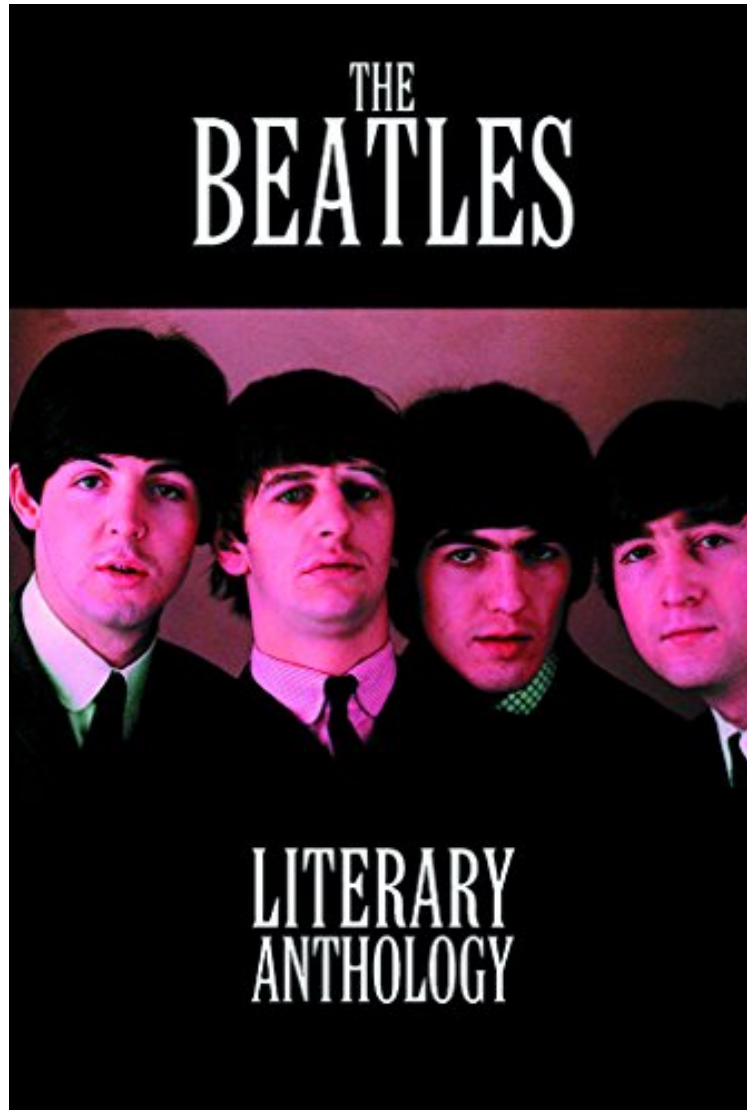


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The Beatles Literary Anthology

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From Brand: Plexus Publishing : The Beatles Literary Anthology before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Beatles Literary Anthology:

5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. DisappointedBy Kindle CustomerI was looking forward to receiving this book from . After reading June Skinner's 'Read The Beatles' which I enjoyed very much, I was anticipating another even larger compilation of writings on the Beatles that spanned their career. The key here is, "their career" not John Lennon's. What I actually found were two things that I didn't enjoy. One was the over abundance of articles that the compiler uncovered that were about John Lennon. Not any of the others. Just John. While I love John and find him

brilliant and interesting, with a title like "The Beatles" Literary Anthology', I was hoping to find articles about the band or at least as many individual writings and interviews featuring the other 3. Before you misunderstand, this book does have articles about the Beatles. Some of them are very interesting in fact. But it seems the interesting ones were already included in June Skinner's excellent book. The ones that are in here are a curious gathering from disgruntled people who can't stand the group. There are articles from people who thought they were horribly over rated and untalented. (Not that I mind articles like this. I don't expect everyone to think they were wonderful, but why so many in this book?) There were also articles from people like Nowel Coward who thought they were rude, (THAT one was quite interesting and fun to read!) and a few from fans like Carol Bedford who wrote a complete book called, 'Waiting for the Beatles'. The two that stand out for me were hers and an excerpt taken from 'The Beatles Down Under'. Other than that, unless you only love John and not the others or you really enjoy reading way too many articles written from the point of view of people who think they were over rated, I'm not sure what the point of this book was. Instead of this one, why not read June Skinner's book? It's cheaper and she includes many more interesting offerings than this one.

