

Marty Khan. *Straight Ahead: A Comprehensive Guide to the Business of Jazz (Without Sacrificing Dignity or Artistic Integrity)*. Tucson: Outward Visions Books, 2004. www.outwardvisions.com

Eugene Foley. *Artist Development: A Distinctive Guide to the Music Industry's Lost Art*, 5th edition. Greendell, New Jersey: Foley Entertainment, Inc., 2009. www.foleyentertainment.com

The title of Marty Khan's book says it all. This is a no-nonsense, tell-it-like-it-*really*-is, book that takes you into every aspect of the music business. With over thirty-five years of experience as a manager, agent, concert and record producer, consultant, advisor, and strategic planner, Khan has worked with emerging talents as well as many of the legendary masters of jazz. This book is the culmination of his experience and business relationships. *Straight Ahead* is intended to be used as a business manual for those who are pursuing a career in the industry, and as a text for classroom use when complemented with the teacher's guide (which can be purchased separately).

In the author's words, "This book:

- explains and de-mystifies everything involved in the business of recording and performing
- defines and clarifies the various roles and responsibilities of everyone with whom the artist will be dealing
- offers specific advice on making the most out of every relationship and opportunity
- describes specific methods and concepts that are productive, cost-effective, and proven to be viable
- comprehensively details all aspects of the 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation that is the backbone of the arts industry
- provides samples of contracts, agreements, releases, stage plots, and other useful materials."

"Other useful materials" include sample contracts, releases, and 186 questions answered in a question-and-answer format.

There are many music business texts out there that are very useful—and some that come across as stale and boring. If there is one word I would use to describe this book it is: pragmatic. Khan presents his thirty-five plus

years of experience to the reader in a practical manner which, if read front to back (as he suggests), builds a framework for the business from the bottom up. Khan's personality is hard to miss throughout the book. Many times his approach seems cynical, and it is, but never negative or without reason. When dealing with others in the business it is important to understand where industry people are coming from and why they may respond or act in particular ways. These traits are accounted for in such a way that you will be able to anticipate this behavior and create an outcome that will be beneficial to all involved. Frustration is an inevitable part of the business, particularly when greed and arrogance are factored in, and the musician can be taken advantage of quickly and easily if not careful. Khan does an excellent job of preparing the aspiring musician/entrepreneur for these issues. The advice he provides is timeless; unlike many texts it will not become outdated with the changing marketplace.

The book begins with "Ten Disturbing Facts that Must be Understood." This sets the tone and mood of the book as a whole by preparing you for the "shady" side of the business. Khan covers a number of economic misunderstandings such as how labels make their money and how that affects the artist, common misconceptions of various goals an artist might have, and the true intentions of arts advocates. This is followed by a glossary of business terms and slang that the author uses throughout the book, and which the reader should also understand when speaking with others in the business. Part II, "The Artist's Team," follows. Here the role of each member of the team from the artist to the publicist is laid out so that we get a clear picture of how each team member works with the other and what is expected from each. Part III, "The Business," describes many topics including: how record labels *really* work, how to get bookings in various venues, how to effectively deal with promoters, stage crews, and even how to treat your audience. In this section Khan also deals with contracts, publishing, funding, and investment. Part IV is entitled "Strategies, Recommendations, Solution" where the keys to success are laid out in an objective and practical manner. He begins with the concept of self-empowerment, how to create a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation, and how musicians can work together in bartering services, sharing management, and more. Khan goes into marketing techniques and how to deal with economic issues. In the final two chapters he offers general advice and as mentioned before, there are loads of sample contracts and release forms.

It should be noted there is no index in this book. The author felt it

would be impractical and instead offers questions that are answered in each section. As mentioned earlier, one may purchase a teacher's guide to accompany the book for use in the classroom. This provides a strategic two-semester course plan for using the book as a text.

What makes this book unique is that Khan speaks to the reader from within the business. He pulls you in and helps you understand the business from the inside out in a way that demystifies how things *really* work. Many music business texts seem to take a bird's-eye view of the industry mainly due to the overwhelming complexities that are too difficult to get into in a text format. While reading this book you feel that you are gaining the experience you need to effectively and honestly achieve your goals. Most importantly, Khan addresses what is most essential. As the subtitle of the book states, he helps you to make your way in the business, "without sacrificing dignity or artistic integrity." I know personally that Khan's greatest influence is the life and character of the immortal John Coltrane. The purity of Trane's spirit and his expression of life through his music is a defining factor in Marty Khan's life. We all seek to find that which helps to define our own spirit. A self-professed "failed musician" Khan gave up the saxophone to immerse himself in the business side of the profession. He has genuinely strived to help and empower those who have found jazz to be a vehicle of expression for their own spirit. And he has done this without sacrificing his—or the artist's—dignity or artistic integrity. Buy this book. You will thank him for it.

