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## Reviews

**Chris Anderson. *The Long Tail*. New York: Hyperion, 2006.**

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Chris Anderson's book is aptly subtitled "Why the Future of Business is Selling Less of More," a slightly convoluted phrase that neatly sums up his book's thesis. New business models, powered by the internet, are successfully breaking the dominance of the hit-driven, superstar-oriented entertainment industry. *The Long Tail* provides compelling evidence as to the how and why this is occurring.

The book's title refers to the flattening demand curve for music, movies, books, and other forms of entertainment that are not blockbuster hits. Such "un-hits" sell far fewer units than a mega-hit, but the evidence Anderson compellingly presents explains why even selling a few copies of a title, when done over a broad enough catalog, represents a profitable business opportunity. The hit-driven system that is focused on creating the next platinum album, hit TV series, or \$200 million grossing feature film was, in fact, created by the economic principal of scarcity, Anderson argues, whereas today's internet-powered firms such as iTunes, Rhapsody and Netflix (to name a few) can offer a seemingly limitless inventory of media content that would never be dubbed "prime time" in the mainstream media that features a limited number of selections. After all, how many movies are showing in your hometown tonight, how many CD titles are in stock at Target, and how many prime time slots are there on network TV each night?

Anderson, editor of Wired Magazine, and formerly a journalist for *The Economist*, provides substantial evidence of the long tail phenomenon including sales data and analysis from Netflix, Amazon, Rhapsody, and the Billboard charts. He clearly explains how this sales data challenges the long-standing "80/20 rule," where 20% of the products generate 80% of the sales, and usually all the profits. Consider, for example, Rhapsody's model, which at the time of the book's publication delivered more than 1.5 million songs for subscriber listening via audio streaming. Surprisingly, Anderson states, virtually *every* song will sell at least once. (Rhapsody now offers more than 3.4 million songs according to an April 2007 conversation with one of its senior managers, and is adding roughly one thousand albums a week.) Compare this to the typical Wal-Mart store's music inventory, which is static at about 60,000 tracks or another scarcity-based model,

commercial radio, which offers an even smaller selection of music tracks to its listening audience.

Simply put, scarcity-based media dissemination results in a small number of hits and a far greater number of misses. Long tail models allow consumers to explore niches that would never be marketed without the power of the internet. Anderson cites the average Borders store which stocks 100,000 titles. 25% of Amazon's book sales come from titles *not* found in the list of the top 100,000 sellers. Hence, Anderson argues the market for books not even available in a book superstore is already one-third the size of the existing market! Likewise, fully 40% of Rhapsody's sales are comprised of songs not found in a typical record store. Anderson goes beyond the media world and also looks at general retailing, blog popularity, true information-based business models such as Google, and other examples that paint a broader picture of the implications for a future made possible by long tail economics.

*The Long Tail* is a useful book for two main reasons. First, it clearly explains the seismic shift underway in the distribution of media and entertainment products. This change has immediate repercussions for scholars, students, and professionals involved in the music and entertainment industry. Second, Anderson provides a handy road map for the reader in his conclusion titled, "Long Tail Rules: How to Create a Consumer Paradise." This section provides anyone interested in profiting from this paradigm shift some direction in how to participate in the new economy. "Make everything available," Anderson advises, "and help me (the consumer) find it." Ever the pragmatist, he goes on to explain the inherent challenges in doing just that, maintaining a balanced, thoughtful dialog with the reader, never succumbing to any Pollyanna-ish notions that the migration will be clean or easy.

*The Long Tail* makes for an interesting book to use in any discussion (or curriculum) considering the evolution of media dissemination. The book's premise, and the multitude of credible evidence it marshals, should prompt lively discussion among musicians, artists, and scholars who see the emergence of this economic model not only as one that will provide consumers with a greatly expanded musical universe to explore, but also as one that will lead to a shift in culture, by providing efficient and affordable access to heretofore unavailable (i.e., artistically and culturally diverse) niche products that would never have seen the light of retail daylight in a scarcity-driven media economy.

Ultimately, *The Long Tail* heralds the shift in power to the consumer, who now is able to become a tastemaker through referrals and self-published media, shining light into new worlds of knowledge, information, and art previously unavailable.

