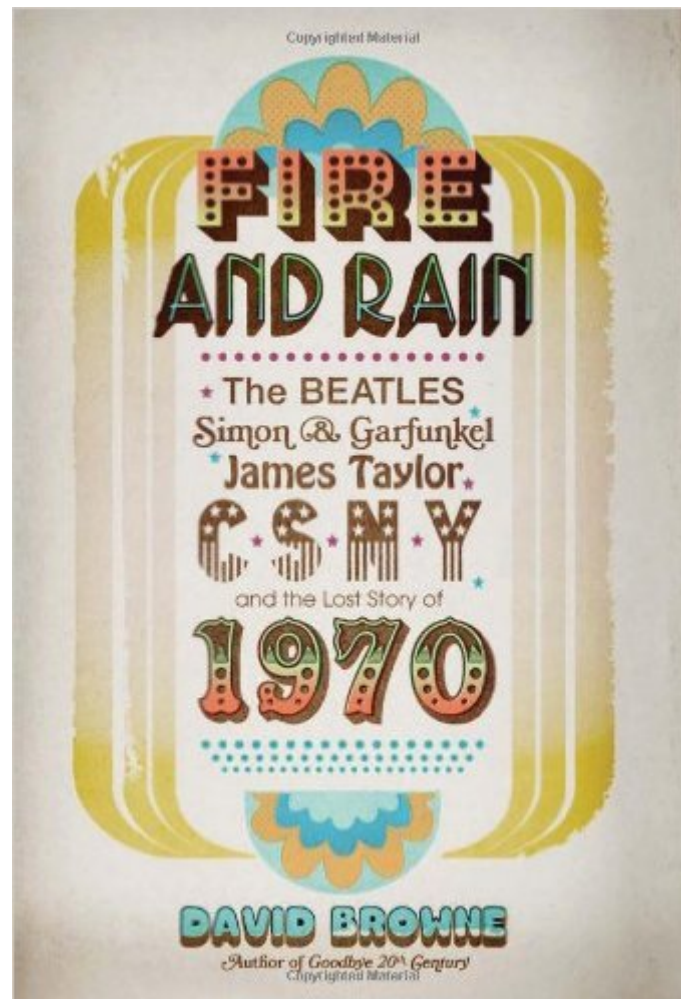


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Fire And Rain: The Beatles, Simon And Garfunkel, James Taylor, CSNY, And The Lost Story Of 1970



Synopsis

January 1970: the Beatles assemble one more time to put the finishing touches on Let It Be; Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young are wrapping up Déjà Vu; Simon and Garfunkel are unveiling Bridge Over Troubled Water; James Taylor is an upstart singer-songwriter who's just completed Sweet Baby James. Over the course of the next twelve months, their lives--and the world around them--will change irrevocably. Fire and Rain tells the story of four iconic albums of 1970 and the lives, times, and constantly intertwining personal ties of the remarkable artists who made them. Acclaimed journalist David Browne sets these stories against an increasingly chaotic backdrop of events that sent the world spinning throughout that tumultuous year: Kent State, the Apollo 13 debacle, ongoing bombings by radical left-wing groups, the diffusion of the antiwar movement, and much more. Featuring candid interviews with more than 100 luminaries, including some of the artists themselves, Browne's vivid narrative tells the incredible story of how--over the course of twelve turbulent months--the '60s effectively ended and the '70s began.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

It's been a long time since I had a *better* time reading a book than David Browne's FIRE AND RAIN. I gulped it down in two sittings and still wanted more. I was 20 in Mr. Browne's target year, I had just gotten my first auto-changing turntable, and we had a groundbreaking FM rock station in town, whose playlists came to be cited in the national trades. I reveled in all the music: I was an intense fan of all four acts he explores, and I read about them and others in the new, hip mag

Rolling Stone. Pop music was one of the most important things in my cultural life back then, and I did pay attention to details - but Mr. Browne went far beyond. His research is amazing. I learned stuff I didn't know in every single chapter. He took me onstage for shows I only dreamed about from far-off Mississippi. I personally think the Seventies began in 1972, with McGovern's defeat, but Mr. Browne makes a compelling case for 1970 itself, at least where pop music is concerned. If you care[d] at all about the genre in 1970, you will not be able to put this thing down. Full disclosure: I edited Mr. Browne's first book, DREAM BROTHER, but I had nothing to do with this one. Too bad: it's still a muggafugga.

