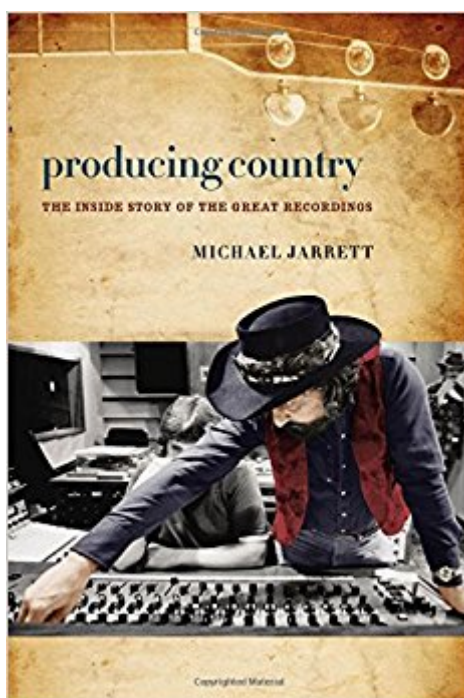


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Producing Country: The Inside Story Of The Great Recordings (Music/Interview)



Synopsis

Musicians make music. Producers make records. In the early days of recorded music, the producer was the “artists-and-repertoire man” or A&R man, for short. A powerful figure, the A&R man chose both who would record and what they would record. His decisions profoundly shaped our musical tastes. Don Law found country bluesman Robert Johnson and honky-tonk crooner Lefty Frizzell. Cowboy Jack Clement took the initiative to record Jerry Lee Lewis (while his boss, Sam Phillips, was away on business). When Ray Charles said he wanted to record a country-and-western album, Sid Feller gathered songs for his consideration. The author’s extensive interviews with music makers offer the fullest account ever of the producer’s role in creating country music. In its focus on recordings and record production, *Producing Country* tells the story of country music from its early years to the present day through hit records by Hank Williams, George Jones, Patsy Cline, Buck Owens, Dolly Parton, Johnny Cash, Loretta Lynn, Waylon Jennings, and Merle Haggard, among many others. Includes original interviews with producers Chet Atkins, Pete Anderson, Jimmy Bowen, Bobby Braddock, Harold Bradley, Tony Brown, Blake Chancey, Jack Clement, Scott Hendricks, Bob Johnston, Jerry Kennedy, Blake Mevis, Ken Nelson, Jim Ed Norman, Allen Reynolds, Jim Rooney, James Stroud, Paul Worley, and Reggie Young, among others.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

“Producing Country doesn’t seek to answer so much as to enlighten, with plenty of behind-the-scenes stories from the recording sessions that gave us a big chunk of our Nashville soundtrack. [L]ots of folks (interviewed in the book) offer wisdom on ways to enhance artistry, solve problems, encourage ingenuity, manage technology and motivate a roomful of disparate creative spirits. It’s hard to say exactly what a producer is, but those are all things that a producer does.”

•Peter Cooper, *The Tennessean* “[Producing Country] really tells the story of the history of country music from the other side of the glass.”

•Eric Banister, *Music Times* “You would look long and hard to find a more readable contribution to the cultural studies, or country music, canon.”

•Tim Holmes, *Record Collector Magazine* “Jarrett’s book is valuable because it illuminates an exciting process that for too long has been veiled by industry protocol and ignored because of public indifference. Producing Country should inspire other scholars to look more deeply and more broadly into the inside story of country music.”

•Ted Olson, *American Studies (AMSJ)* “Jarrett has interviewed a cross section of country music producers. The interviews are relatively short, and focus on specific albums or songs. The interested reader can grasp the various styles of production and how they have evolved over the years. Overall this is a well-written guide to the way records have been made in Nashville, from around 1945 to the present day.”

•Portland Book Review “In its approach to writing the history of country music recordings, Producing Country offers an interesting alternative to dry academic texts.”

•J. Farrington, *Choice* “Jarrett’s ethnography is to be praised for the wealth and breadth of its coverage, raising the volume of voices seldom heard.”

•Tom Greenland, *Journal of Folklore Research* “Works as a partial history of the changing dimension of recorded sound, from its origins as a record of a particular performance to a sonic environment, aural sculpture in the hands of skilled producers and engineers.”

•David Lührssen, *Shepherd Express-Milwaukee Entertainment Magazine*

“This is a very readable and informative oral history of the evolution of country music recording. Few books have delved into the role that record producers have played in country music, and fewer still have allowed the record producers themselves to talk about the nuances of their recording processes in such revealing and fascinating detail.”

• (Paul Kingsbury, editor of *The Encyclopedia of Country Music* and *Will the Circle Be Unbroken*) “Michael Jarrett’s large body of interviews with producers from the country music field is an extremely valuable

addition to music history. The large scope of the book – including producers of archival country anthologies (i.e., the Carter Family, Jimmie Rodgers), to classic country and western of the 1940 and 1960s, to mainstream country from the 1970s to today, to Americana/alternative country (including 1950s rockabilly and the 1960s-70s hybrid of country soul) – makes it an important tool for understanding the creation of some of C&W's classic records by its most outstanding artists. In addition, *Producing Country* provides evidence of the wide scope of country music, its changes in sounds and musical impact over nearly 90 years. Quite an achievement! (Holly George-Warren, author of *Public Cowboy No. 1: The Life and Times of Gene Autry*) "Jarrett's study opens the sound-proofed door of the control room where the pilots, chariot drivers, overseers – whatever you call them – steered the recording sessions that defined popular music. It's an impressive gathering of producers that unlocks the secrets of making records." (Michael Streissguth, author of *Outlaw: Waylon, Willie, Kris and the Renegades of Nashville*)

This is an interesting look at the people who have produced some of the biggest hits in country music. The author lets his subjects speak and mostly stays out of their way. There are different ways to produce a record - some people write the songs, some rule the session like a king (see Spector, Phil, or, in country Sherrill Billy) and others try and stay out of the way of the creative process. This is well worth the money.

Fascinating inside story of how the music we all love is produced. Especially loved Tompall's "Hillbilly Central" references. (Glaser Sound Studios) I recommend this to all music fans.

For people who like the behind the scenes information of Country Music.

I just started reading the book. It is very interesting, can't wait to finish it.

This is a good book, which I believe deserves three stars.

A friend tipped me off to this book and at first I was skeptical because it was "on country." I am a music fan and respect country as a genre - its history and legacy, but I don't generally listen to it. But I picked this book up anyway and boy, am I glad I did. First, this is a beautiful book - literally. It feels really nice to the

touch, the layout is sharp, and the photos look great. The publisher is to be commended. Second, what allowed me to bypass my general antipathy towards country is that it is about the producers of country, not so much the musicians. The focus here is on how the actual album/cd you own is the way it is - why this song and not some other song; how the songs and sound came together; what was done to make the song the way we know it, etc... These kinds of questions transcend genres. And the text is not just about record producers but it is actually the producers talking. The author has pulled together the most salient parts of over twenty years of interviews he conducted with the most influential producers in the field. What this does is fill the book with narratives of creation rather than things particular to the genre itself. What I love about the book are the stories the producers tell and the fact that they are stories about how humans worked together to make art, to make music. Finally, because the book is told in a chronological fashion, you have some of the producers showing up again and again, like developing characters. They discuss how they changed, how the recording studio changed, and how all of that changed the art they made. This gives the book an intriguing historical scope while feeling at times almost like a novel. All of these things give it focus that reaches beyond the country fan and includes anyone who is fascinated with how the music you hear is created. If that is you, pick this up.

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