

***The Funniest People in Music,
Volume 3: 250 Anecdotes***

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**Dedicated with Love to
Caleb Bruce**

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Anecdotes are usually short humorous stories. Sometimes they are thought-provoking or informative, not amusing.

All anecdotes have been retold in my own words to avoid plagiarism.

Chapter 1: From Alcohol to Conductors

Alcohol

- Some USAmerican towns are wet (they allow alcohol); other American towns are dry (they don't allow alcohol). During his 1885 USAmerican tour, Colonel James H. Mapleson had the misfortune to stop in Topeka, Kansas, a dry town. His opera troupe had drunk all the wine available on their train, and they were very displeased when water was placed before them while they dined at their Topeka hotel; in fact, Colonel Mapleson's baritone drew his knife and said that unless he had something suitable to drink soon, he would not perform that evening. Hard pressed, Colonel Mapleson sought a physician and explained the situation to him. The understanding physician wrote a prescription in Latin, Colonel Mapleson took it to a pharmacist, and the pharmacist filled the prescription by giving him three bottles of something much more stimulating than water.¹

- People who drink to excess are found throughout the world — even in the high arts. At a production of Giacomo Puccini's *La Bohème* at the Dublin Grand Opera Society, the tenor was drunk, but he managed to make it to the intermission. During the intermission, the audience speculated on whether the tenor would be able to continue the part. As the intermission grew longer and longer, the audience then speculated on what excuse would be given for the tenor's non-appearance. Eventually, a man appeared in front of the curtain and announced that the tenor had just returned from West Africa and was suffering from malaria. A member of the audience shouted, "I wish I had a bottle of that!"²

- Good things can come out of evil. Someone once put LSD in Richie Ramone's drink. He had a very bad reaction to it, and he had to be carried away in a strait jacket. However, he wrote the great Ramones' song "Somebody Put Something in My Drink." Of course, Richie gets the credit for writing a very good song. Whoever put the LSD in his drink gets a ticket to h*ll — or at least a few more hundred years climbing the Mountain of Purgatory. By the way, the Ramones insisted on canned soft drinks in their dressing room. Yoohoo chocolate drink was also a favorite dressing-room tipple.³

- Conductor Luigi Mancinelli, a conductor at the Metropolitan Opera in the early 20th century, used to dine often at a restaurant and order a \$5 bottle of Italian wine (quite expensive at the time), which was brought to him by his favorite waiter. One evening, his favorite waiter was ill and at home, so Mr. Mancinelli ordered his favorite bottle of wine from a new waiter. He was shocked to learn that his favorite wine cost only \$1.50 per bottle — his favorite waiter had been deliberately overcharging him for months.⁴

- Rolling Stones Keith Richard and Ron Wood attended a party hosted by Dudley Moore and Peter Cook at the Cobden Working Men's Club in London. The party was upstairs, over a bar, and so when Mr. Richard and Mr. Wood felt like getting a pint, they went downstairs. Mr. Richard talked with some of the people in the bar, and one of them asked, "What do you do?" Mr. Richard replied, "I'm in a band." "Which one?" "The Rolling Stones." "Oh, yeah. I think I've heard of them."⁵

- During the days of Prohibition, tips sometimes consisted of something other than money. Besides being a radio announcer, Glenhall Taylor was also a pianist. Once in a while, a bootlegger would call him up to request that he perform "Twelfth Street Rag" on the radio, then the bootlegger would send over a fifth of gin to show his appreciation.⁶

- Young rappers tend to be pretty crazy. Older rappers can settle down. Beastie Boy Adam Yauch went to a health-food store to buy a present for his parents one holiday season, and he said that he wanted a carrot juicer. The health-store employee recognized him and said, “So I guess you guys don’t drink forties anymore?”⁷

- John King owned the music studio where Run-DMC and many other hip-hop groups did their recording: Chunking Studios. So many hip hoppers worked there in the 1980s and 1990s that Mr. King took the soft drinks out of the soda machine and replaced them with the hip hoppers’ beverage of choice: Olde English 800.⁸

Animals

- People in opera sometimes gamble. At the Chicago Opera, Geraldine Farrar sang in *Königskinder*, in which a bunch of trained geese play a role. At the farewell performance, a poker game as usual was going on backstage, and thinking that the trained geese would no longer be needed, the players quickly used them as stakes in the game. Of course, the geese were taken home that night and eaten by the winners. However, Ms. Farrar’s popularity was so great that another performance of *Königskinder* was given by popular demand, and this time Ms. Farrar had to sing not with trained geese, but with untrained geese which honked at all the wrong times and which flew around the stage.⁹

- Noël Coward once wrote a song titled “Chase Me, Charley” for two cats. When the song was sung on television, the BBC insisted that the lyric “Bound to give in” be replaced with “Waiting for you.” Mr. Coward commented, “I think it is very silly. Apparently the BBC thinks that the idea of a cat giving in is more likely to create immoral thoughts in listeners’ minds than the idea of a cat waiting to achieve its objective.”¹⁰

April Fool

- On April 1, 1998, world-renowned cellist Yo-Yo Ma made a startling announcement on National Public Radio. He stated that he would never again play the cello. Of course, when shocked listeners called NPR, they were told, “April Fool.”¹¹

Audiences

- An opera-knowledgeable audience can be h*ll on an opera singer. The night before she was scheduled to sing in Parma, soprano Frances Alda and her singing teacher attended a performance there at which Alice Zepelli sang the role of Anna in Verdi’s *Lorelei*. Ms. Zepelli was a fine singer, but unfortunately she broke on a high note. The audience immediately began to hiss. Ms. Alda writes in her autobiography, “And then, as the poor woman stood there, defenseless, *the audience began to sing that aria through, as with one voice, and perfectly!*” Ms. Alda, her face white, immediately turned to her singing teacher and said, “I can’t sing here tomorrow night. I simply can’t face an audience like that.” However, Ms. Alda did sing the following night — and fortunately, she did not break on a high note.¹²

- When Ludwig van Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony was performed in Vienna, it was a huge and immediate success. The members of the audience applauded wildly, but Beethoven, who was deaf by that time, could not hear them and was unaware that they were applauding. Finally, a soloist turned him so he faced the crowd. The members of the audience then added a visual element to the expression of their appreciation by throwing their hats into the air and by waving their handkerchiefs.¹³

- Walter Damrosch pioneered the playing of classical music in US American towns where classical music had never been played. In one town, he was conducting a Beethoven symphony when someone in the audience loudly requested that the orchestra play “The Arkansas Traveler.” Mr. Damrosch conducted his orchestra in “The Arkansas Traveler,” then resumed conducting the Beethoven symphony.¹⁴

Auditions

- Early in his career, Douglas Colvin was not musically sophisticated. At an audition to join the New York band the Neon Boys, he was asked to play a C. He knew how to play a few musical notes, so Douglas played a note, then looked at the Neon Boys. But he had played the wrong note, so they shook their heads. This went on for a few notes, and Douglas failed the audition. Later, Douglas, who was then well known as Dee Dee Ramone of the Ramones, became a member of the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame.¹⁵

- Tenor Richard Tucker scored a huge success at his 1944 audition for the New York Metropolitan Opera. After Mr. Tucker had sung, from the darkness of the theater came the voice of conductor Emil Cooper: “I will assume full responsibility for this man’s career.”¹⁶

Bathrooms

- John Lennon could behave erratically at times. He and fellow musician Harry Nilsson once spent a drunken evening together. After getting kicked out — with good reason — of a Smothers Brothers concert in Los Angeles, they went to the Lost on Larrabee restaurant. John disappeared into a bathroom, and then he reappeared with a feminine-hygiene product on his forehead. He asked the waitress, “Do you know who I am?” The waitress looked at him and said, “Yes, you’re some a**hole with a Kotex on his forehead.”¹⁷

- Sarah Johns moved to Nashville, sang, and to support her singing, washed tour buses. A few years later, she had a contract with a music company, and she was touring in her own tour bus. Does that mean she doesn’t have to clean tour buses anymore? No. She has to clean her own tour bus. She says, “I clean the toilet every morning, because, you know, I’m on there with a bunch of guys, and they always miss.”¹⁸

Blues

- Joe Williams became famous singing the blues, but for a long time he was paid more to sing popular songs such as ballads — which he and others called “pretty songs” and “pretty tunes.” In 1941, Mr. Williams was being paid \$45 a week to sing the blues. In between the blues shows, he remembers, he would sing “all kinds of pretty tunes of the day.” Coleman Hawkins listened to the pretty tunes, liked what he heard, and told him, “I want you to come with me and travel as my vocalist. I don’t want you to sing the blues. I want you to sing the pretty songs, and I’m gonna give you \$80 a week.” Mr. Williams jokes, “I lost my allegiance to the blues just like that!” The same thing kept happening. Andy Kirk wanted him to sing the pretty songs and let Beverly White sing the blues. And Lionel Hampton wanted him to sing the pretty songs and let Dinah Washington sing the blues. In 1954, Mr. Williams started singing with Count Basie’s band. He sang “Everyday I Have the Blues” and kept singing the blues after that.¹⁹

- It’s possible to fall in love with another culture. In Japan, Yoko Noge fell in love with Chicago blues, and after going to college she went to Chicago to sing the blues. There, she

sang like a black woman. Sometimes, a black man would ask her during a break in her act, “Was that you I heard singing?” She would answer, “Yes,” and he would say, “D*mn. I thought I was listening to a black woman sing. That’s why I decided to come on in from the street and listen. You sounded good.” This, of course, is a compliment. Also, of course, one needs to respect one’s own culture, and Ms. Noge sings some songs in Japanese, making her act a hybrid of Chicago blues and Japanese folk music that she calls “Japanesque.”²⁰

Children

- Henry S. Rosenthal and his wife, Carola Anderson, along with their children, George and Lou Lou of the band Lou Lou and the Guitarfish, lead lives of artistic accomplishment in film and music in a six-story warehouse in San Francisco that they have converted into a home. Back in the late 1980s, Henry and Carola decided to have children. According to Henry, they made the decision because their parrots declined to talk and their first cat, Django, couldn’t talk. Of course, their two children were raised among art, including some art that most children (and adults) are not exposed to, such as Wagner’s *Ring Cycle*. Carola thought that her children — before they had learned to read — would benefit from seeing a video of the *Ring Cycle*, so she showed it to them over a few days — it is something like 15 hours long — and she read the subtitles to them. So how do children with artistic parents rebel? By going mainstream. These days, George and Lou Lou like the same things, including music and films, as their parents, but when she was in the second grade Lou Lou wanted an album by ’N Sync, and for a while, George enjoyed Hollywood action films. The rebellion did not last long. The children have the same tastes as their parents now, and the children inherited the artistic and musical talents of their parents. Their six-story warehouse is fabulous. It is filled with art, including Henry’s collection of 36 stuffed calves — all of which have two heads. One floor is the home of George and Lou Lou, who have separate “houses” decorated the way they like. George’s house looks like an ocean liner, while journalist Jennifer Maerz describes Lou Lou’s house as “a miniature collapsed Palladian villa.” By the way, Daniel Handler fictionalized Lou Lou and put her in a Lemony Snicket book. She is called Madame Lulu, and she is “slightly mysterious and a terrific dresser.”²¹

