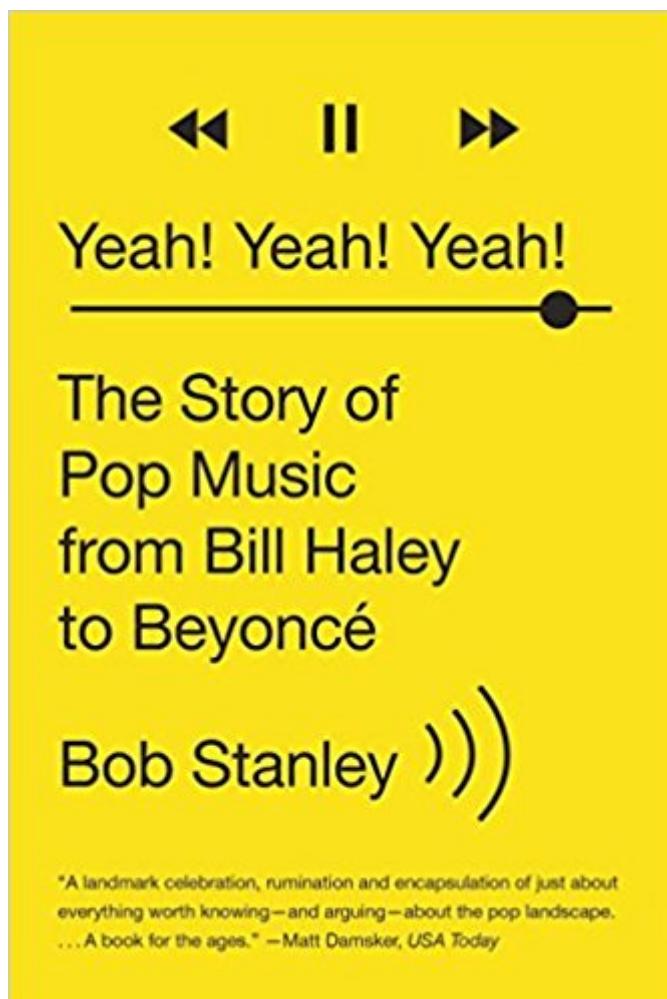


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Yeah! Yeah! Yeah!: The Story Of Pop Music From Bill Haley To BeyoncÃ©



Synopsis

â œBreezy, opinionated and totally delicious.â •David Kirby, Wall Street Journal As much fun to argue with as to quote, *Yeah! Yeah! Yeah!* is a monumental work of musical history, tracing the story of pop music through individual songs, bands, musical scenes, and styles from Bill Haley and the Cometsâ™ â œRock around the Clockâ• (1954) to BeyoncÃ©â™s first megahit, â œCrazy in Loveâ• (2003). It covers the birth of rock, soul, R&B, punk, hip hop, indie, house, techno, and more, and it will remind you why you fell in love with pop music in the first place. Bob Stanleyâ•musician, music critic, and unabashed fanâ•recounts the progression from the Beach Boys to the Pet Shop Boys to the Beastie Boys; explores what connects doo wop to the sock hop; and reveals how technological changes have affected pop production. Working with a broad definition of â œpopâ•â•one that includes country and metal, disco and Dylan, skiffle and glamâ•Stanley teases out the connections and tensions that animate the pop charts and argues that the charts are vital social history. *Yeah! Yeah! Yeah!* is like the worldâ™s best and most eclectic jukebox in book form. All the hits are here: the Monkees, Metallica, Patsy Cline, Patti Smith, new wave, New Order, â œItâ™s the Same Old Song,â• The Song Remains the Same, Aretha, Bowie, Madonna, Prince, Sgt. Pepper, A Tribe Called Quest, the Big Bopper, Fleetwood Mac, â œItsy Bitsy Teenie Weenie Yellow Polka Dot Bikini,â• Bikini Kill, the Kinks, Mick Jagger, Michael Jackson, Jay-Z, and on and on and on. This book will have you reaching for your records (or CDs or MP3s) and discovering countless others. For anyone who has ever thrilled to the opening chord of the Beatlesâ™ â œA Hard Dayâ™s Nightâ• or fallen crazy in love for BeyoncÃ©, *Yeah! Yeah! Yeah!* is a vital guide to the rich soundtrack of the second half of the twentieth century.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Starred Review Numerous albums and songs have used the word as their title, so it seems somehow appropriate that music journalist Stanley has chosen *yeah* to sum up the history of popular music, offering an immensely entertaining pop-music survey course. He is engagingly opinionated and often very, very funny. (He describes, for example, the members of the Turtles as looking like "three Pillsbury Doughboys, one in a bushy black fright wig," while Simon & Garfunkel "looked like as much fun as their undertaker name suggested.") His book traces a thread that connects pop music along a twentieth- and twenty-first-century continuum as he describes the musical contributions of, among others, Elvis Presley, the Beatles, the Rolling Stones, Bob Dylan, the Beach Boys, ABBA, Michael Jackson, Prince, and Madonna. For Stanley, pop is an eclectic and messy mix that includes rock, doo-wop, R&B, Motown, soul, glam, New Wave, disco, punk, grunge, hip-hop, house, techno, metal, and country. The assemblage of irresistible, bite-size histories of top-of-the-charts stars is joyful, smart, and addictive, just like the best pop songs, and a must for music fans everywhere. --June Sawyers --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

