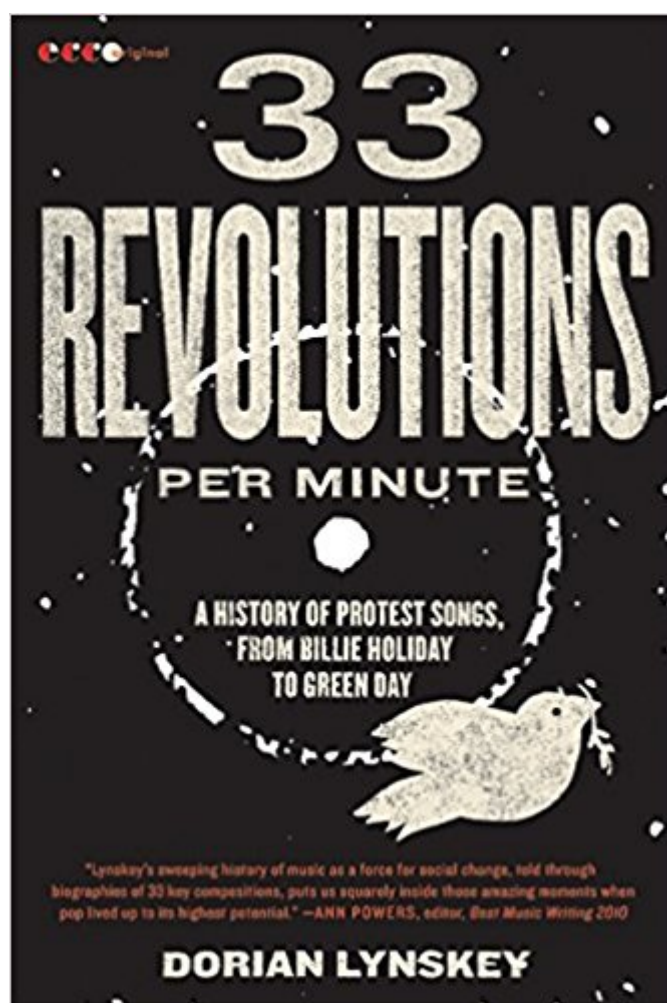


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33 Revolutions Per Minute: A History Of Protest Songs, From Billie Holiday To Green Day



Synopsis

Dorian Lynskey is one of the most prominent music critics writing today. With *33 Revolutions Per Minute*, he offers an engrossing, insightful, and wonderfully researched history of protest music in the twentieth century and beyond. From Billie Holiday and Woodie Guthrie to Bob Dylan and the Clash to Green Day and Rage Against the Machine, *33 Revolutions Per Minute* is a moving and fascinating portrait of a century of popular music that tried to change the world.

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Customer Reviews

The protest song reached its zenith in 1960s America when Bob Dylan, Buffalo Springfield, Country Joe and the Fish, Jimi Hendrix, and Joan Baez wrote popular songs to protest American involvement in the Vietnam War and the mistreatment of social and economic groups. In some cases—Dylan's "Masters of War," P.F. Sloan's "Eve of Destruction," Country Joe McDonald's "I-Feel-Like-I'm-Fixin'-to-Die Rag"—the songs became anthems that defined a generation, confirming the idea that popular music could indeed bring people together to promote a common cause for the common good. Sadly, British music critic Lynskey doesn't capture the deep significance of the protest song or the cultural moments that created them. Although he admirably attempts to isolate the personal and cultural contexts of 33 protest songs, from Billie Holiday's "Strange Fruit" and James Brown's "Say It Loud—I'm Black and I'm Proud" to the Clash's "White Riot," Public Enemy's "Fight the Power," and Steve Earle's "John Walker's Blues," Lynskey doesn't fully demonstrate the reasons that each song qualifies as a protest song in the first place, or

why the songs he gathered provide the best examples of a protest song. (Apr.) (c) Copyright PWxyz, LLC. All rights reserved.