- So what is it like being the parent of a rock star? Dave Simpson of the British newspaper *The Guardian* asked some parents of rock stars just that question. 1) Roy Newman, a retired electrical power engineer, is the father of Colin Newman, a singer with the group Wire. Roy remembers that Colin was a very imaginative child — at age five, he used to walk behind his parents and hold his hand up while making clicking noises with his tongue because he was taking his imaginary horse for a walk. As you would expect, he liked music. His parents took him and Janice, his younger sister, to a store so that Colin could buy the most recent Beatles album. Quickly, Colin turned up missing. Two hours later, they found him. He had been so eager to listen to the album that he had run home, climbed in through a window, and started playing the album. 2) Meat Loaf’s daughter is named Pearl Aday, the first name coming from the title of an album by Janis Joplin. Meat Loaf, who is himself a rock star, says, “Even though she’s a woman in a very tough, male-dominated industry, the only time I was concerned was when she went on the road with Mötley Crüe.” He attended the concert, and his daughter was wearing a tiny G-string. He says, “I went up to [bassist] Nikki Sixx and said ‘I wanna talk to you NOW!’ and scared the h*ll out of him. But it was a joke.” 3) Ed Marnie is a retired Scottish Enterprise development worker and the father of Ladytron singer Helen Marnie. He admits, “It is weird being a pop star’s parent. At one gig my pal and I were standing with our black Ladytron T-shirts on thinking we were cool and this kid looked at us and said, ‘You must

be parents.’” In addition, Mr. Marnie remembers, “I was once in a bar and this bloke said he was a big Ladytron fan and had a screensaver of Helen on his computer. I looked at him and said, ‘That’s my daughter!’”²²

- Sheila Escovedo, aka percussionist-drummer Sheila E., grew up around drums and percussive instruments. Her father is big-time percussionist Pete Escovedo, and her godfather is Latin percussion master Tito Puente. Sheila E. and two of her three siblings became percussionists. Sheila E. explains, “That’s Pop’s fault. We grew up listening to him play around the house. He practiced to records all the time. And if his band wasn’t rehearsing, they’d have jam sessions in our living room all the time. So pretty much the percussion instruments — timbales, congas, bongos, hand toys — were set out in the house as part of the furniture most of the time.” When Sheila E. was 16, a percussionist in her father’s band, Azteca, became ill and unable to play, so she asked her father if she could sit in. He agreed, and at one point during a song he wanted her to take a solo. She remembers, “It was an overwhelming experience because I’d never been able to express myself in that way. To be onstage with 16 musicians in a band signed to CBS in front of 3,000 people, for me, it was as if there was an out-of-body experience. If this is what heaven was supposed to feel like, then I wanted to feel like this every day.” Sheila E. received a standing ovation and the sight of her father looking at her with his jaw dropped open. Offstage, he told her, “I can’t deny you what you already know. I don’t even know how you know all the things you just did tonight.” She replied that she didn’t know how she knew all the things she had just done either. After this concert, her dream changed. She wanted to be a professional percussionist and not a sprinter in the Olympics.²³

- Kimya Dawson became famous after several of her songs appeared in the hit 2007 movie *Juno*. After the movie made her famous, she started creating an album titled *Alphabutt* for children. Her humor, as shown when she was a member of the anti-folk duo The Moldy Peaches with Adam Green, can be crude and can involve bad language. She thinks that all of her albums are “child-appropriate, but not all parents agree — a lot of kids who like my stuff say, ‘I wanted to take your CD to show and tell, but my teacher doesn’t like it when you say ‘f**king c*ck.’” For that reason, she felt obliged to make what she calls “a show-and-tell-friendly album.” In 2008, her daughter was two years old, and Ms. Dawson was thinking of starting a curfew-friendly tour: “I’ve been thinking about doing a tour called ‘The Nine O’ Clock Curfew Tour,’ where I don’t play any shows that end after nine. This staying up ’til 11 stuff is bullsh*t.”²⁴

- Laurie Anderson was forced to study violin when she was a child — it was not a pleasant experience. She says, “I had a teacher who said, ‘If you don’t put your fingers in the right place, I am going to put nails where they [your fingers] shouldn’t be and you’ll prick yourself.’” Ms. Anderson, of course, composed and recorded “O Superman,” figuring that 100 copies of the song would be enough to meet what she thought would be a limited demand. However, British deejay John Peel played it on his radio show, and suddenly demand skyrocketed. She says, “One day, I got a call from London with an order for 20,000 copies of the single, immediately followed by another 20,000 by the end of the week. I looked at the cardboard box of records, which had almost run out, and said, ‘Listen, can I just call you back?’”²⁵

- Long ago, singer/songwriter Billy Bragg made a music video for a song called “The Boy Done Good” with some of his nieces and nephews. During a visit, a niece mentioned the video, and Billy’s son, who was a toddler when the video was made, wanted to see it. So Billy spent a

week looking everywhere in his home for the video, including getting out a ladder so he could look in the attic. Finally, he gave up and telephoned his niece to ask, “Where did you see the video? ’Cause I can’t find it anywhere. Have you got a copy?” She replied, “Duh, Uncle Bill, it’s on YouTube.” Perhaps unnecessarily, Billy says, “I felt such an idiot, such an old guy.”²⁶

- For one of his televised *Young People’s Concerts*, conductor Leonard Bernstein presented Benjamin Britton’s *Young Person’s Guide to the Orchestra*. He needed a child to narrate, and he settled on the young son of his friend Schuyler Chapin: Henry. Henry did a fine job, and he grew up and taught music to young children at a school in New York. Once, he showed his pupils the Young People’s Concert that he had narrated. The children liked the program, but one girl asked, “Who was that nerdy kid who spoke the words?” Henry confessed that he had been the nerdy kid, and the children applauded him.²⁷

- When Beyoncé and fellow Destiny’s Child member Kelly Rowland first heard a song of theirs — “No, No, No” — on the radio in her car, they stopped the car, jumped out of it, and started singing the song and running around the car. When Beyoncé’s younger sister, Solange, saw them, she was shocked at first. But when she was close enough to hear the song, she joined them in running around the car. Beyoncé remembers, “She dropped her bag and books and started running around the car, too. It was a really cool experience.”²⁸

- Rock goddesses have kids, too. Pat Benatar was a major 1980s rock star and continues to play today. Her songs such as “Heartbreaker” are on *Guitar Hero*, and lots of children — and adults — rock out to them, including her two daughters, Haley and Hana. Of course, kids can ask embarrassing questions, and Haley and Hana sometimes ask their mom this question about the Spandex pants she used to wear on stage: “How did you get into those pants?”²⁹

- Jazz pianist Mary Lou Williams was blessed with perfect pitch — she could identify any note and any key after hearing it. In the third grade, she heard her teacher hum a song, and she said that she could identify the key. Her teacher was skeptical and tested her by playing a note on a piano. Mary Lou immediately identified it.³⁰

- When Stevie Wonder was young, he sang in a church choir — until he was expelled because a church member heard him singing rock and roll.³¹

Clothing

- Luisa Tetrazzini (1871-1940), a coloratura, was singing *Lucia di Lammermoor* in Puebla, Mexico, on a stage flooded because of a rainstorm and a leaky roof. To keep from ruining her dress, she held it a few inches above the water. This displeased a woman in a box, who commented on the shocking display of a lady’s ankles. Ms. Tetrazzini walked underneath the woman’s box, then improvised her own words to the music of the opera: “Madam, you are shocked, very shocked, I know it, yes I do. But do you know the stage is soaking wet and our dresses all are spoiling, yet just to please you I am ready, perfectly ready, to let my dress drag through the wet and be completely ruined if you, dear Madam, will promise to buy me a lovely new one.” This gave the audience a laugh and kept the critic quiet for the rest of the performance.³²

- Pianist Richard Goode was far from dressing with splendor, although at times he tried. He once ran the hot water in his bath in an attempt to steam wrinkles out of his tailcoat. Unfortunately, he forgot to stop the bathtub, and an hour later the ceiling of the apartment

underneath his had collapsed. On another occasion, he put his newly washed white bow tie in a toaster oven so he could dry it. Unfortunately, he singed the bow tie, so he tried to cover up the singed places with talcum powder.³³

- Musician David Broekman used to know someone with the unconscious, but annoying, habit of picking lint off the suit of the person he was talking to, so Mr. Broekman used a small paint brush to paint a dot of white on his suit. Sure enough, the man with the annoying habit tried to pick off the piece of “lint” from Mr. Broekman’s suit.³⁴

Concerts

- Jazz pianist Oscar Peterson was discovered in a very Hollywood-movie fashion. In his native Montreal, Canada, Mr. Peterson was playing in a small club. Producer Norman Grantz heard him, liked what he heard, and invited him to play at Carnegie Hall with the band Jazz at the Philharmonic on September 19, 1949. Mr. Peterson did exactly that. By the way, unlike Mr. Peterson, not every musician is competent. Gioacchino Rossini was once forced to work with a very poor contralto whose competence was limited to singing B-flat notes. Therefore, Rossini composed an aria that required her to sing only B-flat notes; the orchestra carried the melody. The aria was successful — the contralto received a standing ovation.³⁵

- Garth Brooks goes to great lengths to keep his concerts exciting. Near the end of a long tour that tired out pretty much everyone except the fans, Mr. Brooks livened things up by offering \$500 to any band member who could knock him down that night. A band member asked what that meant: “Impress you with a guitar lick or ...” Mr. Brooks replied, “No, I meant physically knock me flat on my butt.” That night, all the band members tried to knock him flat on his butt, to the delight of Mr. Brooks — and his fans, who that night happened to be Canadian. During the final song, the entire band rushed him and knocked him flat on his butt — and split the \$500.³⁶

- While Johnny Cash was attending Dyess High School, Charlie and Ira Louvin — aka the Louvin Brothers — performed there. Johnny arrived two hours early, and he saw his heroes arrive. Charlie even spoke to him — to ask where was the bathroom. Johnny saw Charlie eating soda crackers — and thereafter Johnny ate soda crackers. The concert was fantastic, and when the Louvin Brothers drove away in their limousine, Charlie even waved to Johnny. It was a magical night.³⁷

- In 1980, the parents of Plácido Domingo celebrated their 40th anniversary. He invited them to attend Mass with him in a church in Mexico City, and when they arrived they found many friends and relatives there, as well as a symphony orchestra, which provided the music as their famous son sang for them.³⁸

- Vladimir de Pachmann, a classical pianist, enjoyed performing a joke on stage. He would walk on stage, sit on a stool that was too low, then call for a book to sit on. He would then sit on the book, grimace, stand up, tear out one page from the book, sit down on the book again, smile, and begin playing.³⁹

- When giving a concert, Russian bass Feodor Chaliapin used to give the audience a long numbered list of songs. He would look at the list during the concert, decide what to sing next, then announce the number of the song to his audience. (His accompanist must have carried around a huge pile of sheet music!)⁴⁰

- During his career, African-American actor/singer Paul Robeson frequently entertained audiences by singing spirituals such as “Swing Low, Sweet Chariot.” Early in his career, he sang a concert of 16 spirituals in Greenwich Village — then he sang 16 more spirituals as encores.⁴¹

