



# How Music Works

By David Byrne

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## How Music Works By David Byrne

*How Music Works* is David Byrne's remarkable and buoyant celebration of a subject he has spent a lifetime thinking about. In it he explores how profoundly music is shaped by its time and place, and he explains how the advent of recording technology in the twentieth century forever changed our relationship to playing, performing, and listening to music.

Acting as historian and anthropologist, raconteur and social scientist, he searches for patterns—and shows how those patterns have affected his own work over the years with Talking Heads and his many collaborators, from Brian Eno to Caetano Veloso. Byrne sees music as part of a larger, almost Darwinian pattern of adaptations and responses to its cultural and physical context. His range is panoptic, taking us from Wagnerian opera houses to African villages, from his earliest high school reel-to-reel recordings to his latest work in a home music studio (and all the big studios in between).

Touching on the joy, the physics, and even the business of making music, *How Music Works* is a brainy, irresistible adventure and an impassioned argument about music's liberating, life-affirming power.

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## How Music Works By David Byrne Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #285559 in Books
- Brand: Brand: McSweeney's
- Published on: 2012-09-12
- Ingredients: Example Ingredients
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 1.60" h x 7.10" w x 9.10" l, 2.40 pounds
- Binding: Hardcover
- 352 pages

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### Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

**Amazon Best Books of the Month, September 2012:** It's no surprise that David Byrne knows his music. As the creative force behind Talking Heads and many solo and collaborative ventures, he's been writing, playing, and recording music for decades. What is surprising is how well his voice translates to the page. In this wide-ranging, occasionally autobiographical analysis of the evolution and inner workings of the music industry, Byrne explores his own deep curiosity about the "patterns in how music is written, recorded, distributed, and received." He is an opinionated and well-educated tour guide, and the resulting essays--on topics from rockers' clothes to the role of the turntable, concert stages to recording studios--will give you an entirely new perspective on the complex journey a song takes from conception to your iPod. --*Neal Thompson*

From [Booklist](#)

**\*Starred Review\*** Most people know idiosyncratic, Scottish-born David Byrne as the front man of that great new wave band, Talking Heads. But he is also an author, painter, photographer, and film and record producer. In this wide-ranging celebration of the power of music, he discusses, among many topics, the early days of the recording industry, various types of music venues, birdsong and whale calls, the significance of mixtapes, the development of CDs, his love of African rhythms, and the concept of creativity and what it means to be creative. But he also mentions his own career as well as the many collaborators he has worked with, including English musician and producer Brian Eno, Brazilian composer and singer Caetano Veloso, and DJ Fatboy Slim. He describes the origin of his twitchy stage persona and acknowledges his own shyness, describing himself as "a withdrawn introvert," whose most comfortable way of communicating was, he says, onstage. ("Poor Susan Boyle; I can identify," he writes). At one point, he even self-diagnoses himself as having a mild form of Asperger's syndrome. He concludes by asking provocative questions: What is music good for? Why do we need music? "Funding future creativity is a worthy investment," he insists. Endlessly fascinating, insightful, and intelligent. --June Sawyers

From Bookforum

Byrne's book tells a version of the musical life that is deliberately less dramatic and heroic than first-person accounts by musicians usually are. That's because *How Music Works* isn't just a memoir... it meanders at some points, or lapses into a digest of Byrne's broad reading on various subjects. In a book that covers so much ground, often with a zoomed-in level of detailed focus, it's up to the reader to find the through lines that speak to his or her particular concerns. —Simon Reynolds

### Users Review

**From reader reviews:**

**Karen Imes:**

Spent a free time and energy to be fun activity to accomplish! A lot of people spent their sparetime with their family, or their particular friends. Usually they doing activity like watching television, gonna beach, or picnic in the park. They actually doing same thing every week. Do you feel it? Do you want to something different to fill your own personal free time/ holiday? May be reading a book may be option to fill your free time/ holiday. The first thing that you ask may be what kinds of book that you should read. If you want to try out look for book, may be the reserve untitled *How Music Works* can be excellent book to read. May be it

can be best activity to you.

**Michael Bradley:**

In this period of time globalization it is important to someone to acquire information. The information will make professionals understand the condition of the world. The condition of the world makes the information better to share. You can find a lot of referrals to get information example: internet, magazine, book, and soon. You will see that now, a lot of publisher which print many kinds of book. Typically the book that recommended to your account is How Music Works this e-book consist a lot of the information on the condition of this world now. This specific book was represented how can the world has grown up. The language styles that writer make usage of to explain it is easy to understand. The writer made some analysis when he makes this book. That's why this book ideal all of you.

**Andre Todd:**

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**David Thompson:**

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