**Thomas Wolf and Nancy Keens. *And the Band Stopped Playing: The Rise and Fall of the San Jose Symphony*. Cambridge, Mass.: Wolf, Keens & Co., 2005. (Available free of charge at [www.wolfkeens.com](http://www.wolfkeens.com)). <https://doi.org/10.25101/7.13>**

*And the Band Stopped Playing* is a deceptively thin volume. Weighing in at just under one hundred pages, it thoughtfully and comprehensively analyzes the demise of the oldest symphony orchestra in the western United States, a cautionary tale that provides important lessons not only for those involved in classical music, but worthy of every entertainment industry professional's consideration.

Symphony orchestras are facing challenging times in America. The well-documented graying of their primary audience, reductions in music education in most schools, and the growing popularity of alternative entertainment mediums fueled by new technologies are all affecting the orchestra's historical place in the arts and entertainment hierarchy. Put simply, as society has changed, many orchestras continued down the same path they had always trod, mainly presenting nineteenth-century classical repertoire, often to dwindling audiences, and operating on the naive premise that things will improve. It should be noted that there are a number of regional and major orchestras which have blazed new trails, most often leading to renewed and strengthened relationships with their communities. Unfortunately, the 125-year old San Jose Symphony was not one of these.

Authors Wolf and Keens bring a sharp eye to this extended case study, each having spent a significant portion of their careers in arts leadership positions at the national and regional levels. They begin by examining the background situation faced by the orchestra and consider how changing demographics, economic trends, and shifting consumer preferences all impact an arts organization's environment. Their research explains in easy-to-understand terms how factors such as the rising costs necessitated by the

musician's required services (guaranteed paid performances for the entire orchestra), competition from 54 regional classical music ensembles presenting regular concerts, a cavernous, uninviting home venue, and somewhere between 33-55% of each concert's tickets going unsold, combined to create a gathering storm of significant proportion, which threatened the orchestra's continued existence. The thoroughness of this analysis leaves no doubt in the reader's mind that there were plenty of causes for alarm that could have been heeded by the orchestra's board and staff, not to mention leaders among the musicians, themselves.

The chapter titled "Missed Opportunities" offers a glimpse of new initiatives that might have provided hope of renewing the vitality and viability of the orchestra, but that were either ignored or mishandled by the organization's leadership. These include:

- 1) failure to celebrate the diversity of their community, where 25% of the 1.6 million people are of Hispanic origin, and another 25% are of Asian or Pacific Islander descent;
- 2) although statistics demonstrated 95% of the community believed arts education should be increased in the local schools, the orchestra had little in the way of educational partnerships with the community;
- 3) failure to capitalize or even experiment with new technologies while located in the heart of Silicon Valley; and
- 4) an ill-fated attempt to raise \$85 million over and above their operating budget to help the city finance a new concert hall.

To recast the tale in more contemporary terminology apropos the pop music milieu, failure to connect at a deep and meaningful level with one's fan base, ignoring the competition in one's own backyard, being unwilling or unable to attempt new programming, oversupply of product, and the inability to revise long-standing performance contracts to better fit market realities will likely doom any music business, whether it's not-for-profit, or for-profit. In closing, the authors provide a useful list of "lessons learned" that will provide excellent discussion points for anyone involved in presenting the arts today. It is this writer's opinion that such discussion must be an essential point of reference for professionals to consider carefully if

they wish to insure that the arts, in its myriad forms, remain a vital and relevant part of the American experience.

Keith Hatschek

**KEITH HATSCHEK** is Associate Professor and Director of the Music Management Program at the Conservatory of Music, University of the Pacific in Stockton, California. Before joining academe full time, he was a part-time instructor at San Francisco State University's Music and Recording Industry Program for seven years. He has been employed in the music industry for more than thirty years as a musician, recording engineer, producer, recording studio owner and manager, and finally as founder of a music technology marketing and public relations firm. He lectures and gives workshops around the country on music industry careers and consults with a number of music industry companies.

