



Love Songs: The Hidden History

Ted Gioia

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The love song is timeless. From its beginnings, it has been shaped by bohemians and renegades, slaves and oppressed minorities, prostitutes, immigrants and other excluded groups. But what do we really know about the origins of these intimate expressions of the heart? And how have our changing perceptions about topics such as sexuality and gender roles changed our attitudes towards these songs?

In *Love Songs: The Hidden History*, Ted Gioia uncovers the unexplored story of the love song for the first time. Drawing on two decades of research, Gioia presents the full range of love songs, from the fertility rites of ancient cultures to the sexualized YouTube videos of the present day. The book traces the battles over each new insurgency in the music of love--whether spurred by wandering scholars of medieval days or by four lads from Liverpool in more recent times. In these pages, Gioia reveals that the tenderest music has, in different eras, driven many of the most heated cultural conflicts, and how the humble love song has played a key role in expanding the sphere of individualism and personal autonomy in societies around the world.

Gioia forefronts the conflicts, controversies, and the battles over censorship and suppression spurred by such music, revealing the outsiders and marginalized groups that have played a decisive role in shaping our songs of romance and courtship, and the ways their innovations have led to reprisals and strife. And he describes the surprising paths by which the love song has triumphed over these obstacles, and emerged as the dominant form of musical expression in modern society.

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