Compositions

- Singer-songwriter Baby Dee wrote and recorded a song titled “The Dance of Diminishing Possibilities,” which is described by celebrity interviewer Len Righi as “a Bowiesque cabaret number [that] uses a smashed piano as a metaphor for love let loose and the possibility of rebirth.” In the song, a couple of friends smash a keyboard with an axe on a sidewalk. Bobby Slot and Freddy Weiss, the friends in the song, are real; they were neighbors of Baby Dee when she was young and living in Cleveland, and they really did use an ax to smash a keyboard on a sidewalk. Baby Dee says, “They were bums, guys in their 30s, dumb and harmless,” she says. “They really wanted not to have a piano. That was their dream. So the whole neighborhood got together to make their dream come true.”⁴²
- Avant garde composer John Cage once created a music piece titled 4’33” in which the pianist sat at a piano for exactly four minutes and 33 seconds without playing a note. The music consisted of the sounds that the audience heard while the pianist was not playing.⁴³

Conductors

- Early in his career, Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky was too frightened to be a good conductor. In January 1868 he debuted as a conductor at a benefit for the victims of winter famine. However, he was so nervous that he forgot the composition and gave the orchestra the wrong indications. Fortunately, the musicians knew the composition very well, so they ignored Tchaikovsky and played it correctly. For the next 10 years, Tchaikovsky did not conduct. However, when he started to conduct again, he quickly overcame his nervousness and did a good job.⁴⁴
- What if you were in a plane, a storm arose, and you realized that your life could possibly end in a few minutes? What would you think? What would you say? What would you regret not having done? Andre Previn was in a plane with the conductor Sir John Barbirolli when this situation happened. Sir John, dismayed, said, “Oh it’s too awful! I haven’t even done all the Bruckners!” Fortunately, the plane landed safely.⁴⁵
- Richard Wagner was a demanding conductor. Victor Borge’s father played violin in the Hamburg Opera Orchestra when Wagner was guest conductor for his *Tristan und Isolde*. Wagner kept the musicians rehearsing from 8:30 a.m. until 6 p.m., cursing them and bullying them — even though they had an evening performance to give. However, Wagner was able to get the thrilling effects he wanted from the orchestra.⁴⁶
- Conductor Serge Koussevitzky sometimes got very angry at his musicians. In one case, he yelled at a musician who stayed silent. Enraged, Mr. Koussevitzky stormed with his Russian accent, “Vy don’t you spik? Vy don’t you say something?” Before the musician could reply, Mr. Koussevitzky stormed, “Silence! I vill have no opposition!”⁴⁷
- Eugene Ormandy was once so displeased that he was ready to quit the Minneapolis Orchestra. He explained why to his manager, Arthur Judson — he had heard some of the musicians call him “a little son-of-a-b*tch.” Hearing this, Mr. Judson simply laughed and told Mr. Ormandy, “Congratulations, you’re a *real* conductor now.”⁴⁸

Chapter 2: From Crime to Food

Crime

- In 1962, drummer Pete Best was kicked out of the Beatles, who of course went on to become the most successful rock band ever. He remembers how financially impoverished they were back then: They would get paid one day and be broke the next day. Therefore, he and John Lennon decided to rob someone. They jumped a sailor, who fought back. Pete and John then ran away. Pete remembers, “I looked at John and said, ‘Have you got the wallet?’ And he said, ‘No, I thought you had it.’” And so ended their life of crime.⁴⁹
- Manuel Garcia, senior, was a famous operatic tenor. He was so famous that when Mexican brigands held him up during a tour, they not only took all his money but also forced him to sing for them.⁵⁰

Critics

- In a 2008 article titled “The Walking Wounded” in Great Britain’s *Guardian* newspaper, several critics described the worst reactions that their criticisms had provoked. For example, music critic Robin Denselow says that he was “attacked... from the stage” by singer-songwriter John Martyn although he didn’t recall having written anything especially bad about Mr. Martyn. And later, Mr. Denselow says, musician Kevin Coyle hit him “on behalf of John Martyn.” In contrast, other musicians are much kinder. Mr. Denselow once criticized what he calls “a decidedly substandard early show” by Pink Floyd. The musicians in the group were very kind to him. He says, “They wrote to me, agreeing that they had played badly that night, and thanking me for actually listening.”⁵¹
- Vladimir de Pachmann hated music critics and especially a critic who worshipped Chopin. At a concert he knew the critic would attend, de Pachmann walked out on stage, holding a pair of socks. He announced to the audience that these socks had been worn by Chopin himself, then he draped the socks over the piano and played a concert of Chopin’s works. The next day, the critic visited de Pachmann and asked to see the socks and perhaps even touch them. De Pachmann granted the critic’s request, and the critic kissed the socks reverently. Later, de Pachmann revealed to his friends that the socks had never belonged to Chopin and that he himself had worn them for two weeks straight without washing them.⁵²
- Conductor Arturo Toscanini once swore in Italian at the Metropolitan orchestra, saying that it played like a pig. After the rehearsal, the remark was translated and disseminated, and members of the orchestra demanded an apology; otherwise, they would not play for him. Toscanini refused on the grounds that his remark was true. However, he did say “Good morning” at the next rehearsal, and the members of the orchestra decided to play once more for him.⁵³
- Soprano Frances Alda wrote a book in which she criticized baritone Lawrence Tibbett. Later, she dined with Mr. Tibbett and his wife, Jane. No one said anything about what Ms. Alda had written in her book until Ms. Alda said to Mrs. Tibbett, “I’m surprised you speak to me after what I wrote about your husband in my book.” Very politely, Mrs. Tibbett replied, “But I haven’t read your book, Madame Alda.”⁵⁴

- In early 2008, *Maxim* magazine reviewed the album *Warpaint* by the Black Crowes, giving it a mediocre 2½ stars and saying that “it hasn’t left Chris Robinson and the gang much room for growth.” There was just one problem: The reviewer had not heard the album. Faced with a deadline, the reviewer had faked a review. Boo. Fortunately, *Maxim* was forced to apologize.⁵⁵
- Lilli Lehmann could be a severe critic. After the first two acts of a revival of *Tannhauser*, a critic asked for her opinion. Ms. Lehmann had not been impressed, so as she walked out of the theater, she told the critic, “Say that Lilli Lehmann leaves her loge [box or seat in a theater] in disgust at the travesty they call Art in this opera house!”⁵⁶
- The very successful and very rich pianist Liberace was not bothered by criticism. In 1954, he told a critic who had written a bad review of one of his performances, “I cried all the way to the bank.” In 1974, he told the same critic, who still disliked his performances, “You remember that bank that I cried all the way to? I bought it.”⁵⁷
- During one tour, Sir Rudolf Bing and the Metropolitan Opera was criticized mercilessly for five days in a row in the *Chicago Tribune* by Claudia Cassidy. On the 6th day of the Met’s stay in Chicago, Sir Rudolf met Ms. Cassidy as she was entering the theater and said to her, “Oh, Miss Cassidy. I didn’t know you were in town.”⁵⁸
- Charles Ives used his composition “Three Places in New England” to make fun of marching bands in small towns. One of his instructions for playing the piece is to “count as if practicing the beginning and getting it wrong.”⁵⁹
- The Met once played at the Paris Opera, where some French critics panned Roberta Peters. Sir Rudolf Bing defended Ms. Peters by saying, “Miss Peters may have had a bad night, but the Paris Opera has had a bad century.”⁶⁰
- Birgit Nilsson once got angry and left London because a critic complained that her performance as Brünnhilde was not yet perfect. As Ms. Nilsson was leaving, she said, “If I’m not perfect, let them find somebody who is.”⁶¹
- A critic once complained that Richard Strauss had conducted with a too-fast tempo the finale of a Mozart symphony. Mr. Strauss observed, “These gentlemen of the press seem to have a direct wire to Olympus.”⁶²

Death

- J.W. “Blind” Boone was an African-American pianist who made his living as a musician during the late 19th century and early 20th century — he died in 1927. He could have died much earlier in Kansas City, MO. At a fair he played piano. His manager, John Lange, Jr., left Blind Boone behind playing piano while he went to find a newspaper reporter to listen to him. A fire broke out, and Blind Boone smelled the smoke and heard the commotion of people around him, but no one helped him out of the building and he did not know the way out of the building. Blind Boone remained calm and kept playing the piano, and Mr. Lange quickly arrived. Guided by the sound of the piano, he made his way through the smoke and rescued Blind Boone. As they left the building, the roof collapsed.⁶³
- One of Frank Sinatra’s gifts to Sammy Davis, Jr., was an enormous gold Cartier watch. When Sammy knew that he was dying, he told his kids about the watch, “It goes with me.” As he had requested, he was buried with that memento of a great friendship. As happens to many friends,

Sammy and Frank sometimes got angry at each other. Once, Sammy got outrageously drunk and cursed Frank, who ignored the outburst. The next day, Sammy went to Frank to apologize, but Frank simply told him, “Look, we’ve all done exactly what you did last night, but if you can’t handle it, don’t do it. Now, what exactly are we going to do today?”⁶⁴

- Even on her deathbed, musician Michael Franti’s grandmother was able to joke. He visited her in the hospital, and she was connected to a heart monitor and had oxygen tubes up her nose. He asked her, “Grandma, what happened? How come you’re in the hospital?” She replied, “Because I’m pregnant!” He asked, “Who got you pregnant?” She replied, “Reverend Mitchell!”⁶⁵

Education

- Younger musicians are often in awe of older, more established musicians. The 18-year-old jazz saxophonist Charlie “Bird” Parker washed dishes at Jimmy’s Chicken Shack, a nightclub in Harlem. Playing at the nightclub was jazz pianist Art Tatum. Mr. Parker learned about improvisation from Mr. Tatum during the three months that they worked at Jimmy’s Chicken Shack, but he was so in awe of Mr. Tatum that he never spoke to him. Of course, older musicians tend not to be in awe of younger musicians, even immensely talented young musicians. In 1943, the 23-year-old Bird was playing tenor saxophone in a style that he helped invent. Older tenor saxophonist Ben Webster, who played for Duke Ellington, took the horn out of Bird’s mouth and told him, “That horn ain’t supposed to sound that fast.”⁶⁶

- In Finland, teachers call authority-defying students *valituskuoro*, or chorus of complaints. Oddly enough, this became a new performance art form when two Finns, husband-and-wife team Oliver and Tellervo Kochta-Kalleinen took “chorus of complaints” literally. In 2005, choruses of complaints began in Birmingham, England; Helsinki, Finland; and St Petersburg, Russia. The chorus of complaints is exactly what it sounds like: a chorus of people singing about their complaints. *Times* journalist Neil Fisher writes, “They chant about tatty [dilapidated] bus stops and harmonise on the insufficient length of their vacuum-cleaner cord. In fact, every tedious aspect of modern life has probably passed the lips of a complaints choir, a new kind of performance art that is noisily taking root across the world.”⁶⁷

- The goal is perfection, but seeking perfection is more important than achieving perfection. Indian tabla master Zakir Hussain learned this important lesson from jazz saxophonist Charles Lloyd. Following a concert, one of Mr. Lloyd’s friends told him, “Charles, that was amazing — that was perfect!” Mr. Lloyd replied, “Man, I haven’t played good enough to quit yet!” Ms. Hussain identifies what he learned from this short conversation: “If I think I play well enough now, I might as well hang up my boots. It’s not about the goal; it’s about the journey. This is a learning experience all through your life.”⁶⁸