He is the author of *The Golden Moment: Recording Secrets of the Pros* published by Backbeat Books (2006), a compendium of more than fifty interviews with leading engineers and producers discussing the art and craft of music recording. The second edition of *How To Get a Job in the Music Industry* has just been published by Berklee Press and is used in many music programs to help guide the career development of young professionals. He contributes a monthly column to the online recording magazine, *Pro Studio Edition*, and is a member of the AES, MEIEA, NARAS, and other professional organizations.

**Russell Simmons with Chris Morrow. *Do You! 12 Laws to Access the Power in You to Achieve Happiness and Success*. New York: Gotham Books, 2007.**

<https://doi.org/10.25101/7.14>

*Do You* is not about behind-the-scenes stories and gossip from the rap game. You will not find wild anecdotes from the record business. *Do You* is not about Russell Simmons' personal struggles with drugs or his decadent life-style, although he provides examples from his life to illustrate how one can apply the twelve laws outlined in the book. *Do You* does not suggest surefire ways to get rich. Russell Simmons does not advocate one particular management style. The author believes his approach is much too instinctive. However, *Do You* does provide a blueprint for discovering and constructing personal sustainable happiness.

To achieve sustainable happiness Russell Simmons suggests twelve laws rooted in spirituality:

- 1) See your vision and stick to it;
- 2) Always do you;
- 3) Get your mind right;
- 4) Stop frontin' and start today;
- 5) Never less than your best;
- 6) Surround yourself with the right people;
- 7) There are no failures, only quitters;
- 8) Science of success: plant good seeds;
- 9) You can never get before you give;
- 10) Successful people stay open to change;
- 11) Be powerful, be heard; and lastly
- 12) Spit truth to power.

Although the twelve laws are rooted in spirituality, Simmons makes no distinction between Christian law, Muslim law, Buddhist law, the yoga sutras, or any other religious tradition because the laws do not stand alone on a personal or collective basis. They are interwoven and when applied appropriately, can lead one to more wealth, more influence, more friends, and a more meaningful career.

There are several positives to this book including sound career advice from Hip Hop's most influential man, several anecdotes that highlight and authenticate the true intent and nature of Hip Hop, the straightforward man-

ner in which Simmons delivers his message, giving the reader a sense of his credibility (not to mention a foreword by Donald Trump and a review by Nas), and lastly the impressive way Mr. Simmons connects the music industry to spirituality. Nevertheless, Mr. Simmons contradicts himself many times in the same chapter making it difficult for the reader to understand the true meaning of his message. Simmons seems to get lost in his thoughts, going off on a tangent endorsing yoga or advocating for not eating meat. The editor could have improved the book by deleting these tangents; the author's points would not have been lost.

While I do not see *Do You* replacing any textbooks currently used in music business courses, I do think it could serve as supplementary reading. Despite the distracting tangents, this book provides inspiration for aspiring music business entrepreneurs. For music industry professors in need of a text about Hip Hop or career development in the music business, I suggest *Do You!*

Antonio C. Cuyler

**ANTONIO C. CUYLER**, Ph.D. has presented research at international and national conferences. Most recently, he presented papers at the Hawaii International Conference on the Arts and Humanities, and the Association of African American Research and Historical Preservation. Cuyler's research interests include arts administration education, music business and entertainment industry education, Hiphop studies, and qualitative research methods. Dr. Cuyler is an independent scholar.



**M. William Krasilovsky and Sidney Shemel, with contributions by John M. Gross and Jonathan Feinstein. *This Business of Music: The Definitive Guide to the Business and Legal Issues of the Music Industry*, 10<sup>th</sup> ed. New York: Watson-Guptill Publications, 2007.**

**David Baskerville. *Music Business Handbook and Career Guide*, 8<sup>th</sup> ed. Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage Publications, 2006.**

**Donald S. Passman. *All You Need to Know About the Music Business*, 6<sup>th</sup> ed. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2006.**

<https://doi.org/10.25101/7.15>

When Sidney Shemel and William Krasilovsky's *This Business of Music* first appeared in 1964, there was no such thing as music industry studies in academia. For that matter, any courses in music outside of the common practice repertory were few and far between, with the exceptions being studies in the contemporary *avant garde* here and there, and a couple of nascent ethnomusicology programs in far-flung cities. Popular music, recording, and the music business were not seen as worthy of serious study by university and college faculty.

