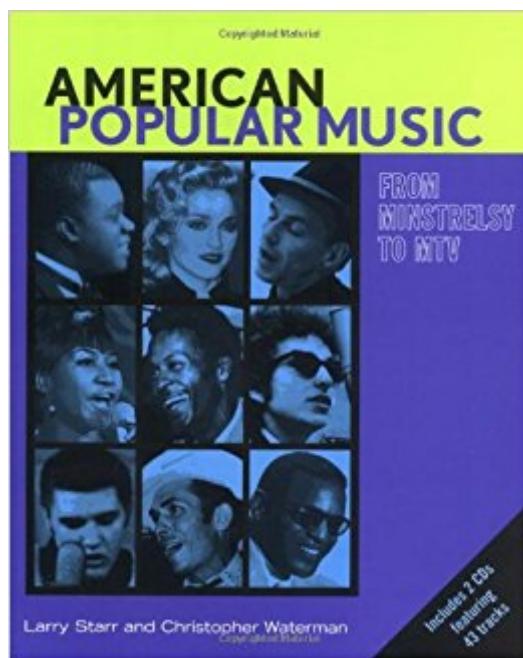


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# American Popular Music: From Minstrelsy To MTV Text & Audio CDs



## Synopsis

The history of American popular music provides crucial insights into the establishment of a distinctively American culture. Authors Larry Starr and Christopher Waterman examine popular music in the United States from its beginnings to the end of the 20th century, furthering our understanding of the relationship between music, culture, and social identity. Using well-chosen examples, insightful, up-to-date commentaries, and an engaging writing style, *American Popular Music: From Minstrelsy to MTV* poses such questions as: Why do people make and listen to music? What do they want from it? What does it give them? Numerous listening examples (corresponding to the 2-CD package that accompanies the text) prompt readers to listen closely to popular music and to learn about its history and the people and institutions that have produced it. *American Popular Music: From Minstrelsy to MTV* integrates detailed discussions of particular popular songs and recordings with a thoughtful consideration of the broader historical and cultural context. Other distinctive features include a rich illustration program, strong pedagogy including numerous boxed inserts, inclusion of earlier American popular music, and well-organized listening charts with lyrics. Themes such as the multicultural roots of popular styles, the development of musical technology, and the operations and strategies of the music industry unify the text. This book is an ideal text for courses in American Studies, Cultural Studies, Popular Culture, and Music. Its accessible style and warm tone will captivate students and other readers, encouraging them to become more critically aware listeners of popular music.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"American Popular Music: From Minstrelsy to MTV is a tremendous accomplishment. A vast array of styles and contexts are skillfully brought together in a coherent and thoroughly readable narrative, and the authors' delight in their subject matter is palpable on every page. For the student, teacher, or general reader interested in pop, this book unquestionably becomes the definitive survey text."--Daniel Sonenberg, University of Southern Maine, in the Institute for Studies in American Music Newsletter, Spring 2005

Lawrence Starr is at University of Washington. Christopher Waterman is at UCLA.

This book contains a wealth of knowledge about popular music. It also comes with a CD (this make it convenient for listening to the music examples that were given).

This product arrived in great shape from the seller and is well written and organized. I plan on using it with a high school class and think that it is clear and concise for that purpose.

This book is designed to be an introductory college-level text for courses about Popular Music in America. It's good overall, but not great. The book begins with the initial "split" in America between "Classical" and "Popular" music in the nineteenth century, with minstrel shows and brass band music. The following chapters cover social dance and jazz, Tin Pan Alley, "race" records and "hillbilly" music, swing, postwar era music, Rock 'n' Roll, the British Invasion, the 1960s, the 1970s, outside influences on 70s music (reggae, punk, funk, progressive country, etc.), the 1980s and MTV, and the rise of "alternative" music. There are some great aspects about this textbook. First the prose is well-written, informative, entertaining, and thorough from a social/cultural standpoint. The book does not make any significant omissions, which is not easy considering all the subject matter which must be covered. Also, with two CDs included with the book price, the textbook does provide a good value. This is a nice feature. I was able to find some serious drawbacks to the book, however. The book seems to focus more on the cultural aspects and less on the musical aspects of each section. The analyses of the musical tracks on the included CDs are too fluffy. It is likely that students will not get enough from the book to understand why the music is so special. Also, while 2 CDs may seem like a lot of music, it is really inadequate to chronicle the history of jazz, blues, musical theater, rock 'n' roll, alternative rock, and so on. There was one minor aspect of the book which also cropped up repeatedly. The authors seemed a little too eager to inject race into every

nook and cranny. Obviously, racism is a central issue American popular music and deserves a healthy focus. The book, however, includes racism related not just to singers and performers, but record companies, disc jockeys, and more. I found it extraneous in some parts. This textbook is very strong, but I would probably recommend *And the Beat Goes On* by Michael Campbell. With that series, one can order a 5-CD set, and the textbook, while shorter, has more in-depth musical analysis. This textbook is very close in quality overall, and is more up-to-date.

This was very helpful when I was teaching a "History of Rock and Roll" class because the text the school chose (and another they gave me) both started with too little information for the time prior to the 1950's and the book filled in (as most jazz texts would). I was glad I had this to give students a deeper, earlier foundation, which I think they didn't expect, but I transitioned over to be more be rock-centered after about the third week, and it worked. The book is not jazz focused after swing arrives, but it does a good job weaving the whole early picture together - you just need to get a history of jazz to have depth about all the later styles of jazz. I got the CD's included in the cover, and found one glitch so far...no Benny Goodman track even though the text offers a "listening guide" to him, but the same song is on YouTube anyway.

American Popular Music is a book that is easy to read and is very useful when wanting to learn more about Music History. I would recommend this book for people who would like to brush up on their music skills and who want to learn more about different music that has developed over the years.

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