



Beat sound, Beat vision (Contemporary American & Canadian Writers)

Laurence Coupe

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There have been books on the Beats; there have been books on the Beatles; but there has not been a book linking the two. Ditto Jack Kerouac and Bob Dylan. Nor has there been a study of this range of writers and songwriters, in relation to a central vision. This, then, is the first sustained study of the spiritual revolution made by the Beats and of its impact on popular song.

This book reveals the ideas behind the Beat vision which influenced the Beat sound of the songwriters who followed on from them. Having explored the thinking of Alan Watts, who coined the term 'Beat Zen', and who influenced the counterculture which emerged out of the Beat movement, it celebrates Jack Kerouac as a writer in pursuit of a 'beatific' vision. On this basis, the book goes on to explain the relevance of Kerouac and his friends Allen Ginsberg and Gary Snyder to songwriters who emerged in the 1960s. Not only are new, detailed readings of the lyrics of the Beatles and of Dylan given, but the range and depth of the Beat legacy within popular song is indicated by way of an overview of some important innovators: Jim Morrison, Joni Mitchell, Leonard Cohen, Donovan, the Incredible String Band, Van Morrison and Nick Drake.

Beat Sound, Beat Vision will appeal to all devotees of the Beats and of the songwriters who emerged in the seminal decade of the 1960s. It will also prove useful to students of literature, of pop music and of religion.

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