive phrases, set against a (typically) diatonic tune, one which hopefully sticks in your brain, long enough to force you to buy a CD of something you heard only once is not only art - it's simply magic...And in John Stevens' "The Songs of John Lennon", the magician's secrets are revealed...Throughout the course of this book, we're not only given some very interesting and detailed history about the song(s) in question (as well as recording and release information) but all this, together with comprehensive and brilliantly detailed descriptions relating to Lennon's song Structure, Phrasing and 'Prosody' (ie, versification/metrical structure).Now, if these terms are a bit scary to you, fear not -- as Stevens carefully outlines the basic terminology and is consistent with his usage throughout. Whether you're in the garage band, a professional songwriter, or a student looking for some answers about how great pop songs are constructed, this book serves not only as a reference guide, but almost as a 'Songwriting Cookbook', full of great, original recipes...and as Stevens reveals, just like in cooking, the essence of a great song still requires you to 'salt to taste'. This was often Lennon's game, as a few simple twists here and there (either melodically or lyrically) often changed the entire feel of a particular song, delivering the critical element to make it a hit.Quite simply, this book is unlike any other. And for the musicians, songwriters, and even music lovers out there who've ever wondered, "How did he do it?", you'd be hard-pressed to find another piece of prose that is more poetic and lyrical than this.So, if you can't make it to Boston to take Stevens' Lennon class (he's a professor @ Berklee College of Music), don't fret...(no pun intended). "The Songs of John Lennon" just might be the most valuable 4-year college course you've ever

taken - and you don't even have to live in the dorm! All you need is love? Indeed...and *this* book.

First of all, I've really enjoyed this book so far. My reasons for purchasing it were to gain a better understanding of songwriting as a craft. There are lots of books out there (some of which I also own!) that go into the construction of a song, but usually only provide a few subpar examples of the technique in real life practice. This book is filled with excellent songs to use as examples for different ways to craft a song. I haven't found understanding this book terribly difficult, but there are a couple of techniques which could have used a bit more of an explanation. Particularly melodic/lyrical phrasing, as to me it appears there are several ways to break a phrase up. It's not very clear what guidelines the author uses regarding that. Even with some confusion, I've still found it very informative. I really wish there were more books just like it. I'd love to see this done with more modern bands as well.

An interesting analysis of 20+ Beatles era John Lennon songs. The highest praise I can offer the book is that I did honestly gain a greater understanding of the manner in which Lennon composed his songs. I did have trouble understanding some of the musical jargon Stevens used, though to his credit he explains most of the terminology he employs in the book in the first chapter. Most irritating to me were a couple of misquotes of Lennon's lyrics, numerous typos, and surprisingly (since this was written by a college professor) a number of usage errors. Worth buying if you're interested in this sort of thing. However, Alan W. Pollack's analysis of the ENTIRE official Beatles' canon is a far more informative, better written, and comprehensive look at Lennon's oeuvre.

As a songwriter and longtime fan of John Lennon, this is the best book I have found on his songs. I refer to it over and over. When I travel, it is one of the few books that finds its way into my backpack. If you are a songwriter, and/or a fan of John Lennon, you will treasure this book. Sincerely, Lynette Yetter, author of the novel, *Lucy Plays Panpipes for Peace*

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