- Buddy Collette helped to unite a white musicians’ union group (Musicians Local 47) and a black musicians’ union group (Musicians Local 767). In doing so, he had help from African-American celebrity Josephine Baker, who spoke to an integrated audience, saying that she didn’t see why there were two (segregated) locals; after all, the audience was integrated. She saw two little girls in the audience, one white and one black, and she spoke for a moment to them. The two little girls hugged each other, and Ms. Baker said, “I think you can learn a lot from these youngsters.”⁶⁹

- Violinist Mischa Elman was known for playing with a warm tone, something that famous violin teacher Carl Flesch did not have. Mr. Elman once attended a master class given by Mr. Flesch, who could be very critical during his classes. One student played with a very dry tone, so Mr. Flesch said, “Ladies and gentlemen, there is someone here who knows more about tone than anyone in the world. Mischa Elman, would you define a beautiful tone for the student?” Mr. Elman told the student, “Exactly what your teacher doesn’t have.”⁷⁰
- When guitarist Felix White of the Maccabees was attending school, he wasn’t allowed to do much in music: “I was told I couldn’t sing or do anything. So I had to play xylophone. Just the one note, again and again. My favorite note? Whichever note they gave me. I was just happy to be involved.” Recently, the school invited him back. Mr. White says, “They said, ‘We’d like you to do a speech about how much the school taught you.’” He jokes, “I’m going to go back and smash the xylophone.”⁷¹
- Chris Martin, the lead singer of Coldplay, and the other members of the band take education seriously. Mr. Martin and his band mates attended London University. They declined to sign a contract that made them release any Coldplay records or tour before they had completed their final exams. Mr. Martin received a first — a top British honor — in ancient world studies. He and the other members of Coldplay became rock gods after their final exams.⁷²
- A Mexican piano teacher named Manuel Barajas was strict. The young Plácido Domingo and two young nephews of a family friend named Esperanza Vázquez took lessons at the same time, with their aunts picking them up after the lesson. Whenever Mr. Barajas was displeased by a young pupil’s playing, he would tell the aunts, “Aunts, upstairs!” He would then criticize whichever pupil had displeased him in the aunts’ presence.⁷³
- René Soames studied with voice teacher Gustave Garcia for 18 months, after which time Mr. Garcia advised him to go into business since he would never be a singer. Mr. Soames was upset by this verdict and wondered why Mr. Garcia had waited to tell him that until after he had spent all his savings on voice lessons. Fortunately, Mr. Soames kept on singing and made a career for himself singing Elizabethan music.⁷⁴
- Gary Valentine, a founding member of Blondie, became infatuated with the Beatles — like millions of other kids — after seeing them in 1964 on *The Ed Sullivan Show*. In the 4th grade, for the last half-hour on Fridays his teacher allowed Gary and other students to pretend to play cardboard cutouts of guitars as they lip-synced to the latest British Invasion single.⁷⁵
- Even as a young teenager, Victoria de los Angeles sang well. Her father worked at the University of Barcelona, where young Victoria would go into the classrooms after class had let out and sing. Sometimes, the professors chased her out because their students preferred to listen to her than do their own work.⁷⁶
- When Giulio Gatti-Casazza was manager of the Metropolitan Opera, he was asked, “Who is a good voice teacher?” He replied, “That is an easy question. It is that teacher who is lucky enough to have an exceptional pupil.”⁷⁷

Fame

- Danielle Arsenault is the hot chick in the Detroit band Crud — she calls herself the *ss of the band. Crud gleefully takes advantage of her hotness — with her permission — by using her image on its T-shirts and posters. She calls the band’s fans “h*rny,” which frontman Vinnie

Dombroski agrees is the fans' most defining characteristic. Often, male fans will push their girlfriends onstage so that Ms. Arsenault can spank or do other things to them. Perhaps the band will become more than regionally famous one day, and perhaps it will bring in a bigger income than it did in early 2008. The income would be welcome, but excessive fame can be a problem. Ms. Arsenault says, "I like the level we're at right now because I don't have to work too hard. But I wouldn't mind working a little bit harder if it meant making a lot more." She adds, however, "I don't want to not be able to go out of the house without makeup. I want to be able to go to the grocery store with a hangover and not get my picture taken."⁷⁸

- How do you know when you're a singer-songwriter who is beginning to make it? Having a song played on the TV series *Grey's Anatomy* is one way, and Australian singer-songwriter Missy Higgins has done that. Being chased by the paparazzi is another, but in Australia you've got to be really famous to be chased by the paparazzi and Ms. Higgins hadn't become that famous as of April 2008. However, her songs are sung on Australia's version of *American Idol*, and her songs are sung in Australian karaoke bars. In addition — and this is fabulous — she says, "I actually saw myself in a crossword in Australia, and I thought that's amazing — it doesn't get any better."⁷⁹

- Rock 'n' roll pioneer Bo Diddley was never as famous as many other rock 'n' roll pioneers. In part, this was a result of a bad decision he made in 1955, when he made his one-and-only appearance on *The Ed Sullivan Show*, a TV show that created stars long before *American Idol*. Mr. Sullivan wanted Bo Diddley to play a big hit by Tennessee Ernie Ford, "Sixteen Tons." Mr. Diddley agreed, but when the cameras started broadcasting him on the show — live — he played the song "Bo Diddley" instead. Mr. Sullivan was not happy, and he never invited Mr. Diddley on his show again.⁸⁰

- In 2005, British pop singer Natasha Bedingfield became famous as a result of her Top 40 songs "Unwritten" and "These Words (I Love You, I Love You)." But when did she know that she was *really* famous? Actually, in 2008. She needed to get into a building in New York that had very tight security. She had forgotten her passport, but she did have a copy of *Rolling Stone*. She says, "I just opened up my *Rolling Stone* and said, 'See the person in white? That's me!' And they let me in."⁸¹

- Leo Slezak spent a short time in the Austrian army, then went on to fame and fortune as an operatic tenor. He gave his former commanding officer a photograph of himself as Othello, and inscribed it, "In remembrance of the recruit of the 17th Rifle Battalion, who rose to the command of the Venetian fleet."⁸²

- Run-DMC's first hit was "It's Like That." At the time, both Run and DMC were college students at different schools. Run was walking on campus at LaGuardia College when "It's Like That" began playing on the radio. Excited, he caused a scene by shouting, over and over, "That's my song! That's my song!"⁸³

Fans

- Classical pianist Christopher O'Riley sometimes plays music other than classical during his concerts and during *From the Top*, his weekly National Public Radio program. For example, at concerts he will play works by Russian composer Dmitri Shostakovich and British experimental rock group Radiohead and by French composer Claude Debussy and English singer-songwriter Nick Drake. When he plays Radiohead on his NPR program, he sometimes

gets interesting telephone calls. Mr. O’Riley says, “I would play ‘True Love Waits’ or ‘Karma Police’ and announce that it was by Radiohead,” says O’Riley. “People would call in and ask, ‘Who is Mr. Head, and where can I find more of his music?’ They assumed it was classical music because I was playing it. We also heard from Radiohead fans who became Mozart fans. They would say, ‘Mozart, I always wanted to check him out.’”⁸⁴

- The B-52s recorded “Love Shack” on their 1989 album *Cosmic Thing* and sure enough, 19 years later, in 2008, they recorded the album *Funplex*. Singer Fred Schneider admits, “We’re not exactly the most prolific group.” (In 1992, they recorded the studio album *Good Stuff*.) Despite not producing a lot of new music, the B-52’s retain their old fans and they have acquired new fans, thanks in large part to YouTube. “I’m happy doing the new stuff, and the response to the new stuff, because of YouTube, they already know it,” Mr. Schneider says. “In the past, they used to clap politely, and then you’d play an older song and they’d go wild.” The B-52’s started making music over 30 years ago in Athens, Georgia. Mr. Schneider jokes, “I’m just lucky. I haven’t got a skill, so as long as I can sing and stuff, I’m OK.”⁸⁵

- One problem with modern celebrity is that going out in public can be dangerous. Tegan Quin of Sara and Tegan fame remembers being able to sign autographs for hours with no problems, but then things changed with greater fame. Tegan says, “That’s the one thing I regret. The bigger you get, the less you can connect with people.” Still, at times Tegan can act like a normal person. In 2008, she got on a public bus and was recognized by a few girls who asked her, “Why are *you* on the bus?” Tegan had the perfect answer: “I don’t drive!”⁸⁶

- In the early days of punk rock in England, fans indulged in gobbing — spitting on the band. Believe it or not, this was regarded as a compliment, even though many band members hated it, Johnny Ramone among them. Debbie Harry of Blondie also did not care for being spit on, complaining, “It doesn’t match my dress.” One band member who did like it — and even encouraged it — was Handsome Dick Manitoba of the Dictators. He used to drink a quart of milk before going onstage so he could spit back at his fans.⁸⁷

- At a concert of works by George Gershwin, both Mr. Gershwin himself and Oscar Levant performed. After the concert, many fans surrounded Mr. Gershwin, while Mr. Levant stood alone. Finally, Mr. Levant said, “You could at least send one of them over to me.”⁸⁸

- David Byrne of the Talking Heads knew that some of his fans were rather odd, so he frequently had his telephone number changed.⁸⁹

Fathers

- For many years, the castrati ruled opera. In Paris, a woman named Teresa Lanti went under the name of Bellino and pretended to be a castrato so she could get jobs singing opera. Ms. Lanti did not fool Casanova; she was one of his lovers. A person who narrowly averted becoming a castrato was the famous composer Joseph Haydn. As a boy, Haydn had a lovely singing voice; however, when his choirmaster suggested that Haydn become a castrato to preserve his voice, Haydn’s father quickly put an end to the idea.⁹⁰

- As a young man, Italian baritone Tito Gobbi really got into his roles. After playing Scarpia for the first time in *Tosca*, Mr. Gobbi took his parents out to eat. At the restaurant, Mr. Gobbi behaved exactly like Scarpia, snapping his fingers to get attention from the waiters and in

general making a nuisance of himself. His father leaned across the table and said softly to him, “Come back, Tito — the opera is over.”⁹¹

- As a rebellious teenager, Paul McCartney wore his hair much longer than his father, Jim, liked. Paul would occasionally go to the barber to get a trim, but his father felt that the trims made little difference in the length of Paul’s hair. Every time Paul returned from the barbershop, his father would say sarcastically, “Was it closed then?”⁹²

Food

- Mick Collins, leader of the Detroit band the Dirtbombs, remembers meeting Julian Schnabel, director of *The Diving Bell and the Butterfly*, who used the Dirtbombs’ version of the song “Chains of Love” on the movie’s soundtrack. The Dirtbombs played at Mr. Schnabel’s premiere party at Cannes — for about 10 minutes, with the volume turned up to 10 — then they met Mr. Schnabel backstage. Carrying a tray of pastries, Mr. Schnabel said, “Let’s do some pastries.” Mr. Collins marvels, “Of all the things I’ve been asked to do backstage after a show, pastries has never been on the list. So we did a tray of pastries. He was a really cool guy.”⁹³