Into the fray jumped Shemel and Krasilovsky with a book that, at the time, was a valuable reference and resource. "Musicians, both amateur and professional, should thank the authors of this work for providing the answers to so many questions in such convenient form," wrote one reviewer.<sup>1</sup> The authors themselves wrote, "This book has been written with a view toward assisting participants in the music and recording industries to understand the workings of the business and their rights and obligations."<sup>2</sup>

Of course, many things about the music industry were significantly different: vinyl LPs and 45s were the media of the day, the "big label" model was in its heyday, the recording studio was still mostly a 9-5 industry, and the explosion of soon-to-be classic rock was in its infancy. James Brown mainly appealed to African American audiences; country music and the country music industry was hardly mainstream. Eight-track tapes, cassettes, CDs, mp3s, not to mention digital multi-track recording and digital signal processing were years away.

In spite of the seeming distance from today's music industry, the book's appropriateness in this new edition brings French novelist Alphonse Karr's famous quote to mind: "The more things change, the more they remain the

same.” A perfect example? Shemel and Krasilovsky, in their original edition, described the then-outrageous payola scandals of the late 1950s. This latest edition reminds us of those payola scandals of the 1950s and also of how things stay the same, as the authors cover the most recent scandal sparked by former New York Attorney General Eliot Spitzer against Sony BMG in 2005.

Indeed, *This Business* covers topics that are as pertinent now as they were then. Contemporary copyright law is covered, as are trademark law and service mark laws. A chapter is devoted to taxes, another to agents and managers, not to mention chapters on record industry contracts, labor agreements, performing rights organizations, mechanical and other audio reproduction rights, and even printed music.

In fact, little is left out. This is a flaw of *This Business of Music*. Painting with as broad a brush as the authors do, it is virtually impossible to cover any one subject in any depth. Take the chapter on recording, for example. A section devoted to “Recording Costs” is perfunctory, and does not take into account both the do-it-yourself and the digital revolutions in recording that have made it possible to create and master high quality recordings for a fraction of what they cost even five years ago. Also, the authors devote a single, closing chapter to “Technology,” when in fact the rapid tectonic shifts in music are almost all due to technology. This importance of technology is certainly acknowledged by the authors, but it seems like an “add on” because of its placement in the chapter order.

Moreover, the authors are driven by a traditional, top-down model of business. The whole notion of bottom-up marketing in the digital age—MySpace.com, for example—is hardly mentioned. Even the book itself is set up like a top-down big business, with two name authors (one, Shemel, died in 1994) on the masthead and the actual worker bees acknowledged only in the preface. A noted contemporary expert in copyright law and copyright litigation, for example, probably did not contribute to this book, but we really don’t know.

One aspect of this book that is worthy of note is its appendices: the first appendix lists music industry organizations, another provides “negotiating checklists” for a variety of agreements (this reviewer’s favorite section of the book), and a brief appendix on “Current U.S. licensing and Collection Practices for Digital Uses” is included. Also of note is the not-so-fantastic editing of the book (numerous typos), the relatively low quality paper used, and its low retail price (U.S. price, \$29.95).

David Baskerville's *Music Business Handbook and Career Guide*, a frequently reprinted and revised tome that also first appeared in the 1960s, suffers from the same all-things-to-all-people syndrome as *This Business of Music*, though with its own set of strengths and weaknesses.

Shemel and Krasilovsky were both part of the music business on the business side, both lawyers, and adjunct music educators. Baskerville was in the thick of music *making* during his career—as a performer, composer, conductor, and producer—as well as an innovative educator who founded one of the first music industry studies programs in the country at the University of Colorado, Denver.

The first edition of the *Music Business Handbook and Career Guide* filled an important niche as an introductory text for music business classes at UCD (as the Denver campus was then called) and at other institutions that began to teach music business. He definitely had the student audience in mind, more so than Shemel and Krasilovsky did. The latest, eighth edition, is still written from this standpoint, with an instructor's manual available on CD for those using the text in the classroom.

