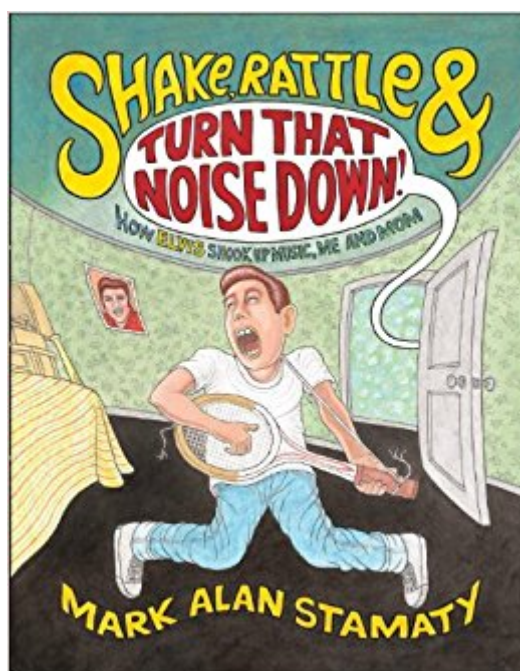


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# Shake, Rattle & Turn That Noise Down!: How Elvis Shook Up Music, Me & Mom



## Synopsis

FOR HIS EIGHTH birthday, Mark Alan Stamaty's parents gave him his very own radio. Little did his mother realize that that innocent-looking plastic box would one day be the gateway for a new kind of sound that would "rock" her nearly out of her mind. . . .Mark first heard the howling thunder of Elvis Presley singing "Hound Dog" on the radio one lazy day and his life was forever changed. Soon he was styling his hair like the King and practicing his dance moves with a tennis racket as his pretend guitar in front of the mirror. But his mother lived in constant fear that her son's new love of rock 'n' roll would turn him into a juvenile delinquent. Could Mark's performance at his Cub Scout talent show change her mind? --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

## Book Information

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Age Range: 3 - 7 years

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## Customer Reviews

**Book Description** For his eighth birthday, Mark Alan Stamaty's parents gave him his very own radio. Little did his mother realize that that innocent-looking plastic box would one day be the gateway for a new kind of sound that would "rock" her nearly out of her mind. . . .Mark first heard the howling thunder of Elvis Presley singing "Hound Dog" on the radio one lazy day and his life was forever changed. Soon he was styling his hair like the King and practicing his dance moves with a tennis racket as his pretend guitar in front of the mirror. But his mother lived in constant fear that her son's

new love of rock 'n' roll would turn him into a juvenile delinquent. Could Mark's performance at his Cub Scout talent show change her mind? Questions for Mark Alan Stamaty .com: What was it like to discover Elvis and rock & roll in 1956? Do you think every generation makes the same kind of discovery, or was that moment one of a kind? Stamaty: Exciting. I'd never had that sort of response to music before. The first time I ever heard an Elvis Presley record, the experience was very much the way I depicted it in Shake, Rattle & Turn That Noise Down! The music just kind of took me over. I was jumping around my room almost involuntarily, swept up in a powerful feeling. After that, each new release or discovery of an earlier Elvis record I hadn't heard before was a great new treat. Then came Little Richard, Chuck Berry, Buddy Holly, Jerry Lee Lewis, Fats Domino and on and on. Once Elvis broke through, my AM radio down there on the Jersey shore was never the same again. Elvis's emergence was a revelation, followed by a new era of popular music that kept growing and evolving. I do believe that every generation has its own music and that there is a certain age range in younger years when the music a generation is exposed to plays a very formative role in people's emotional and maybe physiological infrastructure. And as we get older, the nature of our receptivity evolves and changes. As the saying goes, "things change and stay the same." Every generation finds some part of its unique identity in the music of its younger years. That said, I must declare that Elvis led something of a sea change in popular music that, I believe, was a bigger change than any I have witnessed since then. Elvis did not invent rock & roll, but he was the key figure in popularizing it to the mainstream and that impact continues to this day..com: Would you have become the same artist you did without rock & roll?Stamaty: I think rock & roll unleashed something in me that I hadn't exactly known was in me. It focused and channeled a lot of my crazy, restless energy. It freed me in a way, in terms of self-expression. And I think that carried over into my art, in subject matter, style, and passion. So I'd have to say I probably would not be the same artist I am today without the impact that rock & roll had on me. I'd also add that I especially love the blues. And rock & roll led me to blues. .com: It's been great to see you return to kids' books. Could you tell me the story of Who Needs Donuts? I was (barely) old enough when it first came out in 1973, but I only discovered when it was reissued in 2003, when my kids and I completely fell in love with it. Stamaty: The story behind Who Needs Donuts? began in an all-night coffee shop in New York City in 1966. I was in art school (Cooper Union). That coffee shop was one of my favorite places to hang out and watch people, sketchbook always at the ready. So on that particular night, there was an old woman who seemed to be asleep, seated at and kind of draped over the counter near the entrance. After a while, a nicely dressed man in a suit and overcoat came in and asked the waitress for two cups of coffee to go. The waitress asked him if he'd like donuts with his coffee. "No, thank you," he replied. Then,

