



Machers and Rockers: Chess Records and the Business of Rock & Roll (Enterprise)

By Rich Cohen

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"Rich Cohen is a born storyteller, and this tale of how Muddy Waters and Leonard Chess helped invent Rock & Roll in Chicago in the 1950s is a tough, funny and smart read. It's a big story, told in a big way." ?Jann Wenner

A tour-de-force history of Jews, blues, and the birth of a new industry. On the south side of Chicago in the late 1940s, two immigrants, one a Jew born in Russia, the other a black blues singer from Mississippi met and changed the course of musical history. Muddy Waters electrified the blues, and Leonard Chess recorded it. Soon Bo Diddly and Chuck Berry added a dose of pulsating rhythm, and Chess Records captured that, too. Rock & roll had arrived, and an industry was born. In a book as vibrantly and exuberantly written as the music and people it portrays, Rich Cohen tells the engrossing story of how Leonard Chess, with the other record men, made this new sound into a multi-billion-dollar business aggressively acquiring artists, hard-selling distributors, riding the crest of a wave that would crash over a whole generation. Full of absorbing lore and animated by a deep love for popular music, *Machers and Rockers* is a smash hit.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

In a postscript to his dynamic history of Chess Records, Cohen (*Tough Jews*) confesses that its tale is one he's been telling since adolescence, "using whatever was at hand to make the case: not only does this song rock, it also has something big to tell us." Cohen's book has something big to say too—about how the unlikely marriage of the shtetl and the plantation produced Chicago blues and rock and roll. The music that exploded into the living rooms of America and the world might have remained in the juke joints of the South if not for "record men" like Leonard Chess, whose label is rivaled only by Atlantic for its influence. Sensing an audience where the big labels didn't, Chess carted unvarnished recordings of artists like Muddy Waters, Bo Diddley and Chuck Berry in the trunk of his Cadillac, getting them in stores and on the air by any means necessary. Cohen weaves the story of the mercurial, lovable but not always entirely ethical Chess with the stories of the artists he recorded and well-judged glimpses of social history. Though written with the energy of his teenage bull sessions, Cohen's history avoids the rhetorical excess nearly endemic to rock and roll books, offering instead a punchy and driven but also sturdy and careful narrative.

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From Booklist

More acclaim is rendered to Chess Records and Leonard Chess, in particular, in Cohen's engaging book based on the proposition that "Leonard Chess, along with a handful of the musicians he signed and promoted and coddled and fucked over and enriched, invented the very idea of Rock & Roll." The musicians Leonard and his brother, Phil, signed and so forth included Muddy Waters, Howlin' Wolf, Little Walter, and the rest of the Chicago blues elite, and this is inevitably the story of black musicians and Jewish businessmen coming together to almost inadvertently create timeless rhythm and blues and inspire the development of rock. Cohen blends the artists' stories with the upward progress of Leonard Chess' family, notably including son and eventual rock mogul Marshall, who called Muddy Waters grandfather. The Chess story hasn't languished untold, but Cohen's version of it, centered on the savvy businessman who moved to "an old money town" as his business grew but kept commuting to the south side to make it work right, is utterly fresh. *Mike Tribby*
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Review

A tough, funny and smart read. It's a big story, told in a big way. -- *Jann Wenner*

This is a brilliant book, the best book I have ever read about the recording industry....a classic. -- *Larry King*

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Thomas Hodge:

Here thing why that Machers and Rockers: Chess Records and the Business of Rock & Roll (Enterprise) are different and reputable to be yours. First of all looking at a book is good nonetheless it depends in the content than it which is the content is as scrumptious as food or not. Machers and Rockers: Chess Records and the Business of Rock & Roll (Enterprise) giving you information deeper as different ways, you can find any book out there but there is no e-book that similar with Machers and Rockers: Chess Records and the

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Robert Price:

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