Like Shemel et al., Baskerville takes us through the intricacies of the music business in all of its many aspects, from music publishing, music licensing, and the ins and outs of copyright law to record production, concert production, and artist management. Unique to the Baskerville book are chapters covering arts administration, the music products industry, and chapters on “Starting Your Own Business” and “Career Development.” Also of particular note are chapters on Canadian copyright, international copyright, and appendices that include a list of important periodic publications in music (a handy reference for those new to the industry, i.e., students).

Perhaps as important, the *Music Business Handbook* has a hospitable tone that acknowledges the constant give and take that exists between artistic considerations in music, and the business side of things, reflecting the original author's experience in the business. This is a good fit for performance students who may be studying the music industry as something to “fall back on.”

Also helpful to students are Baskerville's listings of music careers, a chapter he calls “Career Options.” This may be a fantastic chapter to show parents who aren't sure whether their sons or daughters can ever find work in the music industry, but as Kevin Yatarola pointed out about an earlier edition, this gives the impression that students can leave school and possibly apply for one of these jobs with their degrees in hand, such as “lyricist”

or “composer of classical music.”<sup>3</sup> Music educators in the music industry studies programs know this is very far from the reality “on the street.”

Yaratola also mentioned the “conspicuous” absence of music technology.<sup>4</sup> This hasn’t changed much in twenty-five years, with the eighth edition devoting a scant six pages to “The Digital Age,” for example, and one paragraph on do-it-yourself recording. Granted, “revolutions” in technology may only seem revolutionary at the time, but the current democratization of the music business due to the internet may have a permanent and lasting effect. The shift from acoustic to electric recording caused a paradigm shift, the LP resulted in new modes of thinking and new business and manufacturing practices, the cassette caused massive changes around the world, as did CDs in the 1980s and ’90s and digital downloads most recently. Students—and they and educators are the main audience for this book—need to think about what changing technology may mean to them and how they will cope with the current, or the next, “revolution.”

Again, it is hard for any one book to be all things to all people and still cover everything in sufficient depth. One note to those terrified of outsourcing: this book, printed in India, seems of much higher quality construction than either the Passman or Shemel/Krasilovsky. It also comes with the steepest price, at \$72.95 retail.

Donald Passman, who is still living (Baskerville passed away long before the Digital Revolution) and employed in Los Angeles in entertainment law, has written the most enjoyable read of the three books. His *All You Need to Know About the Music Business* is a fun read, the author is adept at simplifying difficult concepts, and he makes material that seemed rather dry in the previous two books a bit easier to digest.

Some might find it annoying, but he also includes cartoonish illustrations (by Randy Glass) to help make his points. Rather than finding this annoying, those who are learning about the music business for the first time will probably find it helpful as well as entertaining. If a committee of faculty from a conservative university or college is reviewing this book, however, this might cause them concern and as a result they may not find it “scholarly” enough.

Unlike the previous two books that have been required reading for music industry students for decades, the Passman wasn’t introduced until 1991. Also, unlike the other two books, Passman’s is geared toward a general audience: an up-and-coming band looking for good information on how to find an agent, personal and business managers, attorneys, and so on.

Yet, unlike the other two books, this one gets into real numbers that seem for the most part to reflect the present day. (Numbers are notoriously difficult to keep up-to-date. In Passman's case, as in *This Business of Music*, the numbers are skewed high, again reflecting a big label model of the music industry.)

Overall, *All You Need to Know About the Music Business* is more focused than the other two books, though much of the same information is covered in all three. Passman's main concern is business; he doesn't deal with non-profit administration, for example, nor does he get into the kind of detail on careers and such that Baskerville does.

So, which book to use in your introduction to the music business class? All suffer, to some extent, from a penchant to cover everything. None of these three supply "all you need to know," though all three have their strengths and weaknesses. Which to use really depends on how much time an instructor has to cover the basics. In a ten-week quarter, Passman's book might be the better choice—if one had to choose between these three—simply because it is an easier, more enjoyable read than either *This Business of Music* or the *Music Business Handbook*. In a one-semester intro class, any of the three might work, though that still would give a student a bare, superficial overview of the industry. None of the three, in my opinion, deal sufficiently with the changes that technology brings and those longer-term implications, though each book deals with technology to some degree.

