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The Record Men: The Chess Brothers And The Birth Of Rock & Roll (Enterprise)



Synopsis

"Brilliant; the best book I have ever read about the recording industry; a classic."--Larry King On the south side of Chicago in the late 1940s, two immigrants; one a Jew born in Russia, the other a black blues singer from Mississippi; met and changed the course of musical history. Muddy Waters electrified the blues, and Leonard Chess recorded it. Soon Bo Diddly and Chuck Berry added a dose of pulsating rhythm, and Chess Records captured that, too. Rock & roll had arrived, and an industry was born. In a book as vibrantly and exuberantly written as the music and people it portrays, Rich Cohen tells the engrossing story of how Leonard Chess, with the other record men, made this new sound into a multi-billion-dollar business; aggressively acquiring artists, hard-selling distributors, riding the crest of a wave that would crash over a whole generation. Originally published in hardcover as *Machers and Rockers*. About the series: Enterprise pairs distinguished writers with stories of the economic forces that have shaped the modern worlds; the institutions, the entrepreneurs, the ideas. Enterprise introduces a new genre; the business book as literature. 12 illustrations

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

First, my wife ordered both "The Record Men" and "Machers and Rockers" for me on the Buy-Together discount, as I was researching Chess Records for a historical presentation we are working on. They turned out to be the exact same book, only with different titles and one has a

hardcover. This is misleading on the parts of the author, publisher AND .Second, the subtitle of "Machers and Rockers" is Chess Records and the Business of Rock & Roll. Well, these subjects are covered, but not in the detail one would expect from the title. It covers a broader history of American music, but doesn't do either the justice they deserve. Considering the title(s) (of both books) do we really need to cover the story of W.C. Handy's first experience of Delta Blues? It's been done much better in other books.And third, the author is sloppy with some of the details. He refers to a 1977 concert by The Who promoting their album "Who's Next" which was actually released in 1971.If you are only going to read one book on Chess Records, either one (the're both the same) is adequate. However, for a more in-depth look at Chicago blues, I would recommend the biographies of Muddy Waters ("Can't Be Satisfied") and Howlin' Wolf ("Moanin' At Midnight") - both excellent books.

I enjoyed this book very much. Mr. Cohen has a distinctive voice, and once you pick up his rhythms the book is an entertaining read. (A number of great anecdotes also help make it a fun read). He weaves the various strands of the story - musical, cultural, sociological, historical - together fluently, and makes a number of insightful points that help the reader connect the dots. As other reviewers have noted, this is not a purely chronological history full of lists and footnotes; but it will take you back to a time and place that is forever gone. Highly recommended.

Great book. very interesting if you are interested in the roots of rock and roll. fun to learn that all of the rock bands of the 60's and 70's were paying tribute to these bluesmen who really did not get recognized in their own right.

Great book, perhaps the author could have organized it better. Aside from jumping around a lot, this is a good read and would recommend it to anyone interested in learning more about the roots of rock n' roll, the music industry in America and the injustices which surround it.

This book was a little strange. Lots of good information, but a lot of irrelevant filler, too. You really had to pay attention. This book got better as it went on. Slow start, hang in there though - it gets better.

This is an enjoyable read, but if you're the type of person who likes to read excellent liner notes from the Chess reissues thru Hip-O-Select, you'll find very little of value here. Some jaw-dropping errors regarding Chuck Berry. Chuck was not "just out of high school" when he went to Chess Records in

1955. He was born in October, 1926, which means he was over 28 when he recorded Maybellene in June of 1955. The flip of Maybellene was Wee Wee Hours NOT You Can't Catch Me. As stated by a previous reviewer, Behind Blue Eyes was on The Who's 1971 LP Who Next NOT the 1977 LP Who Are You. The story the author tells is good enough. The book is thankfully a quick read, but it is far a "the story of Chess Records". I would consider it a companion piece to the film Cadillac Records. It's "history-lite" with a fair amount of mistakes. Lastly, Larry King is the LAST person I would ever consider as someone I would want an endorsement from regarding music. Enjoyable, short, inaccurate, etc.

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