



Reading the Beatles: Cultural Studies, Literary Criticism, And the Fab Four

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Addresses the band's resounding impact on how we think about gender, popular culture, and the formal and poetic qualities of music.

Despite the enormous amount of writing devoted to the Beatles during the last few decades, the band's abiding intellectual and cultural significance has received scant attention. Using various modes of literary, musicological, and cultural criticism, the essays in *Reading the Beatles* firmly establish the Beatles as a locus of serious academic and cultural study. Exploring the group's resounding impact on how we think about gender, popular culture, and the formal and poetic qualities of music, the contributors trace not only the literary and musicological qualities of selected Beatles songs but also the development of the Beatles' artistry in their films and the ways in which the band has functioned as a cultural, historical, and economic product. In a poignant afterword, Jane Tompkins offers an autobiographical account of the ways in which the Beatles afforded her with the self-actualizing means to become less alienated from popular culture, gender expectations, and even herself during the early 1960s.

"This book addresses many of the most significant aspects of the Beatles—their music and their social and cultural influence and contexts. It finds a balance between specialist knowledge (i.e., musicology) and more general interest, and it covers the full breadth of the Beatles' output. The Beatles effected a significant and irreversible epoch in popular music, and for this reason deserve a sound academic study of the many aspects of their arrival, their dominance, their challenges, and their legacy. Such a study is provided here in a diverse and inventive collection of engaging essays." — Julian Wolfreys, author of *Occasional Deconstructions*

"The variety of approaches and issues in this book provides a useful survey of the possibilities of academic approaches to popular music in general, while remaining accessible to music fans. The book is not hagiography; there is an interesting trajectory, from positive appraisals of the Beatles' practices in their heyday to more negative assessments of recent efforts to construct their legacy." — Neil Nehring, author of *Popular Music, Gender, and Postmodernism: Anger Is an Energy*

Contributors include John Covach, Todd F. Davis, James M. Decker, Walter Everett, Paul Gleed, John Kimsey, Ian Marshall, Kevin McCarron, William M. Northcutt, Russell Reising, Jeffrey Roessner, Jane Tompkins, Sheila Whiteley, and Kenneth Womack.

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