suddenly, the old woman lifted her head, pointed at the ceiling, and said "That's right. Who needs donuts when you've got love?" As soon as I heard that, I wrote it in my sketchbook. When I got back to where I was living, I lettered it out on a piece of paper that I hung on my wall. About 5 years later, I was trying to think of something to write a story about and I looked up at that sign on my wall. I'd always wanted to immortalize that line and the old woman, and here was my chance. In addition to that, I made it a kind of autobiographical book, by having my character, Sam, leaving his home in the suburbs to come into the incredible immensity, complexity, and energy of the big city. I don't name the city, but, of course, it's New York. And Who Needs Donuts? depicts how the city looked and felt to me in all of its intensity and visual richness. And craziness. New York has always been a great place for artists, writers, musicians, etc., and the creative spirit in every form. I was trying to express my love of all of that with my pen.

.com: You wrote other picture books in the '70s and '80s, which are just cover photos on to me, but which I would love to see in the flesh: Small in the Saddle, Minnie Maloney and Macaroni, and Where's My Hippopotamus? Any chance of having them reissued too?

Stamaty: I would love to have my out-of-print books reissued if a publisher were to inquire about it. I think Small in the Saddle is considered somewhat in a similar vein as Who Needs Donuts? but not nearly as detailed. But probably as silly. Minnie Maloney & Macaroni and Where's My Hippopotamus? are quite different from Who Needs Donuts? I don't know what the chances are of those books being reissued. I did get one inquiry about Small in the Saddle a few years ago, but it didn't happen.

.com: I may have missed Who Needs Donuts? the first time around, but I did get to know you a decade or so later through Washington, your political cartoon that ran in the Washington Post and elsewhere in the '80s. Have you thought about what Congressman Bob Forehead would be doing now?

Stamaty: What Congressman Bob Forehead would be doing now would be earnestly declaring that he is not afraid to make the hard choices regardless of political consequence. He would express disdain for politicians who decide their every move based on public opinion polls and short-term tactics focused on the next election regardless of what is truly in the best interests of the country. Then he would studiously avoid making any hard choices and viciously attack any opposing politicians who actually do make politically risky hard choices. Bob would decry the "politics of personal destruction" while, at the same time, practicing it with a vengeance. He would make every tactical and strategic decision based purely on his own self-interest, while carefully styling his rhetoric to project an image diametrically opposite to what he really is. And he would manage to fool too many of the people too much of the time and always get re-elected.

.com: Finally: Elvis '54 or Elvis '68? (Do I even have to ask?)

Stamaty: Elvis '54 to '57. His '68 special was good. I liked it. It was great to see him at that time coming away from all of those

increasingly lousy movies. But the Elvis that really got to me can still be seen on YouTube in those old film clips from shows like Milton Berle, etc., back in the '50s. Also, though I'm mostly pre-jumpsuit, I do think he put on a great show in his jumpsuit years. The only time I ever saw him live was in his jumpsuit in Madison Square Garden in 1972. He was great.