It is no secret that recording labels are under a tremendous amount of pressure these days to keep afloat. They no longer have the time or money to take on an artist and nurture and develop him or her into a success. These long term relationships are just not practical in today's unstable market. Labels need artists to be completely polished products before signing them. They need proof that artists have created a sufficient following in their markets, sold a certain number of CDs, are touring with some amount of success in their markets, etc., so that all the label needs to do is push the marketing/distribution/touring button and off they go to the top of the charts. In order for artists to get to this point they need to learn the art of *Artist Development*.

As the title suggests, artist development is becoming a "lost art." With clients from all fifty states and twenty countries around the world earning

nearly forty Gold and Platinum records and three Grammy Awards, Eugene Foley is one of the most sought after music agents/consultants in the country. He has been working with songwriters and musicians for nearly twenty years and continues to see the same general mistakes made by aspiring artists. Foley's intention with this book is to reach those who don't have the time or desire to read four hundred pages of text. He felt "it was time...to release a reader-friendly book that musicians, songwriters, managers and new independent label owners would make the time to read. A book that would help them and inform them on many important issues, all relating to developing an artist." He specifically chose topics he faces on a daily basis that regularly confuse people, and at 180 pages, kept the length reasonable enough for the busiest people to find readable. Therefore, he is very straightforward and blunt in a way that is positive and approachable. He quickly achieves clarity on many complex topics that can overwhelm the everyday musician, and then provides strategies to overcome these obstacles, master them, and achieve the desired result.

The topics covered represent every aspect of the "complete package" needed before an artist begins to approach labels. Songwriting, press kits, advisors, publicity, radio promotion, music videos and TV commercials, touring, record companies (major and indie), distribution, publishing, and music conferences, are all covered in great detail and provide an insider's view of how to approach each of these important topics. Amazingly, there is too much information to address each of these in a simple review, especially considering the compactness of this book. There are however, certain topics of note that should be addressed.

Foley includes a few unique chapters in his book. In "Random Tips" he describes many ideas that are not often considered by artists. Product endorsement deals, reasons for obtaining a post office box, and the value of remixing are a few of the topics discussed in this chapter. A chapter on alternative career options presents ideas for those who don't wish to sign with a label and would like to supplement their income using their particular expertise while continuing to network in their field. Foley also includes a chapter which lists his own favorite top forty markets from around the country. This is a listing of venues, radio stations, and publications that he feels are among the best at what they do in the thirty-nine most original music scenes around the United States. For the fortieth he includes Toronto, Canada, "which has a solid music scene in its own right."

The book also includes a glossary of terms and a conclusion that

wraps up the thoughts and advice offered throughout the work. This may seem redundant in some respects but it serves the purpose of putting everything into the proverbial nutshell. Foley uses this section to help the reader grasp the bigger picture and emphasize that this is all something that can be done, not to feel overwhelmed by the business side of things, and to take things step by step as he has outlined.

Throughout the book Eugene Foley keeps the tone very positive. He mentions that he really does listen to every demo and look at every press packet his agency receives and makes a point of offering honest advice to those who he thinks might benefit because he genuinely wants to help musicians. In each chapter he describes the issues he frequently sees with many artists' materials. He does this not only to show what not to do, but why artists might not be aware of the correct methods of doing things. This helps readers to feel that Foley is in their corner from step one.

Finally, *Artist Development* doesn't pretend to be more than it is: "A distinctive *guide* to the music industry's lost art." Many of the topics (such as music publishing) will need further exploration and the assistance of an entertainment attorney to gain true expertise. That being said, Foley's book is a great resource, or pocket guide if you will, for students who might be taking courses in music industry or business, and are looking for that record deal. As educators, we know 400-page texts are not for everyone. We are always on the lookout for resources that will help a particular student demographic whether it is jazz, classical, or popular. For those who need information on artist development in a concise and straightforward format, this is the best I have seen.

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