



## Rudolf Steiner: An Introduction to His Life and Work

By Gary Lachman

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### **Rudolf Steiner: An Introduction to His Life and Work** By Gary Lachman

The first truly popular biography of the influential twentieth-century mystic and educator who-while widely known for founding the Waldorf schools and other educational and humanitarian movements-remains a mystery to many who benefit from his ideas.

People everywhere have heard of Waldorf schools, Biodynamic farming, Camphill Villages, and other innovations of the Austrian philosopher Rudolf Steiner (1861-1925). Indeed, Steiner-as an architect, artist, teacher, and agriculturalist-ranks among the most creative and prolific figures of the early twentieth century, pioneering work in alternative education, holistic health, and environmental research.

While his accomplishments are felt all over the world, few people understand this unusual figure. Steiner's own writings and lectures fill several bookcases, intimidating those who would like to know more. Works on Steiner are often dense and "insider" in tone, further deterring the curious. No popular biography, written by a sympathetic but critical outsider, has been available.

Gary Lachman's *Rudolf Steiner* provides this missing introduction. Along with telling Steiner's story and placing Steiner in his historical context, Lachman's book presents Steiner's key ideas in a readable, accessible manner. In particular, Lachman considers the spread of Steiner's most popular projects, which include Waldorf schools-one of the leading forms of alternative education-and Biodynamic farming-a popular precursor to organic farming. He also traces Steiner's beginnings as a young intellectual in the ferment of fin de siècle culture, to his rise as a thought leader within the influential occult movement of Theosophy, to the founding of his own metaphysical teaching called Anthroposophy.

Finally, the book illustrates how Steiner's methods are put into practice today, and relates Steiner's insights into cosmology to the work of current thinkers.

*Rudolf Steiner* is a full-bodied portrait of one of the most original philosophical and spiritual luminaries of the last two centuries, and gives those interested in the

history of ideas the opportunity to discover one of the most underappreciated figures of the twentieth century.

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### Editorial Review

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A founding member of the rock band Blondie (he's a prolific writer on esoterica and the occult, too) brings one of the twentieth century's most enigmatic figures to life. Architect, artist, teacher, agriculturalist, philosopher--Steiner was all those and remains known for many things. He was founder of the Waldorf schools, an alternative education system still in practice throughout the world; a leader of the popular occult movement, theosophy; and founder of the metaphysical teaching called anthroposophy. Rather the stereotypical intellectual, especially in his youth, Steiner was quiet, possessed of a very rich inner life, and admittedly found dealing with the external world difficult. Lachman calls him a visionary and something of a Renaissance man, with many interests (too many, thought critics, who accused him of dilettantism) and unflagging energy. If some of his theories were goofy, Lachman sees beyond them to point out his very real contributions to the world of ideas during his rise from obscure scholar to spiritual leader. A solid introduction to Steiner's life and thought. *Ray Olson*

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#### About the Author

Gary Lachman, recently inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame as a founding member of the pioneering rock band Blondie, is among today's most widely read writers on esoteric and occult subject matter. His books have been published to acclaim in both England and America.

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