8 of 8 people found the following review helpful. This Gets a Rave Review, Yeah, Yeah, Yeah! By BeatleBangs1964

This is a book of extraordinarily high caliber. Like the Beatle book by Mojo, this one includes a myriad of magazine articles spanning the Beatles' careers as well as musical analyses, comprehensive biographies and analytical dissections of each Beatle. One drawback the book has are some inaccuracies, e.g. that George Harrison did not contribute in a musically significant way until 1969 with the release of the Abbey Road album. That just isn't true. George Harrison was a gifted guitarist and extraordinary lyricist who had been writing songs for years prior to 1969! Just LISTEN to the 1966 stellar gem "Revolver" which has 3 songs by George Harrison. The intensity of his lyrics and his unique guitar playing helped define the Beatles as the extraordinary band that they were. Suggesting otherwise is counterproductive. On the plus side, this book digs quite deeply into history and provides fascinating accounts of the inception of the Beatles; Pete Best's dismissal from the group in 1962 and his replacement Ringo Starr; personal accounts from Best himself; Beatle manager Brian Epstein's first encounter with the boys in 1961. Each Beatle and the influences that helped shape and guide him down his individual Long Winding Road are discussed in depth; their philosophies; political ideologies and core values and beliefs are explored as well. If you are on a quest for buried treasure, you will find plenty of it in this book. You will uncover anecdotes about Beatle conventions; Murray the K, a New York disc jockey who followed the Beatles around during their first trip to America in 1964; his views on John's wife Yoko in later years; John's and George's tragic and untimely demise as well. Even with the death of two Beatles (at the time of this review), the book does an excellent job of portraying their staying power and how they continue to influence music and other art media. All in all, a solid job. I highly recommend this one, yeah, yeah, yeah!

16 of 16 people found the following review helpful. Essential to any Beatles library By Joel Bocko

Obviously this book should be picked up by any hardcore Beatles fan, but it might be even more essential if you're just a casual Beatlemaniac. Why? Because it contains excerpts from the vast volume of writing on the Fab 4 which you'll probably just dip a toe in otherwise. This anthology compiles magazine articles, both contemporary and retrospective, excerpts from biographies and autobiographies, analysis of music, "I was there" recollections, and dissections of the Beatles as a cultural phenomenon. The last category is often the weakest, since it tends to combine pompous extrapolation with incorrect "facts" and worthless repetition of conventional wisdom, i.e. that George Harrison didn't write any worthy songs till Abbey Road. Yeah, right: even leaving aside his love 'em/hate 'em Indian experiments, the White Album contains gems like the underrated chilling Long, Long, Long and the widely acknowledged masterpiece While My Guitar Gently Weeps. But that's a minor quibble, and the book is full of buried treasures, too many to mention. I'll focus on the cream of the crop here. Culled from original drummer Pete Best's autobiography, we hear the tale of how Best got sacked for Ringo, this time from the horse's mouth (including an interesting anecdote about Best and manager Brian Epstein). Epstein himself has an entry, a truly fascinating account of discovering the Beatles in a sweaty Cavern performance. Then there's an eyewitness account of the Elvis-Beatles meeting which, contrary to press releases of the time, did not go well. Primarily due to Lennon's acerbic mouth. Speaking of John, we get to see how far left he swung after expressing doubt about politics in "Revolution": in an interview with British radicals, he pledges admiration for Chairman Mao and is brimming with angry Marxist rhetoric. A quote included in this section brings him down to earth by describing the room full of air-conditioned fur coats he and Yoko kept around this time that they were attacking capitalists. Future feminist Gloria Steinem submits a circa '64 interview with John Lennon which spends more time painting a vivid picture of the Beatles' chaotic stage show and backstage milieu than talking to the "sarcastic Beatle." A QA with George Harrison expresses his spiritual views, and the best interviews in the book are taken from Playboy, including one with all the Beatles in '65 in which they come off as surprisingly frank and honest. They describe themselves as agnostics and freely discuss topics ranging from sex to religion. Also included is Maureen Cleave's 1966 portrait of Lennon which caused all the controversy by quoting his thoughts on Jesus. And though I've already criticized a lot of the Beatles punditry, there are exceptions: mainly stuff written at the time, before the Beatles legend was set in stone. Pieces by Paul Johnson and John Gabree debunk the Beatles as musicians and pop icons, Gabree a tad more effectively than Johnson, whose arrogant vitriol is truly shocking. Also critical is William F. Buckley, condemning what he sees as the Maharishi's vapidity and scolding the group for not looking in their own backyard,