More importantly, what is crucial for students—and mostly missing from all three books—is a detailed, step-by-step approach that helps them develop their own careers in music. As music industry educators know, the music business usually does not beat a path to our students' doors. Quite the opposite: the students often must cobble together careers, working part-time here, doing unpaid internships there, and making spec deals with clients, working their MySpace pages, while also taking continuing education classes to keep up with the latest software or hardware, etc., building their careers slowly and carefully. This entrepreneurial spirit, mostly missing from these three books, may be the most important skill that a student can learn in today's music business.

Dave Kopplin

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## Endnotes

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- <sup>1</sup> Charles L. Gary, review of *This Business of Music*, by Sidney Shemel and M. William Krasilovsky, *Music Educators Journal* 51, no. 5 (Apr.-May 1965).
- <sup>2</sup> Sidney Shemel, M. William Krasilovsky, and Paul Ackerman, *This Business of Music* (New York: Billboard Books, 1964).
- <sup>3</sup> Kevin Yatarola, review of *Music Business Handbook and Career Guide*, by David Baskerville, *Music Educators Journal* 69, no. 2 (Oct. 1982).
- <sup>4</sup> Ibid.

**Trevor Dann. *Darker Than the Deepest Sea: The Search for Nick Drake*. Cambridge, Mass.: Da Capo Press, 2006.**

**Clay Eals. *Steve Goodman: Facing the Music*. Toronto: ECW Press, 2007.**

**John Kruth. *To Live's To Fly: The Ballad of the Late, Great Townes Van Zandt*. Cambridge, Mass.: Da Capo Press, 2007.**

<https://doi.org/10.25101/7.16>

Sometimes the life stories of musicians provide more useful information about the music business than textbooks. What these three biographies have in common is that none of these artists achieved tremendous notoriety, and all of them died prematurely.

Nick Drake's story is perhaps one of the strangest odysseys in the twentieth-century music industry. Nick was a mediocre student at Cambridge who grew up in an affluent family. He was "discovered" by Joe Boyd, an American émigré who initially placed him on Chris Blackwell's Island label. Joe signed on as Nick's record producer, his personal manager, and his music publisher. To be kind, Joe's qualifications in management and music publishing were at best minimal. Nick didn't help matters much by refusing to tour behind his records, cooperating only minimally with the label's marketing efforts, and being in a fairly regular state of depression and drug usage. Nick died through a combination of prescription drugs that he was taking legally, possibly mixed with whatever illegal drugs he was also taking. Arguably it was a suicide. Nick was twenty-six years old, the same age as Delta blues great Robert Johnson and Charley Christian, the pioneer modern jazz guitarist.

Nick's story parallels that of Robert Johnson in a number of ways. Like Robert, Nick was not well known during his brief lifetime, and his records experienced very small sales. Robert's later fame comes through his association with other blues guitarists, and his eventual endorsements by Eric Clapton, Keith Richards, and many other rock-blues guitarists. After his death Nick was similarly endorsed by a number of well-known artists including Kate Bush and The Black Crowes, and the number of artists who recorded his songs after his death include Beth Orton and Robyn Hitchcock.

In 2000 Volkswagen licensed Drake's song *Pink Moon* for use in a commercial. This brought about the Nick Drake mini-boom with an album

hitting the Billboard charts and sales of his albums far exceeding what he had sold during his lifetime. His songs have also been used in five Hollywood movies and on television shows. Some thirty artists, including Lucinda Williams and Norah Jones, have recorded his songs. Dann's book is the second full-length biography of Drake and there are now documentaries and previously unreleased albums on the market.

Clay Eals' biography of Steve Goodman is absolutely breathtaking in its scope. Goodman was diagnosed with leukemia when he was twenty years old. He lived with that death sentence for fifteen years before dying in 1984 at the age of thirty-six. Eals' and Dann's biographies have one odd quality in common: they were both written through extensive, and in Eals' case almost superhuman, research by the authors. Yet neither author had access to the immediate families of their protagonists. Nick Drake's legacy is largely in the hands of his sister Gabrielle, and Drake's parents were both dead when Dann began to research his book. Goodman's mother, brother, nor widow agreed to talk to his biographer. Both authors therefore turned to friends, associates, and other musicians for their research. In doing so, both worked tirelessly to reconstruct their subjects. Eals literally interviewed over a thousand people, and his book is close to eight hundred pages long.

