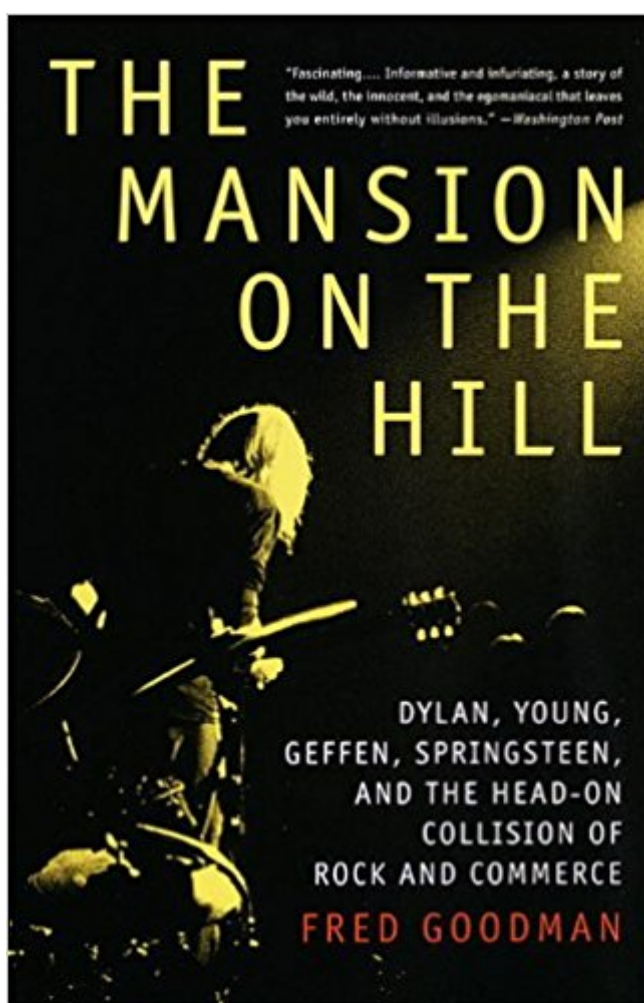


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# The Mansion On The Hill: Dylan, Young, Geffen, Springsteen, And The Head-on Collision Of Rock And Commerce



## Synopsis

In 1964, on the brink of the British Invasion, the music business in America shunned rock and roll. There was no rock press, no such thing as artist management -- literally no rock-and-roll business. Today the industry will gross over \$20 billion. How did this change happen? From the moment Pete Seeger tried to cut the power at the 1965 Newport Folk Festival debut of Bob Dylan's electric band, rock's cultural influence and business potential have been grasped by a rare assortment of ambitious and farsighted musicians and businessmen. Jon Landau took calls from legendary producer Jerry Wexler in his Brandeis dorm room and went on to orchestrate Bruce Springsteen's career. Albert Grossman's cold-eyed assessment of the financial power at his clients' fingertips made him the first rock manager to blaze the trail that David Geffen transformed into a superhighway. Dylan's uncanny ability to keep his manipulation of the business separate from his art and reputation prefigured the savvy -- and increasingly cynical -- professionalism of groups like the Eagles. Fred Goodman, a longtime rock critic and journalist, digs into the contradictions and ambiguities of a generation that spurned and sought success with equal fervor. *The Mansion on the Hill*, named after a song title used by Hank Williams, Neil Young, and Bruce Springsteen, breaks new ground in our understanding of the people and forces that have shaped the music. From the Hardcover edition.