accusing them of being ignorant of Christianity and Western thought. Pauline Kael is observant as always in her review of *Yellow Submarine*, and excerpts from the diaries of Andy Warhol and Noel Coward reveal their take on the pop phenomenon. Chances are you'll find whatever it is you're looking for in this book. Starting with the Beatles' roots in working-class postwar England and the art schools of the 50's, through their gigs in Hamburg and the Cavern Club, into the first outside analysis that greeted the early singles and albums, past first-hand accounts of Beatlemania at the height of its madness (it's astounding nobody died in the frenzy), the recording of *Rubber Soul*, the first evidence of backlash against the Beatles' popularity, lots of cultural commentary on Sgt. Pepper, into the dissolution of the band. And all kinds of cultural phenomena surrounding the group are put under the microscope too. *Swingin' London*, the Maharishi, Charles Manson, the rock renaissance of the 60's, even the bootlegs of the 70's and the spoof group "The Rutles" are touched upon. One of the most entertaining sections details a rabid Beatles convention, in which publicity-hound DJ Murray the K puts in his 2 cents on Yoko. Near the end of the book, there's quite a bit of ink spilled on the murder of John Lennon and the quieter death of George Harrison and, you know, the dream is over. Quite a stocking stuffer.

The Beatles: Literary Anthology recounts the group's mercurial rise from the British Merseybeat scene; the "British invasion" that made them iconic figures in the USA; the experimentation with song structure and sound-recording technique that re-defined pop music forever; their embracing of psychedelic drugs, hippie utopianism and pacifism, amidst the social changes of the mid-to-late 1960s; the band's acrimonious split, and the disparate, sometimes tragic post-Beatles paths followed by John Lennon, Paul McCartney, George Harrison and Ringo Starr. The strange extremes of a career virtually unparalleled in terms of mass-media fame are also examined in thought-provoking articles: the American Far Right's conspiracy theory that marked the Beatles as agents of Communism; the "Paul is Dead" myth, and the cryptographic reading of Beatles trivia that inspired it; the attempts of Lennon, with all his human failings, to live with his absurdly messianic status; the insane "messages" that the Manson Family girls deciphered from the lyrics of *The White Album*; the obsessions of disturbed Beatles fan Mark Chapman, and his tragic attempt to steal a little of Lennon's celebrity.

From *Publishers Weekly* When everything that can be written on a subject has been written, its time to sift through the morass and sort out the best of it. Happily, Evans, editor of this outstanding compendium of Beatles writing, has an eye for the relevant, the telling and the truthful, as well as the acumen to organize these accounts in a way that best tells a story. Not simply a "best-of" anthology, Evans book functions even better as a narrative history. One will be tempted to rummage through it haphazardly, cherry-picking accounts from top-shelf personasa young Gloria Steinems 1964 hotel room interview with a bedraggled and irritable John Lennon; a cranky Noel Cowards summation of a Beatles concert ("bad-mannered little shits who had a certain guileless charm and stayed on mercifully for not too long"); Cynthia Lennons gut wrenching account of walking in on her then-husband and Yoko Ono ("They looked so right together, so naturally self-composed I felt totally superfluous")but in doing so, one would miss the subtle narrative-historical arc that runs through the whole. From pre-Beatles art school days to Lennons assassination and beyond, the book is loosely chronological but shaped by a nicely intuitive arrangement by association, so that George Martins account of the production process of "Sergeant Pepper" (and his dismissal of the idea that the album contains hidden drug references) is followed by an Alan Aldridge interview of Paul McCartney about the Beatles psychedelic-era songs. The book brims with over 40 years of interviews, articles, personal accounts, reviews and essays, deftly edited and arranged to contextualize each stage of the bands evolution and organize an otherwise fragmented and disparate collection into a whole much larger than its parts. About the only thing Evanss volume lacks is Beatles fan fiction, and for that we can count ourselves grateful. Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.