If you were in JR. High and High School between 1968-1977 or so and collected and enjoyed the music of the talents mentioned in the title, then you'll enjoy this book. Like many geezers my age (52), these acts were, among others, the soundtrack of my youth and reading the particulars behind the music was an enjoyable journey to the past. I've been reading a number of musical biographies lately, 'you never give me your money' (beatles), 'The bitch is back' (Elton John), 'Broken Music' (Sting), all have been interesting and this one was no exception. I recommend it without reservation.

Thank you, David Browne, for capturing the essence of this time for those who remember, and describing it beautifully for those who don't. This book crafts a gorgeous narrative of four artists whose work dovetailed and really defined at least one generation. Browne's research is extensive and the facts uncovered are a goldmine. Definitely a compelling read for all people who listen to music, of any age.

OK, I'd like to have given four-and-a-half-stars, for only one dark reason. This fine, carefully and consciously researched book is about the most salient music in 1970, which as, as David Browne notes on page 298, had a "collective message [that] couldn't be denied. Be it bands, community, the antiwar movement, none of it could be relied on anymore." But that message was received in the fall of 1969. What's missing in this book is what happened, decisively, during the fall and winter before 1970. I was 20 years old at Woodstock, and even then, it seemed more like the Last Gathering of the Tribes than it did a signal of a new renaissance. And we all knew that the Beatles had signed off on the whole thing when Abbey Road came out that fall - "And in the end, the love you take is equal to the love you make." Right, bless you, and now we're all on our own - an attitude that David Brown captures very lucidly - seeing "Bridge over Troubled Water" and "Let It Be" as the elegies they were. The Stones' tour late that fall was a wake, the funeral being Altamont, captured in awful clarity

by Stanley Booth's "True History of the Rolling Stones," which you who read this excellent book ought to read next. CSN&Y were clearly Frozen-Nosed hold-overs, and "Teach Your Children" was seen as painfully pathetic by those of us who knew a certain Dream Was mostly Over - but what wasn't at all dead in that Dream had to be kept alive, for the sake of our souls, pretty much. Except now, in 1970, only on an individual basis. So people like James Taylor and Joni Mitchell - and the Band - exemplifying keeping yourselves and hopefully your friends together, somehow, was a way past, a way out, a way through this weird, unnecessary, inevitable collapse - of a deeply, lovingly imaginative, dis-economic, unempowered, socially valid and morally clear vision of a better humanity. Buy this book- it's the only one of its kind, and it's radically necessary cultural history.

David Browne's evocative, insightful FIRE AND RAIN takes the reader on a magical mystery tour through the musical and societal upheavals that took place in 1970. 1970 was one of those landmark years that many of us would like to forget, a 'bummer' year beset by struggle, strife, sex, drugs and rock 'n roll beginnings and endings. Against the backdrop of an imploding America, music critic David Browne charts the varying fortunes of the Beatles, Simon & Garfunkel, Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young and James Taylor. The times they were a'changing and Browne poignantly captures it all in this 2011 Da Capo Press release. Musically, in 1970: the Beatles, ostensibly putting the final touches on their 'Let It Be' album, were about to crash and burn. So too were Simon & Garfunkel, set to release 'Bridge over Troubled Water.' A new super-group - CSN&Y - with the warmest harmonies this side of heaven was blossoming and already beginning to self-destruct! And a sweet-voiced, stone-faced troubador named James Taylor was inching his way into the American consciousness. As if that wasn't enough, sweeping changes were taking place in the music industry. Far more important changes were taking place in American life. The anti-war movement was floundering with a lunatic fringe carrying out a bombing campaign nationwide. Students were killed at Kent State. Three astronauts almost died on Apollo 13 and so on. In short, 1970 was a wild-and-crazy year. FIRE AND RAIN captures all of 1970's craziness, sweetness, sadness and confusion in an affectionate, compelling style. Impeccably researched, Browne's book is a great read. Highly recommended.

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