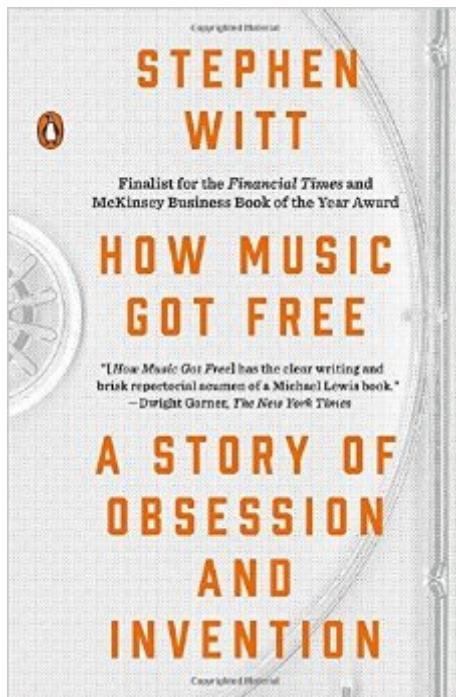


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How Music Got Free: A Story Of Obsession And Invention



Synopsis

Finalist for the 2016 Los Angeles Times Book Prize, the 2016 J. Anthony Lukas Book Prize, and the 2015 Financial Times and McKinsey Business Book of the Year New York Times Editors' ChoiceONE OF THE YEAR'S BEST BOOKS: The Washington Post
The Financial Times' Slate The Atlantic Time Forbes [How Music Got Free] has the clear writing and brisk reportorial acumen of a Michael Lewis book. "Dwight Garner, The New York Times What happens when an entire generation commits the same crime? How Music Got Free is a riveting story of obsession, music, crime, and money, featuring visionaries and criminals, moguls and tech-savvy teenagers. It's about the greatest pirate in history, the most powerful executive in the music business, a revolutionary invention and an illegal website four times the size of the iTunes Music Store. Journalist Stephen Witt traces the secret history of digital music piracy, from the German audio engineers who invented the mp3, to a North Carolina compact-disc manufacturing plant where factory worker Dell Glover leaked nearly two thousand albums over the course of a decade, to the high-rises of midtown Manhattan where music executive Doug Morris cornered the global market on rap, and, finally, into the darkest recesses of the Internet. Through these interwoven narratives, Witt has written a thrilling book that depicts the moment in history when ordinary life became forever entwined with the world online "when, suddenly, all the music ever recorded was available for free. In the page-turning tradition of writers like Michael Lewis and Lawrence Wright, Witt's deeply reported first book introduces the unforgettable characters "inventors, executives, factory workers, and smugglers "who revolutionized an entire artform, and reveals for the first time the secret underworld of media pirates that transformed our digital lives. An irresistible never-before-told story of greed, cunning, genius, and deceit, How Music Got Free isn't just a story of the music industry "it's a must-read history of the Internet itself. From the Hardcover edition.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I'm not sure digital piracy qualifies as an untold story at this late date, and I suspect opinions are colored by generation. But "How Music Got Free" definitely fleshed out and clarified plenty of holes in my own recollection. Whether your point of reference is Bit Torrent and Pirate Bay, Usenet, Kazaa, Napster, or you're old-school and recall the Great Blank Cassette and VHS Tape Scare of the 70's and 80's, I think you'll find Witt's book informative, perhaps nostalgic, but certainly a hard-to-put-down fun read. The author does a masterful job threading multiple storylines portraying three main characters separated by geography, profession, and economics. They never meet yet each plays a vital role in the big picture - what, why and how - digital music piracy went from a college/hacker pastime that mutated rapidly uncontrollably - into a worldwide phenomenon - one that impacted not just the music industry but the very notion of intellectual property and the entire digital content space we inhabit today with repercussions still in effect. But it would be a mistake to write off "How Music Became Free" as a sensationalist glorification of stick-it-to-the-corporations "pirate culture", a la "Away from Keyboard". Curiously, Witt sites that film as an influence yet the tone of "How Music Got Free" is very different (and Pirate Bay itself plays a decidedly minor role).

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