Grade 4 "Young fans of Elvis" and especially their moms and dads and grandparents will delight in this enthusiastic depiction of Presley's influence on the author's musical tastes. Given a radio in 1955 when he was eight, Stamaty was already listening to music when Elvis roared onto the scene. The beat, the rhythm, and the volume drove his mother to distraction but turned him into a lifelong fan. While the layout may be in sync with the animation that Stamaty is trying to portray, at times the combination of exaggerated facial expressions, cartoon panels, hand-lettered text of various sizes and colors, and musical notations sweeping across the pages overpower it. Interspersed bits of the history of rock 'n' roll and thumbnail portraits of some of the performers further crowd the page. Nevertheless, enthusiasts of the music are sure to linger over the mix of information and images that Stamaty energetically supplies. Appended are photos and commentary from "Elvis-related moments" in the illustrator/author's life. Barbara Elleman, Eric Carle Museum of Picture Book Art, Amherst, MA (c) Copyright 2010. Library Journals LLC, a wholly owned subsidiary of Media Source, Inc. No redistribution permitted.

Mark Alan Stamaty is simply brilliant! His illustrations are so much fun and this book follows in the tradition of his classic work. This book is great for fathers and sons to share, as well as, grandparents and grandchildren. It is a great way to show how technology has changed and also how far rock music has come along since Elvis. It is also a good book to show kids how to be their own individual and not worry what others think about them. I also loved the inclusion of the Boy Scouts because it was such a part of my childhood because my brothers were so involved and I can't wait for my husband to share this story with our son when he is in scouting!

My favorite children's book author (of the strangest picture book of all time: Who Needs Donuts) outdoes himself here. Pure full color pleasure on every page.

A delightful look back to the 1950s' generation gap and the history of rock & roll. Stamaty is at the top of his game. Recommended for kids and adults. I loved it!

I heard a review of this book on the CBC Montreal's children's book panel. It's great fun! My 11-yr-old son (a reluctant reader) loves the graphics.

Reason for Reading: I entered a contest the author was running for a free copy because the book sounded so cool. I never heard back, knowing I'd not won, and honestly, forgot about the book when six months later I received a cool letter in the mail from the author with a postcard and an original drawing he'd made. I just had to read it after that! This is truly an amazing book and story that kids and their parents will love and their grand-parents may love even more! I think it's integral to the enjoyment that the child be aware of who Elvis is both through hearing his music and having seen footage of him performing to get the full effect of the story. The book starts with showing some difference in home life from 1955 and now and to emphasize how excited the author was to receive a radio for his birthday. How pleased his mother was to walk past his room and hear lovely band music coming from it until one day later the next year Elvis hit the airwaves and turned Mark onto the new music scene of "rock and roll". Well, mother flips out from the screeching noise emitting from the radio and we see the comparison in all our lives through ages of parents thinking that their children's music is noise compared to what they listened to as children themselves. Mark takes it a step further and combs his hair Elvis style and learns all his dance moves and words to his songs until eventually his Cub Pack puts on a skit at an annual dinner and they ask their resident Elvis to perform. The end of the book has some photographs of the author as a child and performing at the event as well as of him now turning into an Elvis impersonator. The book is a lot of fun with some actual laugh out loud moments. This is one that truly will be enjoyed by all ages. I imagine grandparents reading it to grandchildren will especially bond over the book. This is a must have for the classroom and the library. The graphic design of the book is appealing as well. Much of the book uses narrator style rectangles within frames with bubbles showing up here and there. He also has flowing rivers filled with lyrics or music notes emanating from radios and record players to denote music. The lettering is very large caps throughout with the occasional stylized word here and there. Stamaty's drawing style is eye-catching with his people not being quite proportional they look a bit short and squat with big heads. This disproportion is only slightly off so it only gives his characters just that extra bit of interest. I really enjoy the style. While the story is a lot of fun and kids will relate to little Mark's feelings of parental frustration, idol worship and later performance anxiety it also contains quite a lot of information on the history of rock and roll: who the early pioneers were and how it was different from what came before. This is a keeper!