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## Customer Reviews

If you wanted to write the definitive history of rock music, you'd need three things: a deep appreciation of the music, an understanding of business, and a journalist's skills and instincts. Fred

Goodman has all three, and *The Mansion on the Hill* is a must-read for anyone interested in how a counter-cultural phenomenon with moral overtones became--in a mere thirty years--a multibillion-dollar business. Goodman, a former editor at *Rolling Stone*, traces the arc of this weird transformation by focusing principally on the stories of a handful of key artists and their managers--Bob Dylan and Albert Grossman, Neil Young and David Geffen, and Bruce Springsteen and Jon Landau--but the book is richly populated with others, famous and not-so-famous. Goodman makes good use of his extensive research (he conducted 200 interviews over three years), and admirably balances reportorial analysis with a certain passion for the values that rock music once stood for--and sometimes still does. --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

Fans shocked by Bob Dylan's nonreaction to a bank's using "The Times They Are A-Changin'" as an ad jingle have their worst fears confirmed by Goodman's screed on the co-opting of Woodstock nation's music. Taking his title from separate songs by Hank Williams (senior, and barely mentioned), Neil Young, and Bruce Springsteen, Goodman examines how a music marketed for its antiestablishment stance became mere product in the hands of hip capitalists like Jon Landau and David Geffen. Ex^--Rolling Stone editor and reviewer Landau is portrayed as an operator unconcerned with niceties like conflict of interest, such as reviewing records by musicians with whom he was financially involved, in his pursuit of pelf. This should not surprise us about big-time entertainment, of course, and Goodman just underscores how a pop music that arose from the left-wing, anticapitalist American folk scene was merchandised and hyped until it became what it originally reacted against: the boring, unimaginative mainstream. Good book, sad story, and excellent companion to Selvin's *Summer of Love* (1994). Mike Tribby --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

Neil Young and Rick James used to be in a band together. Neil Young is color blind and epileptic. The Eagles carved their career specifically to be rich and successful. Bruce Springsteen isn't the brightest of bulbs. As a breed, record label owners and musicians' personal managers are giant tools. David Geffen got super-rich mostly due to good timing. Much of the what we know as the music industry was formed by individuals who aspired to be rich and influential power players, not by the development or nurturing of good music or musicians. The success of Bruce Springsteen's "Born in the USA" album was preordained and the product of a marketing juggernaut. Jon Landau was never a good record producer but that didn't stop him from doing it anyway. There -- that's a gross oversimplification of "Mansion on the Hill", with a couple of fun facts tossed in. I've been

reading quite a few books lately on the record business and the movie business (emphasis on the word "business"). "Mansion on the Hill" is one of the better ones I've read, but its impact on me was sort of like learning as a kid that there was no Santa Claus. There is often an ugly and depressing truth under any facade of glitz and glamour, and MOTH peels back each layer to show you the behind-the-scenes players, the histories, the pettiness, and the ugly manipulation. What little respect you may still have for the music business will be whittled down to next to nothing before you are finished with this book. It's a fascinating read nonetheless. Good companion books to read with this one include "Hit Men" (published 7 years before this one but might be better if read after this one) and "Appetite for Self-Destruction: The Spectacular Crash of the Record Business in the Digital Age" (to be read after MOTH). The music business is steadily being eroded from the inside. It's almost over, folks. Music has now officially become "product" (and that's not really news). And if you watch "American Idol" and buy those contestants' records, you are probably part of the problem. I feel bad for young kids today who grow up thinking that the new junk they hear on the radio today is good music. They're just too young to know how deluded they really are -- or how much they've been robbed.

Needed this book for a class, and ended up really enjoying it! Awesome read.

Most underrated book about rock history. This guy tells it like it really happened. Prepare to have your little rock heroes bashed around a bit, possibly. No punches pulled, the real story is told here, filling in the blanks to the history of rock. This will really help you understand why you were listening to that lamo junk music on the radio when Led Zeppelin II was collecting dust!

Interesting look at the music and radio businesses at one point in time. The appeal of the book is primarily with anyone who grew up with Boston radio in the '60's and early '70's but is an enjoyable read for anyone else.

Great book.

arrived promptly and was as advertised

my husband is reading the book and he really likes it. he says it give you a different perspective on the growth of music in my ge ge ge neration

This book seems to be a great footage of rock articles. It presents no definitive theory about the rock industry, nor it gives a real portrait of the rock scenario through the years. It only gives separated pieces of histories about Springsteen, Buffalo Springfield, Neil Young, Bob Dylan, Peter Frampton, Grateful Dead, MC-5 and a handful of others. The writing style is dry and badly developed. Don't recommended.

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