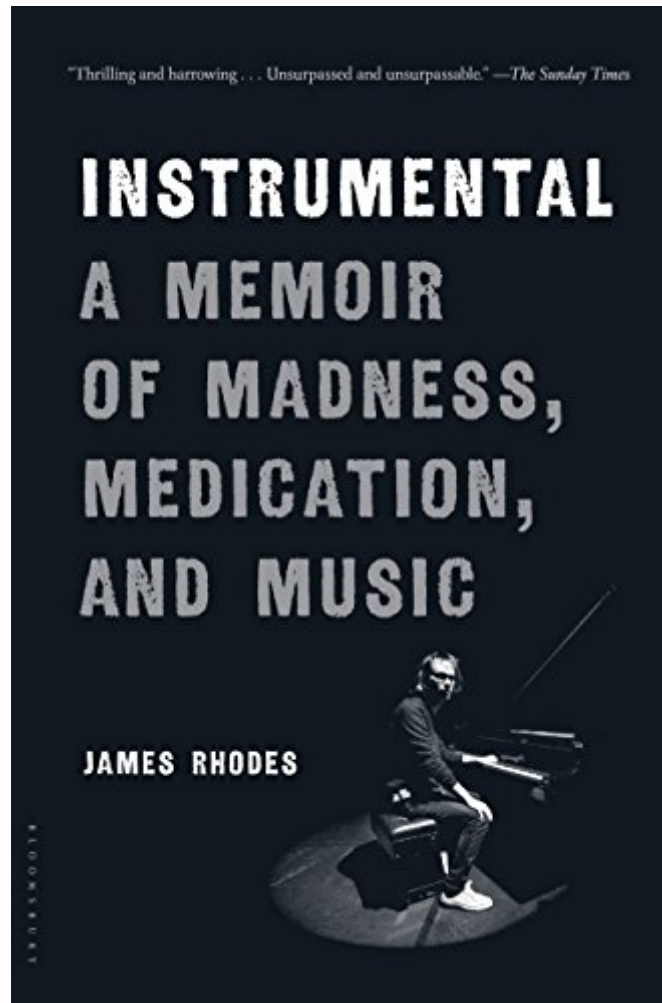




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# Instrumental: A Memoir Of Madness, Medication, And Music



## Synopsis

"A mesmeric combination of vivid, keen, obsessive precision and raw, urgent energy." --Zoe Williams, Guardian "Thrilling and harrowing . . . Unsurpassed and unsurpassable." --Sunday Times James Rhodes's passion for music has been his lifeline--the thread that has held through a life encompassing abuse and turmoil. But whether listening to Rachmaninov on a loop as a traumatized teenager or discovering a Bach adagio while in a hospital ward, he survived his demons by encounters with musical miracles. These--along with a chance encounter with a stranger--inspired him to become the renowned concert pianist he is today. *Instrumental* is a memoir like no other: unapologetically candid, boldly outspoken, and surprisingly funny--shot through with a mordant wit, even in its darkest moments. A feature film adaptation of Rhodes's incredible story is now in development from Monumental Pictures and BBC Films, following a competitive bidding war involving major U.S. and U.K. companies. An impassioned tribute to the therapeutic powers of music, *Instrumental* also weaves in fascinating facts about how classical music actually works and about the extraordinary lives of some of the great composers. It explains why and how music has the potential to transform all of our lives.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

From the age of five to ten concert pianist James Rhodes was repeatedly raped by his gym teacher Mr. Lee. This book has two objectives: to show how he was able to overcome the abuse through the healing power of music and various other means and to educate on classical music and why it is important today and how the classical music industry needs to change or die. For those who seek salacious details of the rapes, you will be sorely disappointed as he does not provide them. It was hard enough living through them at the time. Recalling them is like living through them again and that is not something he wants to do. The rapes happened at Arnold House a Preparatory School for boys in St. John's Wood in England. James tells of how Mr. Lee singled him out for special attention which made him feel good. Pretty soon he was helping Mr. Lee put away the gym equipment and was his little helper. Then Mr. Lee started with letting him burn matches. This forbidden activity had a twofold purpose. It allowed Mr. Lee to get close to James by allowing him to do something he wanted to do and it provided Mr. Lee with blackmail material for when he wanted to get James to do something James might not want to do. He also bought him chocolate and toys. When it came time to sign up for boxing classes (the school didn't have much of a PE program, just the part-time program that Mr. Lee provided) he signed up. Now, what happened after that is taken from a police report that was filed in 2010 by the Head Teacher who took the boys to the boxing classes and back to school. She complained about what she believed that something going on to the Headmaster, but was told she was overreacting. She also told James's mother about it as well. The reason she didn't go farther was that back then no one suspected that kind of abuse. She suspected that Mr. Lee was frightening him and causing personality changes in him, but she never suspected what was really going on. The reason she filed the police report was that James had become public about his abuse and she didn't want Mr. Lee to hurt any more children. But just because the abuse ended when his parents sent him to another school when he was ten it didn't mean that he became better.

