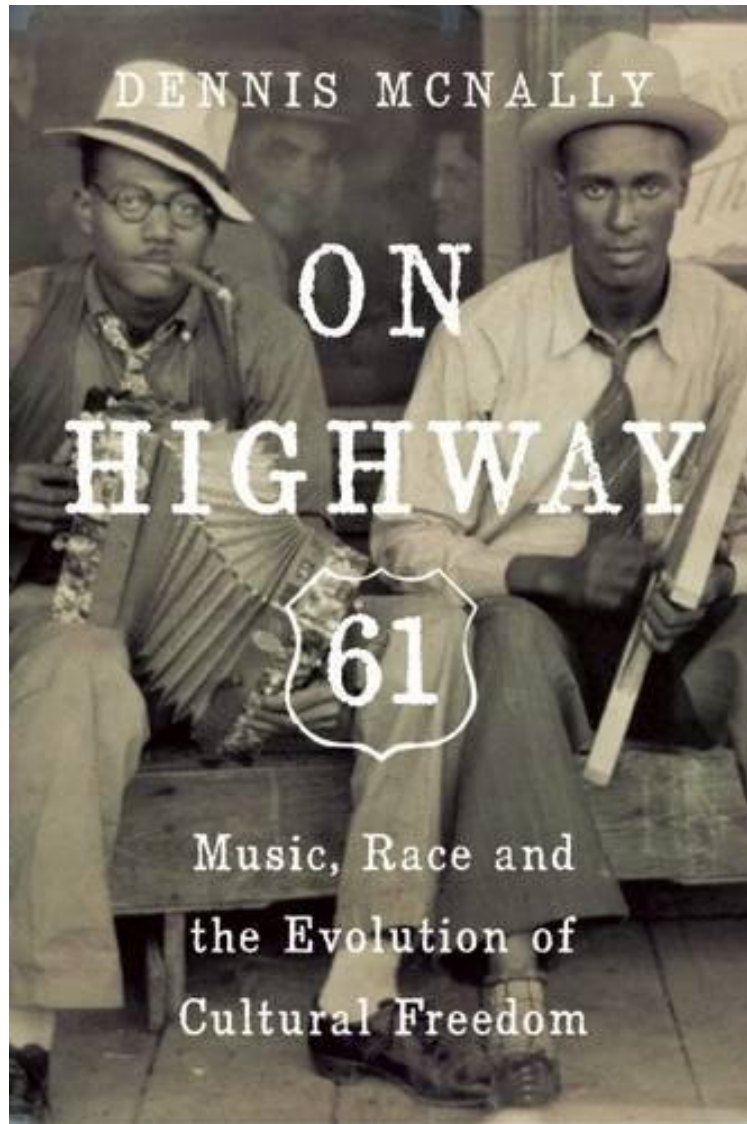


(Ebook pdf) On Highway 61: Music, Race, and the Evolution of Cultural Freedom

On Highway 61: Music, Race, and the Evolution of Cultural Freedom

Dennis McNally

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Dennis McNally : On Highway 61: Music, Race, and the Evolution of Cultural Freedom before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised On Highway 61: Music, Race, and the Evolution of Cultural Freedom:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Take this Highway...and be enlightened.By joshua carsonDennis