"Rich with musical history lived, worked, and felt, with dozens more chapters and digressions that pay pop its due" *Yeah! Yeah! Yeah!* is smart, funny, surprisingly deep for just how broad it is, but, most of all, for stars and songs great and small, it is full of love. - Joshua Joy Kamensky, *Los Angeles Review of Books*
"A landmark celebration, rumination and encapsulation of just about everything worth knowing and arguing about the pop landscape" *A book for the ages.* - Matt Damsker, *USA Today*
"[Stanley is] as clear-eyed about music as he is crazy in love with it." - Mikael Wood, *Los Angeles Times*
"An immensely entertaining pop-music survey course. [Stanley] is engagingly opinionated and often very, very funny" *The assemblage of irresistible, bite-size histories of top-of-the-charts stars is joyful, smart, and addictive, just like the best pop songs, and a must for music fans everywhere.* - Booklist, Starred review
"[Stanley] provides an intriguing view of the shifting ground of pop music." - Publishers Weekly
"Bob Stanley loves and finds surprising connections between a thousand kinds of pop. He makes me want to run to the nearest record store and move in." - Stephin Merritt of the Magnetic Fields
"Yeah! Yeah! Yeah! ties together the disparate strands of pop's shape-shifting history to create a vivid living document of the music of our lives." - Greg Milner, author of *Perfecting Sound Forever*
"This book will be

remembered and deserves to be.â • - Robert Christgau, Barnes & Noble Reviewâ œQuixotic and kaleidoscopic, Yeah! Yeah! Yeah! serves up erudite irreverence on every page. Like its sprawling subject, it invites everyone in for a listen.â • - Chris Vognar, Dallas Morning Newsâ œTells the story of American and British pop music almost as engagingly as the songs themselves.â • - Glenn Gamboa, Newsdayâ œZips through decades of dance tunes and teenage heartthrobs with an affectionate ebullienceâ | As good â ^a story of pop musicâ ™ as a fan could hope for.â • - Ryan Little, Washington Postâ œ[An] exuberant celebration of the silly and the sublimeâ | [Stanleyâ ™s] writing delights and surprises, and his description of the music makes you want to dance to it.â • - Sarah Larson, The New Yorkerâ œ">Read more

It comes as no surprise that one of the trio who have made 25 years' worth of fantastic music under the name Saint Etienne has turned out to be an adept chronicler of 60+ years of pop music. His record collection must be staggering. This is a long but breezy book, equally suited for reading start-to-finish or dipping in to selected eras at will. It's largely chronological, with side-trips to discuss genres, fads, and individual artists at appropriate points. I don't agree with every pronouncement Stanley makes about certain bands and artists, but I'm glad he makes them -- this is an *opinionated* stroll through pop history, not a dry timeline. I especially appreciate the way he hops back and forth across the Atlantic as rock and pop have done over time; I've read many books with either British or American focuses, but never one that tried to make sense of how the balance has shifted between them like this one does. I also applaud Stanley for paying necessary attention to the role of disco / dance / techno music, which is so often ignored or posited as antithetical to rock music when it's a vital part of its DNA. "Yeah Yeah Yeah" takes us from the birth of rock in the 1950s up to about the year 2000, where Stanley draws a line and claims that download culture is fundamentally different than the "Top of the Pops"/"American Bandstand" chart-driven era. I 60% agree with him and 40% think this line is a little arbitrary... but at 750 pages as it is, he had to stop writing somewhere! I look forward to Volume 2 ("Meh Meh Meh"?) when the dust settles on the forecast Death of the Music Industry (TM).

