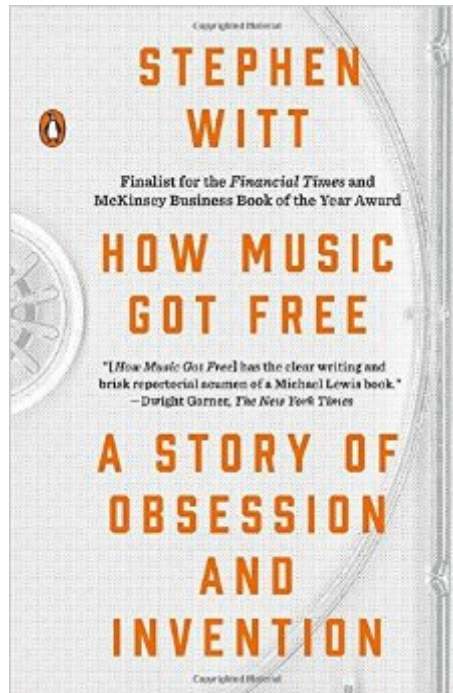


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How Music Got Free: A Story Of Obsession And Invention



Synopsis

Finalist for the 2016 Los Angeles Times Book Prize, the 2016 J. Anthony Lukas Book Prize, and the 2015Â Financial TimesÂ and McKinsey Business Book of the YearÂ New York TimesÂ Editorsâ™ ChoiceONE OF THE YEAR'S BEST BOOKS: TheÂ Washington Post
â ¢Â TheÂ Financial TimesÂ â ¢ SlateÂ â ¢ The AtlanticÂ â ¢ TimeÂ â ¢ Forbesâ œ[How Music Got Free] has the clear writing and brisk reportorial acumen of a Michael Lewis book.â •â "Dwight Garner, The New York TimesWhat 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. Itâ™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.Â 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 onlineâ "when, suddenly, all the music ever recorded was available for free. In the page-turning tradition of writers like Michael Lewis and Lawrence Wright, Wittâ™s deeply reported first book introduces the unforgettable charactersâ "inventors, executives, factory workers, and smugglersâ "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 isnâ™t just a story of the music industryâ "itâ™s a must-read history of the Internet itself.From the Hardcover edition.

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Customer Reviews

Iâ™m not sure digital piracy qualifies as an untold story at this late date, and I suspect opinions are colored by generation. But â€˜How Music Got Freeâ™ 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 youâ™re old-school and recall the Great Blank Cassette and VHS Tape Scare of the 70â™s and 80â™s, I think youâ™ll find Wittâ™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 â€œwhat, why and howâ€• digital music piracy went from a college/hacker pastime that mutated rapidly â€œ 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 â€œHow Music Became Freeâ€• as a sensationalist glorification of stick-it-to-the-corporations â€˜pirate cultureâ™, à la â€˜Away from Keyboardâ™. Curiously, Witt sites that film as an influence yet the tone of â€˜How Music Got Freeâ™ is very different (and Pirate Bay itself plays a decidedly minor role).

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