McNally, who has written excellent tomes about Jack Kerouac, as well as the Grateful Dead, paints his prose across an even grander canvass with *On Highway 61*. Indeed he traces an alternative, and more accurate history of America, vis a vis the development of music and popular culture over the last 150 years. This is a path that is examined with marvelous scholarship, research, and a clear eye on the social structure and consciousness that reveals all the strengths and all the horrors that are woven into the tapestry of this country. Primarily though, it is a tale of the rich evolution of music in America, and its unique gifts to the world: Blues, Jazz, and hence, RB, Gospel, Soul, and Rock Roll. Tracing the movement and yearning for freedom, both individual and collective, of both blacks and whites in the United States, the constant melting, melding, and unfolding of creative musical forms and the associated social implications are conveyed in a highly entertaining, engaging and readable style by Mr. McNally. This is a comprehensive tale of the intertwining threads that make up our common story, and will appeal to all who appreciate music, musical biography, history, and the story of the indomitable human spirit. Highest recommendation. 14 of 15 people found the following review helpful. This book nails it. By Brigid Meier. *On Highway 61, Music, Race and the Evolution of Cultural Freedom* is a brilliant tour de force; the book is erudite, impeccably and thoroughly researched yet intimately conversational. Dennis McNally has provided the backstory for the alive, sexy, creative origins of our American (sub)culture, particularly as it has manifested through music. I am grateful to him for contextualizing the particles in the wave of this rich, multidimensional history. Get Dennis' book if you care at all about how we arrived at where we are and why the whole world loves to listen to jazz, blues and rock and roll. Now I want to see a deluxe version of this book released along with a set of CDs of all the music referenced. 2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Great Premise That Stops Short. By Jimmy Normal. *On Highway 61*, author Dennis McNally presents a roadmap from Henry Thoreau down the Mississippi River through the blues and jazz to Bob Dylan. Mr. McNally, as in his previous works, does an impeccable job researching the lives of such characters as: Mark Twain, John Handy, Louis Armstrong, and many of the major Mississippi blues masters. I found *On Highway 61* to be a good read, but hardly as essential as, say, Robert Palmer's *Deep Blues* which covers much of the same blues music territory in much better detail and other books detailing the other subjects and civil rights years much more compelling. McNally does his best to weave a story that begins with Thoreau and moves through the civil rights era. That said, the last third of the book rushes to the end way too quickly to reach to the ending that Mr. McNally had probably envisioned when contemplating the project ending the book as if just taking off the needle of good groove record before the ending.

On Highway 61 explores the historical context of the significant social dissent that was central to the cultural genesis of the sixties. The book is going to search for the deeper roots of American cultural and musical evolution for the past 150 years by studying what the Western European culture learned from African American culture in a historical progression that reaches from the minstrel era to Bob Dylan. The book begins with America's first great social critic, Henry David Thoreau, and his fundamental source of social philosophy:---his profound commitment to freedom, to abolitionism and to African-American culture. Continuing with Mark Twain, through whom we can observe the rise of minstrelsy, which he embraced, and his subversive satirical masterpiece *Huckleberry Finn*. While familiar, the book places them into a newly articulated historical reference that shines new light and reveals a progression that is much greater than the sum of its individual parts. As the first post-Civil War generation of black Americans came of age, they introduced into the national culture a trio of musical forms: ragtime, blues, and jazz that would, with their derivations, dominate popular music to this day. Ragtime introduced syncopation and became the cutting edge of the modern 20th century with popular dances. The blues would combine with syncopation and improvisation and create jazz. Maturing at the hands of Louis Armstrong, it would soon attract a cluster of young white musicians who came to be known as the Austin High Gang, who fell in love with black music and were inspired to play it themselves. In the process, they developed a liberating respect for the diversity of their city and country, which they did not see as exotic, but rather as art. It was not long before these young white rebels were the masters of American pop music: big band Swing. As Bop succeeded Swing, and Rhythm and Blues followed, each had white followers like the Beat writers and the first young rock and rollers. Even popular white genres like the country music of Jimmy Rodgers and the Carter Family reflected significant black influence. In fact, the theoretical separation of American music by race is not accurate. This biracial fusion achieved an apotheosis in the early work of Bob Dylan, born and raised at the northern end of the same Mississippi River and Highway 61 that had been the birthplace of much of the black music he would study. As the book reveals, the connection that began with Thoreau and continued for over 100 years was a cultural evolution where, at first individuals, and then larger portions of society, absorbed the culture of those at the absolute bottom of the power structure, the slaves and their descendants, and realized that they themselves were not free. Musicians mentioned in the book are as follows: Henry David Thoreau, Mark Twain, Minstrel Shows, Uncle Tom's Cabin, Fisk Jubilee Singers, Scott Joplin, W.C. Handy, Bessie Smith, Ma Rainey, Charlie Patton, Louis Armstrong, Buddy Bolden, Jelly Roll Morton, Sidney Bechet, Mamie Smith, King Oliver, Billie Holiday, W.E.B. Du Bois, Jack Johnson, Robert Johnson, Original Dixieland Jazz Band, Hoagy Carmichael, Bix Beiderbecke, Mezz Mezzrow, Austin High Gang, Paul Whiteman, Carl Van Vechten, Zora Neale Hurston, Langston Hughes, Duke Ellington, Count Basie, Benny Goodman, Thomas Dorsey, John Hammond, John Lomax, Alan Lomax, Lead Belly, Jimmie Rodgers, Woody Guthrie, Mississippi John