- In the early 1980s, while the star rap group Disco 3 was in Switzerland, their manager, Charles Settler, looked at their hotel bill and was impressed by a charge in addition to lodging — the food bill of the three-member group was \$350. Mr. Settler renamed the group The Fat Boys. The group had first achieved success when it came in second in a 1983 rap contest held by Coca-Cola. They were very happy with their prize of a \$5,000 stereo system — and even happier, as well as surprised, to learn that second prize also included a record contract with Sutra Records.⁹⁴

- Jazz musician Ornette Coleman keeps trying new things. When Eddie Vedder of Pearl Jam ate dinner with him, Mr. Coleman poured red wine into his sorbet and asked, “Ever had red wine and raspberry sorbet?” After Mr. Vedder answered, “No,” Mr. Coleman said, “Neither have I.” According to Mr. Vedder, “I think that sums him up. He might be in his late 70s, but that was probably the sixth or seventh new thing he tried that day.”⁹⁵

- While on his way to Dallas, Texas, during the days of Jim Crow, conductor Pierre Monteux stopped at a restaurant, where the waitress told him that she could not serve him. When Mr. Monteux asked why not, she said, “Because, sir, this restaurant is for colored folk.” Mr. Monteux replied, “But we *are* colored, my dear. We are PINK!” Breakfast was served, and it was excellent.⁹⁶

- George Handel, composer of *Messiah* and the “Hallelujah Chorus,” was a bit of a glutton. He once ordered a dinner for three at an inn. The food was slow in coming, so he asked the innkeeper when he would be served. The innkeeper said that he would serve the food when the company arrived. Handel replied, “I am the company.”⁹⁷

- Being a musician can be a hard job. Early in their career, Johnny Cash and his band used to carry shotguns while traveling by car to and from gigs. That way, if they saw ducks or rabbits or raccoons, aka live “fixin’s,” as they were driving, they could stop and shoot dinner.⁹⁸

- One of gospel singer Mahalia Jackson’s business ventures was a restaurant that served “glorified chicken.”⁹⁹

Chapter 3: From Friends to Mishaps

Friends

- When Louis Armstrong was a young man growing up in New Orleans, one of his friends was a tough man named Black Benny Williams. Sometimes Black Benny had money, and sometimes he did not. When he had money, he wore a suit. When he did not have money, he pawned his suit. Once, he had money and was wearing a suit, but a police officer tried to arrest him. Black Benny, however, declined to be arrested, saying, “Oh, no. I just got my suit out of pawn, and I’m going to wear it for a day before I go to jail.” The police officer grabbed hold of Black Benny, but Black Benny — a big, strong man — walked away, dragging the police officer until the police officer gave up and stopped trying to arrest Black Benny. By the way, Black Benny had an interesting way of getting money. He would tell people, “Let’s see your gun.” When he saw the gun, he would say, “I’m taking it.” Black Benny was tough enough that no one ever objected. After collecting a few guns, he would pawn them and then do some drinking and gambling.¹⁰⁰

- Red West is an actor who was a member of Elvis Presley’s “Memphis Mafia” and served as Mr. Presley’s driver and bodyguard. Someone was bringing drugs to Mr. Presley and Mr. West didn’t like it, so he broke the man’s foot and said, “I’ll work my way from your foot up to your face.”¹⁰¹

Gays and Lesbians

- Both comedian Amy Poehler and singer Liza Minnelli have many gay fans. Ms. Poehler and a friend saw a concert by Ms. Minnelli and afterward they visited Ms. Minnelli in her dressing room. Ms. Poehler says, “I told my friend, who was pregnant at the time, that Liza had to bless her baby so that it would either be gay or be a big supporter of the gays for the rest of his or her life.” Ms. Minnelli agreed. She put her head down by the pregnant friend’s belly and sang a couple of slightly altered lines from *Cabaret*: “What good is sitting alone in your womb? Come hear the music play!”¹⁰²

- Noël Coward was gay. He once wrote a parody of a Cole Porter song that began, “Weren’t we fools to lose each other, Though we know we loved each other. You chose another, so did I” Mr. Coward then added this line of his own to Mr. Porter’s song: “You chose your brother, so did I.”¹⁰³

Good Deeds

- Some people turn out to be much nicer than you expect. Jarvis Cocker’s car once broke down, and some very young teenagers driving a very nice car stopped to help. Mr. Cocker says, “These kids came up in a posh car. They were only about 15, so I didn’t think it was theirs. I thought I was going to get mugged, but they were very nice, driving me to the nearest station and giving me chocolate limes, which I’m sure just happened to be in the car when they nicked it.” The experience inspired him to write a song titled “Joyriders,” which appeared on [Pulp](#)’s 1994 album *His’n’Hers*. Mr. Cocker respects the miracle that is songwriting: “The beauty of songwriting is that any human being can do it. And they learned how to do it their way. One minute someone was sitting in the living room, having a cup of coffee. The next they

picked up the guitar and wrote something from nothing. That's a miraculous event. That's what keeps me going."¹⁰⁴

- The Ramones starred in *Rock 'n' Roll High School* with P.J. Soles, who played the character Riff Randle. To get the footage for one scene in the movie, the Ramones played three concerts in one day. At the 8 a.m. show, fans got in free. In the afternoon, fans paid \$1. For the evening show, fans paid \$5. Unfortunately, the Ramones were required to play the same five songs over and over during the concerts. Johnny Ramone did not think that was fair to the fans who had paid \$5 for the evening show, so he asked the other Ramones to stay and play a few more songs for those fans. They did. Also capable of kindness was P.J. Soles, who invited the Ramones to her home for a holiday turkey dinner — the Ramones started filming the movie in December of 1978. P.J. remembers, "They came all dressed up, like little gentlemen! They were very sweet, and my family enjoyed them very much."¹⁰⁵

- Garth Brooks and his wife were watching a United Cerebral Palsy telethon. It became clear that the organization was not going to meet its fundraising goal, so they drove a few miles to the station, where they appeared before the cameras. Mr. Brooks pledged a dime for every dollar that viewers contributed, and his wife immediately wrote out a check for \$25,000.¹⁰⁶

Husbands and Wives

- Martha Wainwright comes from the musical Wainwright Family. Her father is Loudon Wainwright III, and her brother is Rufus Wainwright. All are recording artists. When Martha was six years old, Rufus came into her room and looked into her mirror, and then he remarked, "I'm more beautiful than you." She says, "I think I was upset by the fact that he might be right. Maybe that was an inspiration to me to sing. Maybe I felt like an ugly duckling. Maybe I felt lesser." Martha can and does speak vividly: "I don't see life always through the eyes of a songwriter, and maybe I should because I'd write more songs. I have a tendency to live life and then feel upset because I haven't played the guitar in a long time. It's like not masturbating for a long time." By the way, she did get married in 2008 to her bass player, Brad Albetta. Martha hired him in 2003 for a very good reason: "I fancied him, so I kept him around as much as I could."¹⁰⁷

- Jazz musician Dave Brubeck attended the University of the Pacific, and occasionally he returned there to perform. One day, while he was there, a student said to him, "Where did you meet your wife?" This was the perfect place to ask Mr. Brubeck that question because he pointed to a door located to the left of the stage and answered, "Coming through that door." At a later performance at the University of the Pacific, Mr. and Mrs. Brubeck received a very nice surprise. A dean of the university revealed a plaque that stated, "Dave Brubeck and Iola Whitlock started their musical life coming through this door." Because of that, the two left their archives to the University of the Pacific.¹⁰⁸

- Musicians have an advantage over ordinary people: creativity in proposing. Electronic one-man band Martin Dosh proposed to his wife, Erin, by singing a song to her: "I Think I'm Getting Married." From an early age, he knew that he liked music. When asked what he wanted to be when he grew up, he replied that he wanted to be a singing carpenter.¹⁰⁹

Injuries and Illnesses

- When Marshall Mathers, now better known as rap singer Eminem, was in the 4th grade, a 6th-grade bully named D’Angelo Bailey frequently tormented him. Eventually, D’Angelo attacked young Marshall so fiercely that Marshall ended up in the hospital with a cerebral hemorrhage. Later, Eminem wrote and performed a rap song titled “Brain Damage” about the attack. In it, he attacked D’Angelo — with words and rhymes — so fiercely that D’Angelo sued him for \$1 million in a defamation suit. The judge ruled against D’Angelo, pointing out that Eminem had clearly exaggerated in his rap song and that what he sang was obviously not to be taken seriously. For one thing, Eminem wrote that D’Angelo had attacked him so fiercely and injured him so badly that his brain had fallen out of his head. The judge, Deborah Servitto, wrote a 10-stanza rhyme that delivered her decision. It included these lines: “It is therefore this court’s ultimate position, that Eminem is entitled to summary disposition.” By the way, the name Eminem comes from his initials: M’n’M, short for Marshall Mathers.¹¹⁰

- This will come as a surprise to absolutely no one, but creative people have creative ideas. For example, rapper Hollywood Holt suffered a mishap in Vancouver when he was struggling out of a pair of tight jeans and cut his arm severely when it went through a window. No fool, he got to a hospital fast, but even so the doctors talked about a possible amputation. Mr. Holt says, “I was seriously thinking about this sh*t, while I was laying out in pain: ‘If my hand gets cut off, I’m gonna build some sort of cool prosthetic ape-man-style hand.’ And I woulda seriously built that.”¹¹¹

- As a little girl, Ernestine Schumann-Heink used to sing with great volume. One day, she was practicing her singing and really belting out the tune. The little boy of the rope-maker who lived nearby came running and gave her a glass filled with liquid and asked her to drink it. When she asked what it was, the little boy said, “My mother says you must have an awful stomachache because you are screaming so loud! She says that you should drink this and then go right away to bed.”¹¹²

- Willie Nelson’s friend Zeke Varner suffered from back pain, so he went to a doctor for some pain pills. The doctor showed him the available pills for pain, saying that the red pills offered the best pain relief, but that they were very addictive. Mr. Varner replied, “Doc, I am seventy years old. I am addicted to nicotine, alcohol, caffeine, and a dozen other things. What’s one more?”¹¹³

- Opera singer Matthew Best points out that singers are not good people to be around when you are seeking sympathy because you have a cold. The response of the singer is likely to be, “You have a cold? Get the h*ll out of here!”¹¹⁴

- Opera singer Emma Eames worked hard and seldom forgot a word while on the stage. She stated, “If by any chance I forget a word on the stage, I know my health is run down, and I then at once take a rest for several days.”¹¹⁵

Language

- Singer-songwriters need many talents, including the ability to give good interviews. Of course, as songwriters and singers, they tend to have a facility in creating and presenting language. For example, Charlotte Sometimes made a splash with her 2008 debut album, the pop-with-attitude *Waves and the Both of Us*. And no wonder — this is a sample lyric: “Do you think of her / Hands on my waist / And do you think of me when she screams your name?” David Medsker of Bullz-eye.com asked her in an interview, “What is the hardest thing about

being a woman rocker that people outside the biz would never understand?” Ms. Sometimes replied, “Having PMS. I think I should get those days off!”¹¹⁶

- Frances Alda, a soprano, rehearsed before Arturo Toscanini in preparation to play the title role of Charpentier’s *Louise*, a role that required her to sing in Italian. Ms. Alda sang the entire role, while Maestro Toscanini listened in silence. After she had finished, Maestro Toscanini asked in his native Italian, “In what language were you singing?” Of course, Ms. Alda had been singing in Italian, and she became furious and stormed out of the rehearsal, staying in her hotel for the next few days. (Later, Maestro Toscanini worked long hours with Ms. Alda to teach her the proper Italian pronunciation.)¹¹⁷