Goodman achieved much more fame during his lifetime than came Drake's way, but there were several bitter ironies in his career. Goodman's best known recording was of a song called *The Dutchman*, written by Chicago singer-songwriter Michael Smith. Goodman's most successful songwriting effort was his song *The City of New Orleans*, but the hit record was made by Arlo Guthrie, and many people believe to this day that Arlo wrote the song. Goodman's hit country song, *You Never Call Me By My Name*, was recorded by David Allan Coe. Coe does a long monologue in his recording, rhetorically cutting himself in on the authorship. Finally his baseball epic, *A Dying Cub Fan's Last Request*, was deemed too negative by the club's management to adopt as an official anthem.

Although this is not a book about the music business, there are a number of ways in which the industry enters into Goodman's story. John Denver reformulated the lyrics of *City of New Orleans* and recorded his version of it, taking a piece of the writer's money for his efforts. Eals is not a music business scholar, and he exhibits some confusion in trying to untangle whether Denver was cut in on his version alone, and how Denver's publisher, Cherry Lane Music, figured into the deal. No one seems to remember what percentage Steve had to give up, and although Denver never made



a hit single of the song, his albums certainly sold in quantity. Another thread that is never quite untangled is exactly what role Paul Anka played in Goodman's career. Anka became enthralled with both Goodman and his friend John Prine, and helped get Steve his deal with Buddha. Later on, Anka relinquished his piece of the pie. Eals never seems to have untangled what Anka received for his efforts. Al Bunetta became Goodman's manager, and appears to have worked tirelessly on his behalf.

Unlike Nick Drake's story, Goodman's death has not resulted in a spectacular uptick in his career. Perhaps this book will be able to spark such a development. Possibly one of the problems in the reclamation of Steve's career is that almost everyone believes his live performances were far more compelling than his recordings. This places him in that special purgatory inhabited by Lena Horne and Sammy Davis, Jr., spectacular performers who have limited success on recordings.

This brings us to the sad odyssey of Townes Van Zandt, whose career exhibits some similarities to the other two artists. As was the case with Steve Goodman, Townes' most successful songs became hit recordings by other artists. *Pancho and Lefty* was a major hit for Willie Nelson and Merle Haggard, and *If I Needed You* was a number-three country hit in the Emmylou Harris and Don Williams version. The parallels with Nick Drake come in Townes' self-destructive alcohol and drug abuse, which led to his death at the age of fifty-two. Van Zandt's relationship with record label owner Kevin Eggers was even more controversial than Drake's relationship with Joe Boyd, with some of Van Zandt's friends believing that Eggers was a self-serving hypocrite, while others take the position that Eggers did what he could for someone who was basically an impossible artist. Biographer John Kruth has an edge over the other writers in the sense that he was able to talk to ex-wives, one of Van Zandt's children, Kevin Eggers, and virtually everyone involved in Townes' career with the exception of Eggers' brother Harold, who was Townes' road manager, and Susannah Clark, one of Van Zandt's best friends. For whatever reasons, both of these friends were willing to be interviewed for the video *Be There To Love Me*.

Like Nick Drake, Townes was unpredictable in performance. At times he was particularly adept at catching the hearts of women in the audience, and on other occasions he was so stoned on one thing or another that he was unable to interest an audience. The present reviewer played on one of Townes' albums, *Delta Momma Blues*. I remember Townes walking into the New York studio and singing his songs for us. There was nothing writ-

ten—no chord charts, no lead sheets, and no copies of the lyrics. Many of the songs seemed to be about cough medicine. I don't think any of us had a clue what he was up to, and it wasn't clear whether he himself knew either.

The books contain the riveting life stories of three interesting, if failed, artists. Only Steve Goodman consciously courted success, only truly attaining it in live performances and in cover recordings of his songs by other artists. Both Nick and Townes seemed to assume that success was their birthright, possibly a consequence of their prosperous upbringing. Yet both of them seemed to make every effort to guarantee that adulation would never truly materialize in their lifetimes. The music business is a dream machine, and the truth is that the artist's fate is more commonly heartbreak and frustration than fame and fortune.

Dick Weissman

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