



## Synopsis

This expanded fourth edition of *Songwriters on Songwriting* includes ten new interviews--with Alanis Morissette, Lenny Kravitz, Lou Reed, and others. In these pages, sixty-two of the greatest songwriters of our time go straight to the source of the magic of songwriting by offering their thoughts, feelings, and opinions on their art. Representing almost every genre of popular music, from blues to pop to rock, here are the figures that have shaped American music as we know it.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

By MICHAEL TEARSON Paul Zollo, himself a singer-songwriter, has assembled a mighty and important book here. He has gathered 52 interviews he conducted for SongTalk. The subjects are a virtual who's who of songwriters. Zollo has an obvious love of song and songmaking and a curiosity about the process that won't quit. These qualities are reflected in his interviewing. So, too, is Zollo's uncanny knack for putting his subjects at ease so they will open up to him and candidly reveal more than they might have expected to. He probes intelligently, asking questions that evoke true responses. I often found myself thinking how good his questioning is. He clearly does his homework so that he can display an encyclopedic knowledge of the artist's full career, often asking specifically about the damnedest, most obscure songs. Two pieces juxtaposed early in the book form a kind of core around which this collection revolves. These are lengthy interviews with first Bob Dylan and then Paul Simon. In each of these, Zollo shows how well he listens and responds in his questioning.

Both interviews are tremendously revealing and rewarding. This collection is about just what it is singer-songwriters of all stripes do, plus the how, in the way their various processes work, and the why of their drive to create. Essential questions all. This is compelling, don't-you-dare-miss-it stuff for anybody who writes songs, and equally for anybody else who listens to songs and cares about them.

There are many great stories from these interviews with some of the most successful songwriters through time, and as an aspiring songwriter myself I found this book both useful and entertaining. For example, I had experienced what is commonly called "writing block" for quite some time, and I kept telling myself it was just because really, I had nothing to say. Then I read what one songwriter had said about writer's block: That it's just a mind blockage, because you don't want to face what you have on your mind, so therefore you keep telling yourself "I have nothing to say". When I realized that I actually had lots of things to write about (I just didn't want to face it) I broke out of the writer's block and wrote one of the best songs I've ever written. This book is INSPIRING! There's some advice to find directed at young and aspiring songwriters, as well as some interesting and funny stories about songwriters and the songs they've written. Sammy Cahn for example, said that he wrote with a cowriter "Let it snow" when it was really hot outside (which I found quite amusing). Instead of going out to swim, his partner said: Let's stay in and write a song about the winter. Realizing that all of these amazingly talented and glorified songwriters are actually people just like us, made of flesh and blood, that made me feel closer to ALL songwriters. One of the interviewed said that "All songwriters are links in a chain". That's how this book made me feel, and that's why I bought it: Because I have no serious songwriters that are so utterly devoted to their craft as these are around me, and this book made me feel as if I had a group of old teachers who just happened to be some of the world's greatest songwriters.

The author interviews songwriters about their songwriting habits, attitudes, experiences and inspirations. Each songwriter has something unique to say. The interviews are educational, insightful, and occasionally inspiring. There are many interviews, so the book is a very good value for the price. This book tells you how songwriters think and feel. The focus is on intangible artistic creation, vs. mechanical songwriting techniques.

Anyone who doesn't like this book is obviously NOT a songwriter himself. Like Paul Simon says in this book, "If you are not a songwriter, you don't know what the hell you are talking about." This

book is worth its weight in gold for anyone who loves songwriting and has himself put in a lot of heart and sweat writing songs. If you don't write songs, then I'm not sure how well suited you are to appreciate this book. Otherwise, you'll thank the author for taking the time (over 10 years) to complete this book!!!

By LAHRI BOND Paul Zollo has had the good fortune of talking shop with some of the best songwriters from the fields of folk, country, blues, and rock and roll. Collected in this volume are 52 interviews with such early originators as Joan Baez, Paul Simon, Carole King and Gerry Goffin. He also talks with seventies innovators such as Rickie Lee Jones, Van Dyke Parks, Walter Becker and Todd Rundgren as well as modern songsmiths like David Hidalgo and Louie Perez of Los Lobos and Jules Shear. As the title suggests, this book features songwriters exploring their influences, inspirations and craft.

This book is a must have for any serious poet/singer/songwriter. The author breaks it down with the best of the best. The work sheds light on inspiration, perspiration and infatuation with the muse. After reading it you are guaranteed to pick up your guitar and begin noodling. Enjoy

This book has some really great documented conversations between the author and some of the best songwriters to walk this planet. A couple of the biggest things I walked away from after reading this book are: That different songwriters have their own unique approaches and beliefs when it comes to how they go through the process of a song, therefore its okay for aspiring songwriters like myself to find out my own process for creating songs. I am not interested in reading all the articles as some of the authors work/songs don't really interest me but that could change down the road with more listening. Neil Young's approach and outlook, Tom Petty, Bob Dylan and the meticulous Paul Simon were some of my favorites to read/reread. This book isn't a typical songwriting lesson book but it is just as valuable if not more so than most of the ones that I have read. Reading about what successful songwriters do when feeling the so called "writers block" and where they seek their inspiration and or get their ideas is extremely helpful stuff. Also for music fans this book does contain a lot of interesting information.

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