- Colin Hay, front man for the Australian group Men at Work (and currently a solo artist), used to be multilingual: He can speak English with a Scottish accent. And he used to be able to speak English with an Australian accent. He was born and raised in Scotland, but when he was a teenager, his family moved to Australia. Mr. Hays says, “I used to have two accents. There’s the Scottish accent I’ve always had. But I developed an Australian accent just to assimilate. I would talk Australian out on the street, and at home with my parents, I would speak Scottish.”¹¹⁸

- Even early in his career, Luciano Pavarotti weighed over 300 pounds. Once, just before he was to appear on a TV talk show, he discovered that in order to reach his dressing room, he would have to climb five flights of stairs. He tried to get himself an easier-to-get-to dressing room on the grounds that his coach and accompanist Eugene Kohn — who was quite healthy — was weak and suffering from a bad heart. This obvious ploy failed, and Mr. Pavarotti was forced to climb the stars, cursing in Italian with each step.¹¹⁹

- Conditions were tough when Plácido Domingo sang at the small Tel Aviv Opera House. Because of limited rehearsal times and because of frequent substitutions, sometimes the operas were sung in various languages. In one of the performances of *La Traviata*, by Giuseppe Verdi, the chorus sang in Hebrew, the baritone sang in Hungarian, the soprano sang in German, and Mr. Domingo sang in Italian!¹²⁰

- The USAmerican baritone Lawrence Tibbett once played the title role in the opera *Don Juan de Mañara*, with British baritone Dennis Noble playing Don Juan’s illegitimate son, Don José. Mr. Tibbett saw Mr. Noble in a cafe and called out to him, “This is a d*mn fine opera, Denny — I call you a b*stard three times in the first act!”¹²¹

- In 1921, a Metropolitan Opera production of Modest Mussorgsky’s opera *Boris Godunov* featured Feodor Chaliapin singing the title role in Russian, while everyone else sang in Italian. This production was a great success.¹²²

- Jean Francaix set some bitter satires by Juvenal to music, but his friend Nadia Boulanger joked that the singers ought not to pronounce the words correctly to avoid scandalizing the audience.¹²³

Letters

- Many people hope to discover geniuses, but geniuses are rare. When cellist Pablo Casals wanted to go to Paris (for a second time) in 1899 to become a famous musician, he asked for a letter of introduction from Count Guillermo de Morphy to famed French conductor Charles Lamoureux. Mr. Lamoureux read the letter, and then he groaned, “Everyone thinks to discover

genius.” However, he allowed Mr. Casals to audition for him the following day. After Mr. Casals played, Mr. Lamoureux, with tears in his eyes, told him, “You are one of the elect.”¹²⁴

- Adam Green, who became famous when the Moldy Peaches’ “Anyone Else But You” was featured in the hit movie *Juno* (which also made the other half of the Moldy Peaches, Kimya Dawson, famous), has something that he is really proud of. He has received a number of fan letters, including one from a French boy who gave him thanks because he wrote “such impersonal music,” but he is really proud of a letter that made its way to him although it was addressed in this way: “ADAM GREEN, U.S.A.”¹²⁵

Media

- Late in 2008, Amanda Palmer’s record company informed her that her latest music video needed to be edited. Why? Because her belly wasn’t flat enough. This shocked Ms. Palmer, who says, “I’m quite sensitive about my ‘fat’ little belly, so if I was overweight, I would have known about it, and I was excited because it looked so hot in the video. I was just amazed. I couldn’t see what in h*ll’s name they were talking about.” She wrote about the incident in her blog, and fans started sending in photographs of their own bellies to protest a culture that overvalues flat bellies. The fans even wrote such slogans as “Love thy belly” on their bellies before taking and sending in the photographs. These acts of activism became known as the Rebellyon.¹²⁶

- Humphrey Doulens, the publicity manager of coloratura soprano Lily Pons, once had what he thought was a great idea for a story. He told a newspaper in Greensboro, North Carolina, where Ms. Pons was singing, that she was a great fan of baseball and would be watching the World Series on TV. At first, the newspaper interview went well, with Ms. Pons telling the reporter how greatly she loved baseball. Unfortunately, during a lull in the interview, Ms. Pons asked the reporter about the World Series, “By the way, who is playing?” Nevertheless, Ms. Pons got a favorable front-page story.¹²⁷

- In 1981, the Rolling Stones started a world tour. Usually, band members are willing to grant lots of interviews to media representatives in return for lots of publicity. On September 21, 1981, in North Brookfield, Massachusetts, Stones lead singer Mick Jagger gave his only face-to-face interview of the worldwide tour. He allowed two girls, 12 and 13 years old, to interview him for their school newspaper.¹²⁸

- A reporter once interviewed Sergei Rachmaninoff, then filed a story that the famed pianist/composer was retiring. The next morning, after reading the story in the newspaper, Mr. Rachmaninoff cleared up the misunderstanding: “I merely said that I was going to bed.”¹²⁹

Mishaps

- Some of Adam Green’s music was featured in the 2007 hit movie *Juno*, bringing him fame and making him the subject of interviews in the media in which he tells some of his favorite anecdotes. For example, he broke a tooth while eating a bagel, necessitating a titanium replacement. His dentist used a substance that became a subject of conversation at a subsequent meeting in which his dentist told him, “Hey, remember when we pulled out your tooth? We put some replacement bone material up in there to promote healing.” The dentist said that the replacement bone material came from a human cadaver, then added, “The problem is that ... have you been reading the news lately? Well, this guy stole all these bodies from this

funeral home in New Jersey, and you are the recipient of this, like, stolen body part.” Mr. Green grins and says, “It turned out I got the bones of Alistair Cooke!”¹³⁰

- Gloria Estefan and the Miami Sound Machine have performed all over the world. In El Salvador, civil war wracked the country, and three bodyguards with Uzi submarine guns protected Ms. Estefan. While they were performing, some explosions rocked the air above the arena and so the members of the band hit the floor of the stage. Fortunately, the explosions were fireworks set off to welcome them. They got up and dusted themselves off, and the crowd applauded them. When they had an English-language hit in “Dr. Beat,” they performed in Spain, where the promoters provided them with translators because they did not know that Ms. Estefan and the other members of the Miami Sound Machine were fluent in Spanish. Indeed, for most members, including Ms. Estefan, Spanish is their first language.¹³¹

- Sir Peter Ustinov once saw four very interesting windmills at a production of Jules Massenet’s *Don Quixote* at the Paris Opera. The first windmill, which was propelled by a small man, turned at the proper speed. The second windmill, which was propelled by a very heavy man, turned much slower. The third windmill was turned by two men who disliked and would not cooperate with each other, so its speed varied. The fourth windmill was powered by a malfunctioning electric motor that went into reverse so that the fourth windmill was turning in a direction that was different from the other windmills.¹³²

- In Vienna, operatic tenor Leo Slezak knew a cabbie with one horse — a blind one. Although it wasn’t fashionable to go about the streets of Vienna in a one-horse cab — two horses were the fashion — Mr. Slezak so liked the cabman, Johann, that he patronized him. One day Johann prepared a special treat for Mr. Slezak — he brought a musical clock that played the Radetzky March. Mr. Slezak was appreciative of the gesture, but after the clock had played the Radetzky March a dozen times, he asked Johann to stop the clock. Unfortunately, Johann replied that when the clock had been wound up, it would play for two and a half hours, and there was no way to stop it. Mr. Slezak was forced to get out of the cab and walk.¹³³

- Linda Ronstadt has sung some operetta and opera. For example, she has sung the role of Mabel in Gilbert and Sullivan’s *Pirates of Penzance*. Doing this was hard work because she wasn’t used to acting while singing. For example, during rehearsals she sometimes did not understand where to walk. A few times, at the end of a song in rehearsal she found herself standing in the place marked off for the orchestra pit. And co-star Kevin Kline once pointed out to her during a rehearsal, “This is Gilbert and Sullivan, Linda — you can’t say, ‘Git!’” She also worked in *La Bohème* with some other people who were new to opera. One musician even was heard asking during an early rehearsal, “Isn’t there any dialogue in this show?”¹³⁴

- Chris Martin of Coldplay occasionally tries to cook, but maybe he shouldn’t. Once he tried to cook fish and peas, but he forgot to turn on the vent. His fire alarm went off, and since it is connected to the fire station, a fire engine quickly arrived. He was forced to tell the firefighters, “I’m sorry. There’s no fire.” A couple of months later, he again tried to cook, and again he forgot to turn on the vent. Again, the fire engine arrived, and again, Mr. Martin said, “I’m sorry. There’s no fire.” He was shaken and decided to get out of his home for a while. The fire engine happened to be going in his direction, so the firefighters asked, “Do you want a lift?” Mr. Martin says, “I got to have a ride in a fire engine. How cool is that?”¹³⁵

- When the German soprano Erna Sack prepared to perform Gilda in *Rigoletto* in Chicago, debuting there on November 16, 1935, she made herself unpopular. She was unable to

converse in any language but German, and the USAmerican baritone John Charles Thomas asked tenor Joseph Barton, aka Giuseppe Bentonelli, loudly during the final rehearsal, “What in the ... is she jabbering at me?” Despite the rehearsals, her performance was a disaster. During her first performance, she decided suddenly to sing her part an octave higher than was written and to sing all phrases fortissimo. No one had praise for her after her debut, and she left the windy city the next day and never sang there again.¹³⁶

- The Beastie Boys’ second album, *Paul’s Boutique*, contained a song titled “Egg Man.” The song came from a leisure activity they and their friends engaged in. The Beastie Boys would throw eggs at people from their 9th-floor rooms at the Mondrian Hotel. Of course, people complained, and the hotel managers send them a very diplomatic note: “We’ve had some reports of things falling out of your window. If there’s a problem with your window, please let us know.” The Beastie Boys and their friends stopped throwing eggs at people from the windows of the Mondrian Hotel; instead, they drove around in cars and threw eggs at people.¹³⁷

- Before George Cehanovsky started singing with the Metropolitan Opera, he sang the title role in *Eugene Onegin*. During the scene where he was supposed to shoot and kill the poet Lensky in a duel, his gun would not fire. (Later, he discovered that he and the singer playing Lensky had picked up the wrong guns — the singer playing Lensky had the gun with the blank in it.) The singer playing Lensky decided to fall over “dead” anyway, and when he hit the floor, the blank in his gun went off. Mr. Cehanovsky asked Eugene’s second, “Is he killed?” The second replied, “He died of a heart attack.”¹³⁸• Rumors often fly concerning opera divas and opera house administrators. For example, a rumor was bandied about stating that Joan Hammond and Sir David Webster of the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, had had a row in which Ms. Hammond had busted a chair over Sir David’s head. Actually, she had sat in the chair, and it had broken. By the way, the British people must love pets. Ms. Hammond wrote in her autobiography, *A Voice, A Life*, that during World War II the British issued gas masks for dogs.¹³⁹