Physically his body was messed up. He had to defecate all the time. Later he would require multiple back surgeries to fix the damage. Mentally he was really messed up as those who have been abused are. He slept with any who wanted to sleep with him or gave blowjobs to the boys or to teachers and other grown men. All of this is perfectly normal behavior for someone who has just survived the kind of abuse he went through. He wasn't even sure of his sexuality for a while. But he had the piano to play and lose himself in. Though he was told he would never be good enough to be a professional. When he went off to college he fell even more heavily into drugs and would stop

playing piano for ten years. He just stayed high constantly until his parents got him out and placed him in a rehab facility where, while he got sober, he still didn't deal with his abuse issues. He spent the next year in France working at a Burger King and having a great time with the ladies and the amazing things you can see and do in France. It was the healthiest year of his life. He then went back to college and tried being normal. He just shoved all of that pain and craziness down and pretended it didn't exist. He made it through college and got a good job and met a nice woman whom he married but didn't tell about his past. But that pain would not stay down forever and it would come out and destroy everything. He would spend time in various hospitals seeking help and finally found himself a good therapist to see. But music was the guiding force that saved him. When he was seven he heard Bach-Busoni, Chaconne and it transformed his life. It was a place to escape to. Each chapter of this book is set to a piece of music that he has picked out tells the story behind it so you can get the full experience of it like he does and set the mood for the chapter. Be warned there is classical music talk in here, but he makes it so interesting you want to learn more. Overall this book packs a powerful punch and I can't recommend it enough. Quotes Music has infiltrated our lives as much as nature, literature, art, sport, religion, philosophy and television. It is the great unifier, the drug of choice for teenagers around the world. It provides solace, wisdom, hope and warmth and has done so for thousands of years. It is medicine for the soul. There are eighty-eight keys on a piano and within that, an entire universe.--James Rhodes (Instrumental: A Memoir of Madness, Medication, and Music p xi) If there were an ultra-neurotic Jewish mother, on coke, who was beyond evil and got wet off malevolence, that is that part of my mind.--James Rhodes (Instrumental: A Memoir of Madness, Medication, and Music p 49)

A devastating account of what can happen to any child that should be read and remembered. Is it so difficult to realise what is happening to one's son or daughter? The years of suffering have tortured the author, he grasped music as a lifeline; a survivor who has battled to come to terms with the unspeakable, who insists on changing attitudes to classical music, who has taught me that it's always worth fighting the good fight.

Incredible!!! Such a great book. I've watch the Piano Man DVD and he mentioned some of the issues that he dealt with, but I had no idea of the details, but the book really explains it all and for a person to go through something like that and rise from the ashes to become in my opinion one of the greatest classical pianist in this day and age is absolutely amazing.

I didn't like the continued bad language at the start of the book. I felt privileged to be given an intimate understanding of a severe form of abuse. To find music with it's beauty as the extreme opposite to abuse gives an insight to the highs and the lows we experience. The terrible low gave more power to the extreme high discovered through the beauty of music.

This book was so highly recommended that the thought of reading it was oppressive. Impossible to stop reading it.

Excellent inspiring book- also very intense, but that's his story and he tells it in his own style. My heart goes out to him and everyone who has suffered from sexual abuse, etc. I know one thing- because of his book, I'm now exploring classical music AND I ordered his other book, How To Play the Piano. Thanks James, for sharing your story and for spreading appreciation of classical music.

Fascinating! Very dark at times, but with invaluable insights from this artist. His one page on Bach told me more than John Elliot Gardiner's whole book.

One of the only books I read that I seriously didn't want to ever put down. Rhodes story is very heavy and emotional but raw and real. Very worth the read especially if you love classical piano. The seller also sent this book neatly and promptly ã ã ã•

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