



## 33 Revolutions per Minute: A History of Protest Songs, from Billie Holiday to Green Day

By Dorian Lynskey

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Dorian Lynskey is one of the most prominent music critics writing today. With *33 Revolutions Per Minute*, he offers an engrossing, insightful, and wonderfully researched history of protest music in the twentieth century and beyond. From Billie Holiday and Woodie Guthrie to Bob Dylan and the Clash to Green Day and Rage Against the Machine, *33 Revolutions Per Minute* is a moving and fascinating portrait of a century of popular music that tried to change the world.

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### Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

The protest song reached its zenith in 1960s America when Bob Dylan, Buffalo Springfield, Country Joe and the Fish, Jimi Hendrix, and Joan Baez wrote popular songs to protest American involvement in the Vietnam War and the mistreatment of social and economic groups. In some cases—Dylan's "Masters of War," P.F. Sloan's "Eve of Destruction," Country Joe McDonald's "I-Feel-Like-I'm-Fixin'-to-Die Rag"—the songs became anthems that defined a generation, confirming the idea that popular music could indeed bring people together to promote a common cause for the common good. Sadly, British music critic Lynskey doesn't capture the deep significance of the protest song or the cultural moments that created them. Although he admirably attempts to isolate the personal and cultural contexts of 33 protest songs, from Billie Holiday's "Strange Fruit" and James Brown's "Say It Loud—I'm Black and I'm Proud" to the Clash's "White Riot," Public Enemy's "Fight the Power," and Steve Earle's "John Walker's Blues," Lynskey doesn't fully demonstrate the reasons that each song qualifies as a protest song in the first place, or why the songs he gathered provide the best examples of a protest song. (Apr.)

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Review

"This book is impressive in scope." (New Yorker)

"A longtime music critic, Lynskey presents up-close details to ballast the book's larger historical sweep." (Los Angeles Times)

"Lynskey has a strong command of the music and its makers." (Wall Street Journal)

"lovely writing...Let's praise the agile, many-tentacled writer Mr. Lynskey can often be, because I loved bits of this book; you can pluck out the many tasty things like seeds from a pomegranate." (New York Times)

"British music critic Dorian Lynskey offers a completely absorbing look at 33 songs, spanning seven decades and haling from five continents...Comprehensive and beautifully written." (Booklist (starred review))

"[A] provocative, absorbing book" (Cleveland Plain Dealer)

"A must-read for militant-music lovers." (The Root)

From the Back Cover

From one of the United Kingdom's most prominent music critics, a page-turning and wonderfully researched history of 33 songs that have transformed the world through the twentieth century and beyond.

When pop music meets politics, the results are often thrilling, sometimes life-changing, and never simple. The protest songs of such great artists as Woody Guthrie, Bob Dylan, Stevie Wonder, U2, Public Enemy,

Fela Kuti, R.E.M., Rage Against the Machine, and the Clash represent pop music at its most charged and relevant, providing the soundtrack and informing social change since the 1930s. They capture the attention and passions of listeners, force their way into the news, and make their presence felt from the streets to the corridors of power.

*33 Revolutions Per Minute* is a history of protest music embodied in 33 songs that span seven decades and four continents, from Billie Holiday crooning "Strange Fruit" before a shocked audience to Crosby, Stills, Nash, and Young paying tribute to the Vietnam protesters killed at Kent State in "Ohio," to Green Day railing against President Bush and twenty-first-century media in "American Idiot." With the aid of exclusive new interviews, Dorian Lynskey explores the individuals, ideas, and events behind each song. This expansive survey examines how music has engaged with racial unrest, nuclear paranoia, apartheid, war, poverty, and oppression, offering hope, stirring anger, inciting action, and producing songs that continue to resonate years down the line, sometimes at great cost to the musicians involved.

For the audience who embraced Alex Ross's **The Rest Is Noise**, Bob Dylan's *Chronicles*, or Simon Reynolds's *Rip It Up and Start Again*, *33 Revolutions Per Minute* is an absorbing and moving account of 33 songs that made history.

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**Judy Marinez:**

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