- In 1967, Plácido Domingo sang the lead role of Giuseppe Verdi’s Don Carlos in his debut at the Staatsoper in Vienna, Austria. Only one rehearsal was held — and it wasn’t held at the Staatsoper. Therefore, Mr. Domingo was unfamiliar with the stage at the first performance, and when he charged onstage, he nearly fell into the orchestra pit as he sang “*To l-ho perduta*.” The words mean “I’ve lost her,” but if he had fallen into the orchestra pit, the words could equally well be translated as “I’ve lost it.”¹⁴⁰

- Supposedly, one of the great moments in rock history occurred when the Ramones first played at CBGB’s in New York. Unfortunately, the Ramones were still pretty bad this early in their careers. Their equipment kept breaking down, and they kept yelling at each other. However, they persevered and kept on playing at CBGB’s, even though occasionally bassist Dee Dee Ramone would shout “OneTwoThreeFour!” and the four Ramones would each start playing or singing a different song.¹⁴¹

- Early in her career, soprano Leslie Garrett appeared as Cupid in *Oronthea* for *Musica nel Chiostro* (Music in the Cloisters) in Batignano, Italy. Little money was available for costumes, and as Cupid Ms. Garrett wore only some silver cycling shorts and a strategically placed towel. At a dress rehearsal attended by local villagers, the towel somehow flew off, angering the local

matrons but gladdening their sons. After that near-riot dress rehearsal, Ms. Garrett glued the towel to her chest.¹⁴²

- Opera singers can be funny during dress rehearsals. At the Metropolitan Opera in New York, during a dress rehearsal of *Carmen*, the singer playing Don José was telling Carmen how much he wanted to passionately make love to her. Unfortunately, as he confessed his desire to make love to her he was having trouble loosening his scabbard so he could take it off. Marilyn Horne, who was playing Carmen, told him, “Sure, as soon as you get the sword off, honey.”¹⁴³

- Walter Page, a bassist for Count Basie, once bought a new set of teeth that were so good that he ate a big barbeque rib dinner on the bus. Afterward, he wrapped up the remains of the dinner and threw the package out the window. About 75 miles later, Mr. Page suddenly asked, “Hey, has anybody seen my teeth?” Unfortunately, the bus had gone too far to turn around and go back to find the teeth mixed in with the remains of the rib dinner. (One moral of the story is this: Don’t litter.)¹⁴⁴

- Tenors can be temperamental. During the 1953 season of the Chicago Civic Opera House, tenor David Poleri, who was singing the role of Don José in *Carmen*, became infuriated at what he thought was a too-fast tempo set by the conductor. In fact, he became so infuriated that he told the conductor, “Finish the d*mn opera yourself!” and then stalked off, leaving Carmen alone and forcing her to commit suicide rather than being murdered.¹⁴⁵

- In opera, singers must be heard in the back rows of the opera house. Occasionally, this striving after volume results in a spray of saliva that can drench an innocent co-star. The tenor Pasquale Brignoli was known for his spraying. While on stage co-starring with Brignoli in Mozart’s *Don Giovanni*, contralto Emily Lablache asked him loudly, “See here, my good friend, can’t you for once spit on Donna Elvira’s dress?”¹⁴⁶

- The Russian Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Modest Altschuler, was playing Beethoven’s “Leonore No. 3” at an outdoor park. Just as the first trumpeter, stationed away from the orchestra, raised his horn to his lips to play the offstage fanfare, a park policeman ran over to him and grabbed the trumpet away from him, saying, “You can’t do that here! Don’t you know there’s a concert going on?”¹⁴⁷

- One of Frank Cottrell Boyce’s friends visited a pub where he heard a band playing an expert version of Eddie and the Hot Rods’ “Anything You Wanna Do.” When the band took a break, he bought them all drinks and advised them to form an Eddie and the Hot Rods tribute band. The band’s singer replied, “Nice idea. The only problem with it is that I am Eddie. And these are my Hot Rods.”¹⁴⁸

- Chubby Wise played fiddle for country singer Hank Snow. During a concert, Mr. Wise’s bow caught Mr. Snow’s toupee and flung it out into the audience. Someone in the audience went home with a very unusual celebrity memento. (Once, Mr. Snow got too close to the edge of the stage and fell off. He said, “Godd*mn it, Chubby. Why don’t you watch where I’m going?”)¹⁴⁹

- Fanny Brice was persistent. Once she was singing her big number in a show when her voice cracked — something no one could believe. She made the orchestra begin the song again, and she sang again, and her voice cracked again. So she told the audience, “Just stay in your seats. We’ll get it this time.” And she did get it, and she received a huge ovation from the audience.¹⁵⁰

- Bobby Jax played in his junior high school marching band in Paragould, Arkansas, where his most memorable exploit was falling on his rear end during a halftime performance. Because of this exploit, his fellow band members implemented the annual “Bobby Jax I’ve Fallen and I Can’t Get Up Award.” Bobby good-naturedly became the recipient of the first award.¹⁵¹
- Ernestine Schumann-Heink was rehearsing Wagner’s *Das Rheingold*, in which she played a nymph. She and the other women playing nymphs were connected to wires that raised and lowered them to simulate diving and swimming. Unfortunately, she disliked the motion and screamed, “For Heaven’s sake, let me down! I’m the mother of eight children!”¹⁵²
- After retiring from opera and movies, Geraldine Farrar began giving musical concerts. Mishaps sometimes occurred at these concerts. At one concert, a storm knocked out the electric power. Therefore, Ms. Farrar gave the concert by the light of candles. She held one in front of her, while her pianist played by the light of two candles stuck in potatoes.¹⁵³
- Opera singers sometimes have very tight travel schedules. On her way to London to perform, soprano Eva Turner stopped at Las Palmas to sing the part of Leonora in *Trovatore*. Her ship sailed just a half-hour after the final curtain, so her fellow travelers were treated to the sight of Ms. Turner in full costume climbing up a ladder to get on board.¹⁵⁴
- Jazz musician Dizzy Gillespie played a trumpet with the bell pointed upward. The story is that someone once accidentally sat on his horn, bending its bell. At first, Mr. Gillespie was angry, but then he discovered that he preferred the trumpet that way. Afterwards, he ordered all of his trumpets to be made with an upwards-pointing bell.¹⁵⁵
- World-renowned cellist Yo-Yo Ma is a busy man — so busy that in October of 1999 he left his \$2.5 million Montagnana cello in the trunk of a New York taxicab. Fortunately, he had a taxicab receipt, so police located the taxicab quickly. The cello was still in the trunk — the taxicab driver had not even realized that it was still there.¹⁵⁶
- While singing for the Metropolitan Opera during the 1950s, soprano Lucine Amara ran into a problem: New York can be a dirty city, and in the days before air conditioning dust settled everywhere in her apartment soon after dusting. She once cried, “I long for home! Even our dust is clean in San Francisco!”¹⁵⁷
- David Byrne, former front man for the Talking Heads, is a cyclist. In 2008, he crashed on West 14th Street in New York City. Two police officers arrived and asked him two questions: 1) Were you drinking? and 2) Are you David Byrne? Both questions have the same answer: yes.¹⁵⁸
- Even very good musicians can have an off night. A team of musicians led by jazz saxophonist Branford Marsalis once mightily messed up “April in Paris.” After they had “played” the song, Mr. Marsalis announced to the audience that they had just heard “April Embarrassed.”¹⁵⁹
- While acting in the stage play *Brouhaha*, Peter Sellers danced a waltz right off the stage and into the orchestra pit, bruising himself badly. Comedian Spike Milligan sent him a telegram, asking, “Are you a member of the Musicians’ Union?”¹⁶⁰
- Camille (Charles) Saint-Saëns once attempted to accompany a duet sung by two girls who were never together in their vocals. He stopped playing, then asked, “Now tell me, which of

you two am I supposed to accompany?”¹⁶¹

- Operas may have been more fun in the past than they are today. When George Frideric Handel’s opera *Serse* was produced, it was enlivened by Caffarelli, the lead singer, who liked to goose the sopranos on stage.¹⁶²

Chapter 4: From Money to Practical Jokes

Money

- Welsh singer Tom Jones is known both for his voice and for women throwing their underwear at him. The first time a woman gave him her underwear while he was performing was in 1968 at the Copacabana in New York. He was sweating, and since people had been eating at the supper club, a couple of people gave him their napkins to wipe his brow with. Then, Mr. Jones remembers, “This one woman stood up — up with the dress, down with the drawers. Took ’em off and handed them to me.” He wiped his brow with them and said, “Sweetheart, watch you don’t catch cold.” Mr. Jones married at age 16 and has stayed married. While he went to London to make it as a singer, his wife worked in a battery factory to support their young son. Mr. Jones vowed to make it big so that she didn’t have to work and so that he could support his family. One of the great achievements of his life was making enough money that his father could retire from working in the Welsh coal mines at age 50. Tom Jones himself could have ended up in the coal mines, but he contracted tuberculosis at age 13 and the doctor told Tom’s father, “Whatever you do, you can’t put this boy in a coal mine because he has weak lungs.” Mr. Jones says, “And the weird thing is, with weak lungs I’ve become a f**kin’ singer.”¹⁶³

- Memphis garage-punk musician Jay Reatard, née Jay Lindsey, once made a single with another musician in Austria. The agreement was that together they would issue the single for a European tour, and that later Mr. Lindsey would be able to use the single for another project. Without authorization, the guy in Austria made copies of the single. According to Mr. Lindsey, he “pressed it on a clear, six-inch square that plays from the inside out,” then sold the single on eBay for \$280 per copy. He did send Mr. Lindsey a few copies of the specially pressed single. Of course, Mr. Lindsey wasn’t happy that an unauthorized use was being made of his work, so he told the guy in Austria, “Since you gave me nine copies, I’ll sell them on eBay and have enough money for a ticket to Austria to kick your *ss. He chilled out after that.” Actually, Mr. Lindsey kept one copy for himself, but unfortunately lost it when moving. He gave the other copies away to friends who he knew would keep and not sell them.¹⁶⁴

- Tom Mathers, the founder of the Mathers Fund, learned the hard way the truth of these words: “If you find a great growth company, don’t sell it just because it gets a little pricey — you may never get back in again.” Back in the 1960s, he and his wife wanted to buy a piano. He owned shares of stock in Disney, and since he thought that the Disney stock was pricey, he decided to sell his Disney stock and use the money to buy the piano. Over the years, of course, the price of Disney stock rose higher and higher and higher, and because he had sold his Disney stock, he lost out on all that growth in the price of Disney stock. As you would expect, he sometimes looks at the piano in his living room and complains, “That’s the most expensive d*mn piano on the face of the planet!”¹⁶⁵

- In 1967, Frank Sinatra and his daughter Nancy recorded “Somethin’ Stupid,” which was a monster hit for them, spending a month at No. 1. Nancy remembers, “The whole thing took about 20 minutes. We recorded it in two takes, and the only reason it took two was that Dad kept singing it ‘shumshing shtupid’ to make me laugh on the first one, and we couldn’t finish it.” After recording the song, Frank said, “That’s a No. 1 record.” Mo Austin, a honcho at Reprise Records, disagreed, and said, “No, it’s a bomb.” In Nancy’s office today is a

photograph of Frank and herself from that recording session. Nancy describes the photo in this way: “Coming out of a balloon in my dad’s mouth are the words, ‘Silly b*stard bet me \$2 it would be a bomb.’ And attached [to the photograph] is a \$2 bill.”¹⁶⁶