HurtCharlie ParkerDizzy GillespieWillie The Lion SmithLouis JordanMuddy WatersHowlin WolfWillie DixonJohn Lee HookerThelonious MonkJohn ColtraneMiles DavisJack KerouacPete SeegerBill HaleyElvis PresleyChuck BerryRay CharlesLavern BakerAhmet ErtegunJerry WexlerBob DylanJoan BaezPaul ButterfieldMike Bloomfield

"No one can deny that On Highway 61 richly expands our appreciation of the dense gumbo of American culture."UMASS Amherst Alumni Magazine"On Highway 61 is America's most iconic stretch of asphalt, a vital artery of blues, stories and dreamers. Dennis McNally charts that sacred ground from Congo Square to the Canadian border, riding shotgun with Mark Twain, Robert Johnson and Bob Dylan in this gripping, new history of race, revolutionary expression and a nation busy being born at every mile." -- David Fricke, Rolling Stone"Don't let the somewhat serious subtitle of Dennis McNally's thrilling new book throw fear into the brain, because this is a wild ride through musical history. Before it's over, centuries have been traversed, opinions expressed that throw new light on everything we listen to, and appreciation created where none might have been before.The expression and inspiration are all intertwined on the road to freedom, and Dennis McNally turns on the lights in a room full of revelations and re-imaginings in a way that's never been done. Right on time." The Morton Report"Ultimately, On Highway 61 is a book about the journey of our music and the way it helped to expand the eye of the culture, honing its collective clarity, giving it a heartfelt purpose.During its best moments, On Highway 61 flows like a living room conversation with somebody who helped to change the course of pop music and lived to tell about it. Every serious fan of rock and roll, jazz or blues should read this book: It has much to say, and it says it with depth and grace." Electric "On Highway 61 is an essential volume for music lovers." Oakland Tribune"McNally, author of Desolate Angel: Jack Kerouac, the Beat Generation, and America, is adept at putting art in perspective, placing it within the conditions under which it has been made.he makes a strong case that music is not just an expression of freedom but a way of spreading it. Like McNally, we come to believe that 'the essence of the American idea [centers] on the pursuit of freedom, and that achievements in that pursuit are often spurred by word and song.'"The Santa Fe New Mexican/Pasatiempo"In On Highway 61, McNally re-traces the roots of America's counterculture, focusing the hundred years that followed the Civil WarMcNally riffs around that core, layering on the details, character by character, covering the same time period from many different points of view. He tracks the evolution of music itself, how particular techniques begin with one individual and spread from musician to musician, from city to city." Relix Magazine"This scholarly examination of the roots of American music and its cultural evolution encompasses ragtime, blues, jazz, folk, country, big band, swing and good ol rock n roll. At the party, we meet the key players of the day." Sacramento Bee, Notable Fall Nonfiction Title"the books best qualities are McNallys ability as a storyteller combined with his exhaustive scholarly research on the countrys rich African-American musical history and the response of the white audiences along the road." Chino News "Dennis McNally has unraveled a tapestry of historical and societal collisions that inspired, drove, and conjured -- through the seemingly unlikely strands of Thoreau, Twain, Louis Armstrong, Ellington, W. C. Handy, Coltrane, Seeger, and Dylan--a distinctly American conversation in perpetual pursuit of cultural freedom; an unflinching legacy with reverberations felt throughout the world." -- Bill Payne, co-founder of Little Feat"This book is about cultural alchemy and the multicultural, transnational nature of artistic growth and aspirations of political freedom. McNallys interdisciplinary approach to cultural history has too seldom been applied to race-bound considerations of what constitutes the folk in American culture." Toronto Star"For those who lived through the era and who still care about issues of class, race, and gender, Highway 61 is the book to read about American music, the book that will awaken memories, stir the heart, and evoke the sounds of Bessie Smith, Lead Belly, and Bob Dylan." The Rag Blog"This intelligently assembled book is a vivid American portrait full of contradictions and unlikely but pivotal collaborations." The Journal of Wild Culture"Dennis McNally is but the latest guide to take the reader on its byways. The job he does is matched by few and his perspective is his alone. Indeed, McNally rocks, rolls, burns, cruises and kills it in this book, his petal to the metal from beginning to end." Counterpunch"...offers an extensive analysis of and tribute to the popular music that grew along Route 61..."Kirkus"There is much here of interest to serious lovers of innovative music in America." -- Booklist