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Song Machine: Inside The Hit Factory



Synopsis

Over the last two decades, a new type of song has emerged. Today's hits bristle with "hooks", musical burrs designed to snag your ear every seven seconds. Painstakingly crafted to tweak the brain's delight in melody, rhythm, and repetition, these songs are industrial-strength products made for malls, casinos, the gym, and the Super Bowl halftime show. The tracks are so catchy and so potent that you can't not listen to them. Traveling from New York to Los Angeles, Stockholm to Korea, John Seabrook visits specialized teams composing songs in digital labs with novel techniques, and he traces the growth of these contagious hits from their origins in early '90s Sweden to their ubiquity on today's charts. Featuring the stories of artists like Katy Perry, Britney Spears, and Rihanna as well as expert songsmiths like Max Martin, Ester Dean, and Dr. Luke, *The Song Machine* will change the way you listen to music.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Seabrook's book will appeal to at least two types of readers. First, it may appeal to those who grew up in the mid-late 1990s and the 2000s, when a new teen pop invasion began (led by Britney Spears and the Backstreet Boys), and when Jay Z began his ascent to music-biz tycoon. (Or, if you aren't a Millennial, perhaps the music of Katy Perry, Rihanna, Justin Timberlake, and Taylor Swift scratches an itch for you, and you'd like a peek behind the curtain to learn how it's made). Another group of readers who may be attracted to 'The Song Machine' are the music nerds and musicians who are intimately familiar with how records were made during "the golden age of recording"--the

kind of people who watch documentaries like "The Wrecking Crew" and "Muscle Shoals". People curious about who the modern-day Phil Spector and Brian Wilsons are, and how the hits are being made in the digital age. I'm not sure the book will wholly satisfy either group of readers, but I think it's an important piece of reporting that will be read in 50-100 years by historians of music and pop culture. For the fans of this music (particularly fans of female chart-toppers from Britney S. to Kesha), you'll get a look at how the industry finds unknown teens with musical ambition and molds them into superstars. You'll learn how this is taken to even greater extremes by the South Koreans, whose pop marketplace places much less value on "authenticity," rebelliousness, and individuality. There is a discussion of how "American Idol" affected today's record business.

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