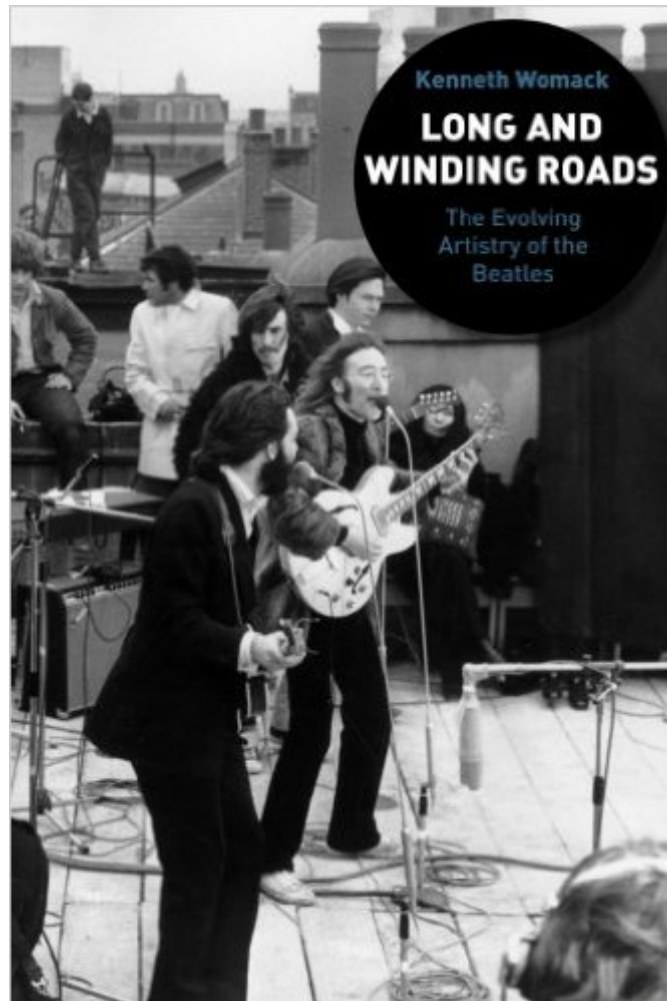


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Long And Winding Roads: The Evolving Artistry Of The Beatles



Synopsis

In *Long and Winding Roads: The Evolving Artistry of the Beatles*, Kenneth Womack brings the band's story vividly to life—from their salad days as a Liverpool Skiffle group and their apprenticeship in the nightclubs and mean streets of Hamburg through their early triumphs at the legendary Cavern Club and the massive onslaught of Beatlemania itself. By mapping the group's development as an artistic fusion, Womack traces the Beatles' creative arc from their first, primitive recordings through Abbey Road and the twilight of their career. In order to communicate the nature and power of the band's remarkable achievement, Womack examines the Beatles' body of work as an evolving art object. He investigates the origins and creation of the group's compositions, as well as the songwriting and recording practices that brought them to fruition. Womack's analysis of the Beatles' albums transports readers on a journey through the Beatles' heyday as recording artists between 1962 and 1969, when the band enjoyed a staggering musical and lyrical leap that took them from their first album *Please Please Me*, which they recorded in the space of a single day, to Sgt. Pepper's *Lonely Hearts Club Band*, the *White Album*, and *Abbey Road*—albums that collectively required literally thousands of hours to produce. In addition to considering the band's increasing self-consciousness about the overall production, design, and presentation of their art, Womack explores the Beatles' albums as a collection of musical and lyrical impressions that finds them working towards a sense of aesthetic unity. In *Long and Winding Roads*, Womack reveals the ways in which the Beatles gave life to a musical synthesis that would change the world.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I wanted to love this book; I might have approached it with unfair expectations, but one is led to believe that Womack shares some original insights on the Beatles' music. The book is merely a cursory overview of the Beatles' backgrounds (again?), private lives (again?), and recorded output, with a couple of long detours to discuss the band's image; it's not nearly as in-depth or freshly perceptive as its press indicates. On the positive side, there's certainly one aspect of the narrative that's highly praiseworthy, even if it's not directly related to the music -- so I'll mention that after first elaborating on my disappointment with the book's failure to fulfill the promise of the subtitle. Womack's curious tendency is to focus on the romantic psychology behind the lyrics, which always seems to be quite a stretch, as the words meant nothing to the Beatles themselves during the first half of their recording career (apart from the words' strictly phonetic functions in melodic delivery). This arbitrary exercise is especially overreaching throughout the first two-thirds of the book, considering the superficial boy-meets-girl nature of the first few albums' lyrics. As the Beatles' inventiveness and culture-altering imaginations were so effective due to melodic, harmonic and stylistic innovations and convention-breaking, and certainly not their lyrics, it would be much more interesting to read about any musical insights that might have rewarded the author's close listening, rather than the over-analytical lyrical guesses.

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