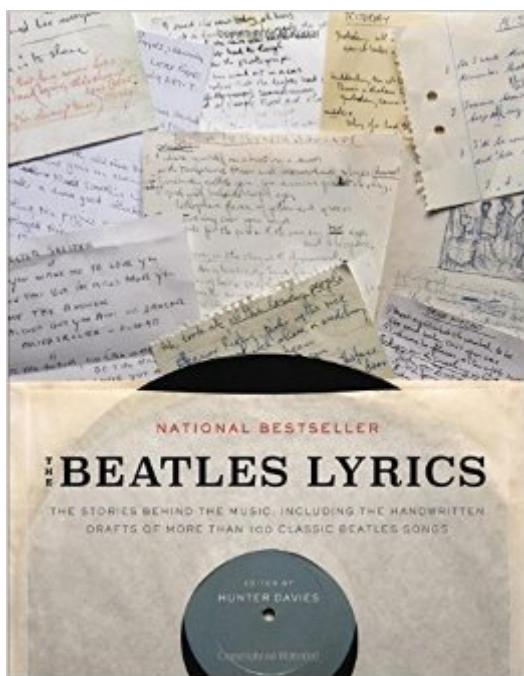


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The Beatles Lyrics: The Stories Behind The Music, Including The Handwritten Drafts Of More Than 100 Classic Beatles Songs



Synopsis

The definitive book of Beatles songs, shown as first written by their own hands and put into authoritative context, for the 50th anniversary of the Beatles coming to America. For the Beatles, writing songs was a process that could happen anytime -- songs we all know by heart often began as a scribble on the back of an envelope or on hotel stationery. These original documents have ended up scattered across the world at museums and universities and with collectors and friends. Many have never been published before. More than 100 songs and lyrics are reproduced in THE BEATLES LYRICS, providing Hunter Davies a unique platform to tell the story of the music. The intimacy of these reproductions -- there are sections crossed out and rewritten, and words tossed into the final recordings that were never written down -- ensures that THE BEATLES LYRICS will be a treasure for musicians, scholars, and fans everywhere.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I read the book on Beatles' lyrics today, oh boy..And I like it..The layout and size of this book is similar to Hunter Davies' book 'The John Lennon Letters', this means little less than 400 pages, in a mid-size hardcover book with reader friendly but old fashioned typography. The layout similarity is especially noticeable in the way the content of the manuscript photographs is repeated in the text body, as in the 'Lennon Letters' book this works very well here. The images provide a glimpse of a Beatles' activity in the past, writing on a piece of paper; the words reproduced in the text-body are presented for contemplation and analysis and for you to hear the words thru voices and music sounding in the hallways of your mind..Davies presents approximately 120 reproductions of song

transcripts. Sometimes these were scraps of paper on the studio-floor from 1966/7 Hunter Davies took with him, when he had the privileged position of closeness to the boys while working on his authorized biography, others are nuggets from antiquarian shops, published in auctions catalogues or from unnamed friends. Hunter even had the opportunity to ask the boys for handwritten lyrics of songs he said he wanted to write about in the biography. Manuscripts of lyrics are even re-handwritten after the actual process of composition and recording was finished. Davies presents pictures of these little manuscripts and we are lucky, he adds pictures of e.g. Beatles' summer activities for 1966, the 'Being for the benefit of Mr. Kite'-poster, contracts, concert programs, etc.. Some of these manuscripts reveal the development of the lyrics, occasionally this info is unique and a first.

Yes, I know, another book on The Beatles' songs/lyrics. But this one is a bit different. The author, Hunter Davies, the only person to write an authorized biography, and knew the Beatles personally, has collected many of the still existing scraps, envelopes, napkins, and other pieces of paper with lyrics written (and sometimes scribbled quickly) for many of the band's songs. Along with that he also includes his own observations and memories of the period. Davies' last book was a collection of John Lennon's letters that revealed a different side of Lennon/The Beatles, and this new book does a bit of the same kind of thing from a different vantage point. Many (most) of the hand written lyrics included (100+) have been gathered from many sources. This is the first time that these original pieces have been tracked down and collected. Is this a book for someone with only a passing interest in The Beatles and/or reading/seeing the lyrics in the original forms? No. This book is for a deep fan of The Beatles, someone who liked the Lennon letters collection for instance. Davies gives these lyrics a foundation from his personal knowledge of the group--what they were doing at the time, what was going on around them, their thought process, and in some cases, how the original lyrics changed at recording time. The chapters are laid out with titles like "Love Me Do", "With The Beatles", "A Hard Day's Night", "Beatles For Sale", "Help!", "Rubber Soul", "Revolver", "Strawberry Fields", and so on. Included are many photos from the various periods in the band's life, posters, ads, and of course reproductions of the lyrics themselves in their original written form.

Overall I like this book. It's got photographs of song manuscripts I've never seen before plus Davies gives us some inside info on how many of the Beatles songs were composed. What I don't like about the book is that it's filled with typos (even when Davies is criticizing spelling errors among Beatles' lyrics), incorrect and conflicting information, and some really bad critiques of songs. Davies is on

solid ground when he's giving us info learned directly from the Beatles as to how they wrote their lyrics; it's quite something else when he surmises how they wrote their lyrics or what they meant because he's making this judgments from clearly limited personal experience. For someone who cites an extensive bibliography of source material he seems to have read very little of it. There are songs which were universally praised by other critics and by myself which he dismisses with a pretentious sniff. There are some songs which he clearly never understood and still doesn't. I find much of the writing in this book very lazy, about as lazy as my review because I'm not really going back to cite specific examples. One glaring error that should have been caught by the editor: in an early chapter Davies writes that John Lennon was 15 years old when his mother, Julia, was hit by a car and killed. In a later chapter he writes that Lennon was 17. Which is it? He also gets some of the lyrics which have been printed in the book wrong, like he didn't even read the lyrics transcripts before making his comment. I also think after all these years he still knows nothing about Americans.

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