Stanley tries the impossible here: squeezing a bookshelf's worth of material into a single volume. It's an admirably crazy effort, and it works in keeping the reader engaged, at least when that reader knows the performers he's talking about. It's more Brit-centric than an American writer's text would be. That's not a complaint, just an observation and one of the reasons I didn't know some names that didn't make a splash in the U.S. And when I do recognize the names, I want him to say more

sometimes. That's inevitable. Stanley is a contrarian critic, it seems to me, sometimes forcefully declaring an opinion that might raise an eyebrow. The Turtles the best pop band of the sixties? New Morning Dylan's best album? Does Radiohead deserve his quick dismissal? But his jabs just make readers think how they would evaluate something differently. So no complaint here either. I do see some errors of fact. Minor. But "Queen Jane Approximately" does NOT appear on Blonde on Blonde as he says on 147-8. (It's from Highway 61 Revisited.) And Peter Sellers played multiple roles in several films, but not in Lolita (to my knowledge), as Stanley asserts on 263. And there are many notable omissions. No mention of Wilco? Warren Zevon? Nick Lowe? Graham Parker? Other readers will have their own list. I most enjoy Stanley's way with figurative language. He can be hilarious. He describes one singer's style as giving "the impression the singer was continuously jumping off a chair to avoid a mouse." Ric Ocasek's "gaunt, almost alien presence...hid...behind huge mirror shades...make him look like a human fly." A page later the early Elvis Costello is "singing as though he's standing in a fridge." In dismissing Radiohead, Stanley has Thom Yorke singing as though he's in the fetal position. There are a lot of such gems. Whether the flippancy is always warranted or not, it can still be fun to read such things.

Although there is a definite British bias to this book, because the author is British, this is still an excellent and well written and researched book. To me, the book seemed to have four major parts (although officially there are five): prior to 1960, 1960-1970, 1970-1975 and after 1975. Prior to 1960, the author does an excellent job of covering the start of pop (rock and roll, R&B, etc.) from Bill Haley and Comets, the official first hit - Rock Around the Clock, through Elvis Presley, Jerry Lee Lewis, Buddy Holly, etc. This period ends when Elvis goes into the army and Buddy Holly dies in the plane crash. After 1960 there is a lull, but a number of groups and organizations take over from there. The story about the Brill Building in NYC is especially interesting to me, because I was unaware of it. This building had cubicles with song writer groups churning out top 20 hits. This is where Carol King got her start with "Will you still love me tomorrow". Then there was the Motown organization in Detroit and the numerous acts, Four Tops, Supremes, etc and top 10 songs created by that organization. Also, there was the "British invasion" with the Beatles, Rolling Stones, and numerous other acts that followed (Kinks, Dave Clark Five, etc.). Finally, there was the US groups that responded to this including the Byrds, Paul Revere and the Raiders, etc. And, then there was Bob Dylan. This period, from 1960-1970, is arguably the best and most creative period of pop with numerous excellent acts and songs being created. (Of course, having grown up in this period, I'm biased - but the reader who disagrees should read the book and then listen to the songs created.)

The author does an excellent job of covering this period. The author rightly states that 1970 is a turning point in the period of pop - the second one after 1960 - with the disbanding of the Beatles. Although other bands, e.g. Kinks and Dave Clark Five, and individuals, Bob Dylan, lose some of their creative genius at about this time. However, pop music continues on with acts from Britain - Rod Stewart, Jethro Tull, etc., and acts from the US. In this later section, the author discusses the "Laurel Valley" area of California, near Los Angeles. This area had Crosby, Stills and Nash, the Eagles, Neil Young, Joni Mitchell, the Mamas and the Papas and other acts. The creativity of these British and US groups dissipates in 1975, and pop music splinters. This is the first place where the author shows his British bias by criticizing the "Laurel Valley" groups but not the British groups for losing their creativity. OK, so Stephen Stills was self-absorbed. But, then again, how would you describe John Lennon, George Harrison and Paul McCartney. It seems to me, and this was a key take away for me through the whole book, that these creative acts lose their drive after 5-7 years probably because they get popular, and make a lot of money and are no longer motivated to create. After 1975, music splinters into many different types: disco, electronic, punk, heavy metal, hip hop. One interesting story in this section describes how hip hop got started in the Bronx in the late 1970s. However, to me, most of this section which took up more than half the book was mainly British centric, describing bands which were not popular in the US and not covering US bands to the same level. Consequently, in my opinion, the book interest declined after 1975. Prior to 1975, however, this is an excellent book, and afterwards, not so much. (Maybe that is because I was not as interested in pop music after that year, but I'll let you make that determination on what you think.) In spite of that, I do recommend the book for anyone interested in the birth and development of popular music.

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