



Popology: The Music of the Era in the Lives of Four Icons of the 1960s

Timothy English

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Popology: The Music of the Era in the Lives of Four Icons of the 1960s is the first book to examine the lives of four of that decade's icons - JFK, Martin Luther King Jr., Robert Kennedy and Thomas Merton - via the prism of the music in their lives. Readers can share the precise listening experiences of each of the subjects. This unique approach brings the 1960s to life through the emotive power of music. Popology also highlights a huge number of events that have been lost to history. These events include: the night Barbra Streisand sang for JFK; Frank Sinatra's role as a courageous supporter of Dr. King and an unsung hero of the civil rights movement; the time folksinger Phil Ochs sang a new song to Bobby Kennedy - about his brother's assassination! Did you know? • That JFK's favorite song was "September Song", the lyric of which was eerily prescient regarding his demise? • That the last words Martin Luther King's spoke were a song request? He asked that saxophonist Ben Branch play his favorite hymn "Precious Lord, Take My Hand" at a rally he planned to attend. • Robert Kennedy had the Byrds play at a benefit for him or that he entertained the Jefferson Airplane at his home? • Thomas Merton - a cloistered monk - was one of the most perceptive writers of the moral dilemmas of the 1960's? No ordinary monk, he enjoyed beer and scotch, surreptitiously romanced a young nurse (becoming "obsessed" with Joan Baez's "Silver Dagger" in the process), and dug the music of John Coltrane, Dylan and the Beatles. The 1960s were a time in which sweeping societal changes and remarkable events seemed to have been compressed into a few short years. You could tell on which side of the cultural divide a person stood from the music they were surrounded by, or by the length of a man's hair or a woman's skirt. For this reason, knowing what music our subjects were listening to as the decade progressed can provide us with insights into how they responded to the changes going on around them. All four men recognized that they were living in a time of momentous change and sought to devote their lives to trying to better the lives of others. As the music of the day reflected those changes, Popology examines the songs that impacted and shaped their lives, and provides insights into what the music they listened can tell us about the kind of men they were. Popology provides a new and unique perspective on men that have fascinated readers for decades. No reader will finish Popology without learning a wealth of new information about John and Robert Kennedy, Dr. King, and Thomas Merton.

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