Long ago, roundabout 1973 or so, a young Mark Alan Stamaty wrote a picture book. It was called "Who Needs Donuts?" and it remains, to this day, just the trippiest darn thing you ever did see. Trippy and remarkably beautiful. Somehow or other Stamaty was able to cram more tiny details in a single centimeter than most folks do on an entire page. It was like Peter Sis on angel dust. Since the publication of that book Mr. Stamaty has had various other titles for kids. Books like "Small in the saddle", "Minnie Maloney and Macaroni", and "Where's My Hippo?" More recently he's played about with graphic novels for kids, with titles like "Too Many Time Machines" and the remarkable "Alia's Mission: Saving the Books of Iraq". Now with his latest, Stamaty combines the graphic format with picture books, in the best little old autobiographical mash-up I've seen in quite some time. It may not have the sheer insanity of "Who Needs Donuts?", but "Shake, Rattle & Turn That Down" is definitely its descendant, and has a personal touch that kids everywhere should be able to connect to. Mark and his mom were pretty simpatico when it came to music when he was a kid. When she got him a radio for his birthday, he would listen to gentle melodies or classical tunes. But that was all before HE came along. His name was Elvis Presley. The first time Mark heard him "a howling thunder of sound exploded into my room, engulfing me in a hurricane of excitement." The first time his mom heard Elvis she "burst into my room looking like a cornered hostage in a vampire horror movie." And never the twain quite met. Mark's mother was convinced that this was a fad that would disappear. Meanwhile Elvis and other singers like him started to transform the face of popular music. Part personal memoir, part history lesson in music, part graphic novel, part picture book, Stamaty's personal history with "The King" is a touching story that anyone can relate to. Backmatter includes photos of young Mark, photos of older Mark, and a personal history that even discusses him doing his Elvis impression for the President of the United States. This is what a graphic novel is all about, people. Look at it. No lazy digital coloring slapped on without a second thought. No, Stamaty has utilized graphite, ink, gouache, watercolors, polymer paints, and even done in colored pencils to give each of these images the right texture and feel. Shirts and patterns are often colored pencils while the people's bodies are watercolors and the font of their words thick bright paints. And speaking of the fonts, no Comic Sans for this man. Oh no. Stamaty has meticulously drawn each letter of dialogue. If folks are just talking then the words are all capital letters in black ink. But when they shout or sing, suddenly the words take on a size and girth they never had before. Best of all are the layouts. Panels aren't just blocky squares. They become circular when they need to be, or take over entire pages. Sometimes, as when Mark hears Elvis for the first time, you've a full two-page spread to really drill home the excitement of the music. And the speech balloons! They start out normal, then expand and contract to an enormous degree. I love watching them curve

around the action. The lyrics of music in particular are given a snaky quality, wrapping around the characters' dialogue. Amazing. And then there's Stamaty's way with people. Folks in this book have a tendency to talk to one another with their arms placidly at their sides. However, given just the right amount of stress or joy, they're all over the place. Little Mark's legs convey all the crazy Elvis gyrations to a beautiful degree. And then there's Mark's mom. Her sheer shrieking panic is a thing of beauty on the page. Just look at her. Her hands clutch her hair, as if to rip Elvis's very voice out of her skull. Even the refracted light in her glasses has turned into jagged points that seem to cling to her wide-open eyeballs. This is a woman on the verge of a nervous breakdown, and it's all thanks to Elvis. Interestingly, the book this reminded me the most of was "The Long Gone Lonesome History of Country Music" by Bret Bertholf. On the surface this might be because it's a non-fiction graphic novel picture book that seeks to teach kids about the history of music in some fashion. But both books also take a great deal of pleasure in drawing the faces of the famous folks of the time. Stamaty has a lot of fun showing everyone from Jerry Lee Lewis to Ray Charles to The Rolling Stones while Bertholf indulges in folks like Johnny Cash or Jake Tullock. The two would pair beautifully together for a historical music lesson. Each one catches the eye, though Stamaty stays in the realm of rock n' roll and Bertholf skews into full-blown country. Autobiographical graphic novels for young readers are still few and far between on library shelves these days. You'll get something like Raina Telegemeier's "Smile" or (heaven help us) David Small's "Stitches" but actual picture book comic adaptations are as rare as Elvis sightings. Stamaty's book, like all his titles, is a true original. From the beginning of his literary career he's done his own thing and made books that look, feel, and sound like nobody else's. Now he's written one that kids will enjoy thoroughly and maybe even accidentally come to learn something from. Elvis lives all right. In this book. Ages 4-9.

Fabulous book by a fabulous artist. Read everything by Stamaty! His is one of the most original minds in the art-book world.

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