



Dark Mirror: The Pathology of the Singer-Songwriter

Donald Brackett

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Singer-songwriters' lyrical reflections have a magical way of expressing our own sentiments and feelings. Almost all of the singer-songwriters discussed here ? including Bob Dylan, John Lennon, Tom Waits, Amy Winehouse, The White Stripes, and many more ? sing in an exotic and raw vocal style, which one would not traditionally call reassuring, and yet their profoundly unique voices appear to be the only ones capable of conveying their unique messages. One of the key elements being studied in this book is the fact that singer-songwriters often suffer from a deep sense of loneliness, perhaps associated with a sense of being the only one who could adequately sing and perform what they compose. Often, even those who write within a famed partnership still compose for that other voice exclusively, much to their chagrin. The irony here is that it is this very tendency towards self-absorption that allows these artists to speak so eloquently for all the rest of us. Utilizing firsthand musical reflections on the nature of the singer-songwriter psychology and its consequences on art and private life, *Dark Mirror* explores the intricate nature of isolation and self-absorption in the singer-songwriter's creative work.

Lyrical reflections have a magical way of expressing our own sentiments and feelings. Almost all of the singer-songwriters discussed in this volume-including Bob Dylan, John Lennon, Tom Waits, Amy Winehouse, The White Stripes, and many more ? sing in an exotic and raw vocal style, which one would not traditionally call reassuring, and yet their voices appear to be the only ones capable of conveying their own unique messages. One of the key elements being studied in this book is the fact that singer-songwriters often suffer from a deep sense of loneliness, perhaps associated with a sense of being the only one who could adequately sing and perform what they compose. Often, even those who write within a famed partnership still compose for that other voice exclusively - much to their chagrin. The irony here is that it is this very tendency towards self-absorption that allows these artists to speak so eloquently for all the rest of us.

This work is divided into three principal sections: part one delves into the singer-songwriters who function primarily as solo artists; part two explores singer-songwriters who function primarily as part of a team - and who wouldn't write quite the same material for a different partner; and part three surveys those who function as members of a larger thematic community or stylistic tribe, within which they share certain creative sentiments. Utilizing firsthand musical reflections on the nature of the singer-songwriter psychology and its consequences on art and private life, *Dark Mirror* explores the intricate nature of isolation and self-absorption within the singer-songwriter's creative work.

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