“This book is impressive in scope.” (New Yorker) “A longtime music critic, Lynskey presents up-close details to ballast the book’s larger historical sweep.” (Los Angeles Times) “Lynskey has a strong command of the music and its makers.” (Wall Street Journal) “lovely writing” | Let’s praise the agile, many-tentacled writer Mr. Lynskey can often be, because I loved bits of this book; you can pluck out the many tasty things like seeds from a pomegranate.” (New York Times) “British music critic Dorian Lynskey offers a completely absorbing look at 33 songs, spanning seven decades and haling from five continents...Comprehensive and beautifully written.” (Booklist (starred review)) “[A] provocative, absorbing book” (Cleveland Plain Dealer) “A must-read for militant-music lovers.” (The Root)

I am no historian, and I am not much of a music-love, but I read this book on a recommendation. I enjoy Lynskey’s writing style. He manages to pack a lot into each chapter and gave me a lot of new insight into the impact of the music he was discussing as well as the context in which it was written and a bit of history on the events and culture of the time. I learned a lot about the songs, the artists and each chapter was like a snapshot of the era it was discussing. However, some chapters seemed to barely discuss the title song of the chapter or even the artist. He’ll discuss all of the political events going on and other artists and songs and then finally mention the song the chapter is titled for. This didn’t really detract from the book, overall, in my opinion. While a thick book, I consider it a light read. Each chapter pretty self-contained. You don’t have to read them all or in order if you don’t want to, so it’s an easy book to pick up occasionally and take your time with or at the same time as other books.

No one interested in how pop-culture affects society, a vastly ignored subject by social scientists, can afford NOT to include this on their bookshelf. Linsky quite humbly invites us to share his assessment of music concerned with politics and humanity, with great competence and great humility. The printed book includes a fine set of photographs.

I realize that 5 stars is the max, however, for me this book hit all the marks. It uses just over 30 songs spanning from the late 1930s until the early 2010’s as catalysts for a myriad of songs, artists

and styles that created what can be called protest music. The writing is crisp and concise and includes dozens upon dozens of quotes from the artists themselves. Lynskey's voice as historian is strong as he succeeds in not only putting each song in context of the social and historic times in which it was written or propagated, but he also places these songs as complements, contrasts and comparisons to other ages and eras of pop music, politics and culture. Lastly, I was glad that he accounts for his scope in the introduction where he lets us know that he will be covering specific areas of the world, but not the entire planet! The U.S., UK, Jamaica and Africa are well documented and pleasingly fills the text. I would be curious how he would cover Pussy Riot's story as they are a realized culmination of so many aspects of so many artists that he covers in his book.

This is A, rather than THE, history of protest songs. At its best, the book is informative. Even if you hate a particular song and/or artist, the author manages to keep one's interest in reading about it/them. In part this is due to his scatter-shot approach, encompassing eras and genres. It is also well-researched. Where it fails is in the balance of history. There are far too many relatively recent songs included. That Phil Ochs wasn't granted a chapter, while Frankie Goes To Hollywood was, is criminal. Broadside magazine is hardly even mentioned, while the author goes out of his way to include an obscure disco song, as well as U2's "Pride (In The Name of Love)," which isn't even a protest song but, rather, a song of celebration. So why include it? I suspect it's for the same reason that the book is so laden with relatively recent songs, that the main concern was the bottom line. Most people will want to read about songs that they're familiar with. So the blues, a form of music that, by its very nature, is a protest, is totally ignored. Part of this is probably due to the author's definition of protest music, which he links to politics. There are, of course, other forms of revolution, such as cultural and social, but the author chooses to put blinders on concerning them. Still, I'd much rather have read something about the "Bourgeois Blues" than "Two Tribes." Even among the modern music the author does highlight, there is some head-scratching on my part. Does Dorian Lynskey honestly believe that Huggy Bear is more representative of Riot Grrrl than Bikini Kill? Does he not believe that Patti Smith's song "People Have The Power" is even worth mentioning? Doesn't he see the implicit revolutionary aspect of the entire DIY culture / "indie scene," in which the "workers" have seized the means of production? This is still a worthwhile book. I learned quite a bit about such artists as Crass, Linton Kwesi Johnson, Victor Jara and Fela Kuti. While I would not say that it is at all definitive, it is a good start.

great buy

Ordered for my grandson in college, received in great condition.

This is a great book for anyone interested in the intersection of music and 20th century history. Highly recommended.

Thanks

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