- Dolly Parton is a smart artist, and she is a smart businesswoman. In 1974, Elvis Presley wanted to sing her song “I Will Always Love You.” But in order for that to happen, Mr. Presley’s manager, Colonel Tom Parker, required that Ms. Parton sign over half the rights to the song. Ms. Parton declined to do that. Way to go, Dolly! The song has made millions of dollars. Ms. Parton explains why she declined to sign over half the rights to the song: “I knew it was one of my best songs, but it wouldn’t have mattered what song Parker wanted the publishing on. That’s money I’m earning for my family. I couldn’t give it up. It was already a hit for me, but then after Whitney Houston recorded it and I did it two more times, once with Vince Gill, well ... I’ve made gobs of money off it.”¹⁶⁷

- It seems very unlikely to me that being a drug addict has any advantages whatsoever; however, Ron Asheton, guitarist for Iggy and the Stooges, once received a telephone call from an IRS agent who told him that the band owed a lot of money in back taxes. The story — which is most likely untrue — goes that Mr. Asheton told the IRS agent the unfortunately true statement, “Hey, look, man. We’re all drug addicts. We don’t know where the money is.” The IRS agent supposedly said, “Oh,” hung up the telephone, and did not press them for payment of back taxes. (The truth is probably that Iggy and the Stooges didn’t owe any back taxes; they were far from being a very commercially successful band.)¹⁶⁸

- When blues music lessened in popularity in the United States, blues musicians such as Howlin’ Wolf started touring in Europe, including communist countries. During one tour, Howlin’ Wolf was paid half in USAmerican money and half in the local currency, and he was warned to be sure to spend the foreign money as he would not be able to exchange it for USAmerican money. Also, Howlin’ Wolf once said that he didn’t want to buy anything and therefore he wanted to donate his foreign currency to the local YMCA. Unfortunately, the German promoter who had put together the tour was forced to explain that communist countries, due to government suppression of religion, didn’t have any YMCAs.¹⁶⁹

- T-Bone Burnett has made music over 40 years, and he has found much success, including a 2002 Grammy win for Album of the Year for *O Brother, Where Art Thou?* Of course, his life wasn’t always easy. In 1970, he became a starving artist in Los Angeles. T-Bone says, “My roommate was a wedding musician, and he’d bring home wedding cake and we’d eat cake for three or four days.” Even though *O Brother, Where Art Thou?* sold 7 million copies, he is not a commercial artist, and he does not make a ton of money. He says, “Making money isn’t an appropriate goal for making music. If you want to print money, buy a printing press, not a guitar. The guitar is the wrong tool for that.”¹⁷⁰

- Blues singer Bessie Smith could be earthy, something that occasionally cost her. She once interrupted one of her songs during an audition for Black Swan Records by saying, “Hold on! Let me spit!” Horrified, the president of Black Swan Records told her that she had failed the audition. Of course, being earthy does not mean you can’t sing the blues; if anything, it probably makes you a better blues singer. Musician Bix Beiderbecke, who was white but did not let that stop him from being an artist in jazz music, once threw his salary for an entire week up on stage so Bessie would sing a few more songs.¹⁷¹

- Singer Sarah Brightman was happily married for a while to composer Andrew Lloyd Webber, but they divorced, and now they have a good relationship as a divorced couple. In the divorce settlement, Ms. Brightman was awarded £6 million. Of course, Ms. Brightman has done rather well as an actress in *Cats* and *Phantom of the Opera* and as a recording artist, so one day she asked her ex-husband about the £6 million, “Look, I’m doing all right. Would you like it back?” He replied, “No, you went through all of that — you keep it.”¹⁷²
- Screenwriter/critic Frank Cottrell Boyce met German singer Nico at Eric’s, a punk nightclub in 1970s Liverpool, but maybe that wasn’t a good thing. He told her that he loved her, and she replied, “Really? Do you have any money? I seem to be a little short.” He had two 50-pence pieces, and he gave her one of them, but he could tell that she wanted the other one, too, so he gave her that one as well. That night, he walked 11 miles home, due to lack of train fare.¹⁷³
- Music critic and scholar Chadwick Jenkins remembers being required to take his choice of music classes when he was in high school. He signed up for chorus, but quickly the teacher wanted him to drop the class — and offered him \$50 to do just that. According to Mr. Jenkins, the teacher “said that the sum was a substantial portion of his yearly income but that it was worth it just so he could sleep at night.”¹⁷⁴
- The Raconteurs have a reputation for producing rock ‘n’ roll alchemy. Although they were selling records in 2008, they also made money in other ways than playing music. During their tours, they both played live music and sold their own homemade elixirs. What kind of elixirs? One elixir is intended to put hair on your chest; another elixir is intended to remove the hair on your chest.¹⁷⁵

Mothers

- Vince Clarke, a former member of the bands Depeche Mode and Erasure, occasionally gets together with Alison Moyet to tour as the duo Yas, aka Yazoo. He is very popular with gays although he is straight with a wife and a son. In fact, he is so popular with gays that the gay magazine *The Advocate* asked him whether he had to “frequently come out of the closet as straight.” Mr. Clarke replied, “My Mum was surprised, actually. When I phoned her to tell her I’d just gotten married, she didn’t believe me. It was a good half-hour conversation of ‘No, Mum, I really did just get married.’”¹⁷⁶
- The New Kids on the Block have their fans. Writer David Wild once stayed in a hotel on the same floor that the boy band was staying on. Each time he turned on his light, teenaged female fans outside the hotel screamed. But what really impressed him about the fame of the New Kids on the Block was that lots of hot mothers offered him sexual favors for his All-Access Backstage Pass. He blogged, “For the record — and for my wife who might be reading this — I adamantly refused these propositions for reasons that are not entirely clear to me today.”¹⁷⁷
- Sam Endicott, the frontman/bass player of the Bravery, an indie-rock band, learned about ethics from his mother when he was very young. He took a grape out of a grocery store without paying for it and ate it. His mother found out, and, Mr. Endicott remembers, “My mom made me go back and tell the cashier lady what I’d done. It was the most humiliating experience of my life. I’ve never stolen since.”¹⁷⁸

Names

- When the Replacements performed at their first concert, they were supposed to be known as the Impediments. However, their first concert was in the basement of a Presbyterian church, and the promoter thought that the name the Impediments was not very Presbyterian and that it sounded anti-people with handicaps. Forced to pick a replacement name very quickly, they very quickly named themselves the Replacements. Of course, the band had nicknames as well. At times, members of the band were so drunk that they could barely perform. At those times, they called themselves the Placemats, or more simply, the 'Mats. Once, in Portland, the 'Mats wore their own clothing on stage — and over their own clothing, they wore the clothing of the opening act.¹⁷⁹

- Who drummer Keith Moon did not think that the music of Jimmy Page, Robert Plant, John Paul Jones, and John Bonham would be successful; in fact, he told them that their music would be as successful as a lead balloon. Page, Plant, Jones, and Bonham decided to name their band after Mr. Moon's comment. A zeppelin was the biggest balloon they could think of, and after removing the A from "lead" to facilitate accurate pronunciation, they called themselves Led Zeppelin. It was their music that led music reporter Lester Bangs to coin the term "heavy metal" music.¹⁸⁰

- Mikey Rocks and Chuck English make up the Chicago rap duo known as the Cool Kids. Actually, "Mikey Rocks" is a pseudonym. His real name is Antoine Reed, but he chose his stage name because of his youthful hero-worship of NBA star Michael Jordan. When Mr. Reed had to choose a stage name, he regarded it as an opportunity: "As a little kid, I would try to change my name to Mike, like write it on papers and I would tell my mom to call me that but she wouldn't do it, so I just saw this as my opportunity to have the best name that I could possibly have."¹⁸¹

- Late in his life, blues musician Howlin' Wolf is said to have not liked his name; however, it was preferable to other names he had acquired earlier. Born Chester Arthur Burnett, Howlin' Wolf wore size-16 shoes. That led to him being called first "Foots" and later "Big Foot Chester." Another blues musician named John T. Smith, who in 1930 had recorded a song called "The Howling Wolf" and had thereafter taken that name, was no longer famous when Big Foot was looking for a new name, so Mr. Burnett borrowed the name and kept it for himself.¹⁸²

- Scottish singer Amy Macdonald regarded Pete Doherty as an early idol, and she wrote the song "Poison Prince" about his drug problems. Mr. Doherty has heard about the song, although he may have misheard its title. On television, an interviewer asked him, "So you've met Amy; she's a big fan. And you've heard the song?" Mr. Doherty asked, "What song?" The interviewer replied, "The song she wrote about you, 'Poison Prince.'" Mr. Doherty was not amused, saying, "Why would I want to listen to a song about me that is called 'Poison Prick?'"¹⁸³

- Stanley Kirk Burrell is better known as rapper M.C. Hammer. "M.C." is a slang way of saying "Rapper," and "Hammer" is a nickname he was given when he became the Oakland Athletics batboy after Charley Finley, the owner of the Athletics, saw young Stanley singing and dancing in the Athletics parking lot. Stanley resembled home-run hitter Hammerin' Hank Aaron, and so he was called Little Hammer.¹⁸⁴

- One story about how "break" dancing got its name concerns Afrika Mambaataa, an African-American man in the Bronx in New York City who led a gang called the Zulu Kings that was

more interested in dancing than in fighting. Another gang challenged the Zulu Kings to a fight, but Mr. Mambaataa suggested that they take a break from beating people up and instead compete in dancing.¹⁸⁵

- At one time, people with foreign or Jewish names would sometimes change their names because they thought that it would help them fit in better or more comfortably in the United States. Composer/conductor Leonard Bernstein was advised to do this early in his career, but he replied, “I’ll do it as Bernstein, or not at all.”¹⁸⁶
- The Yugoslav conductor Berislav Klobucar once substituted for Herbert von Karajan at the Metropolitan Opera. Members of the orchestra showed their affection for Mr. Klobucar by calling him “Clubcar” and by calling his wife “Loungecar.”¹⁸⁷

Opera

- Early in her career, Ernestine Schumann-Heink studied the lead role of *Carmen*. At first, she learned the part by ear, then she studied various performances of *Carmen*, learning something from each performance. Unfortunately, after she sang the role professionally for the first time — in an emergency and without a rehearsal — the conductor, Gustav Mahler, laughed and said that she had memorized the *mistakes* of all the different Carmens she had seen and heard. (She was a hit, nevertheless.)¹⁸⁸
- Mezzo Mignon Dunn was five-foot-nine, and many of her fellow male opera singers were shorter than she, so on stage she often sang with her knees bent. However, one day director Tyrone Guthrie saw her doing that and asked, “You cow, what on earth are you doing?” Afterward, she sang with unbended knees.¹⁸⁹
- Tenor Giacomo Lauri-Volpi was proud of his sustained high notes. In *Trovatore* in Rome, he raised his sword and hit a sustained high-C note, but a curtain fell too quickly, in his opinion. Still singing the high-C note, he parted the curtain and brandished his sword, finishing the note when *he* felt like it.¹⁹⁰
- Each time soprano Birgit Nilsson returned to sing at the Metropolitan Opera, general manager Rudolf Bing got on his knees before her. After he had been knighted, he kneeled again at her return to the Met, and she told him, “You do that much better since you practiced it for the Queen.”¹⁹¹

Politics

- Steve Earle’s life has been more interesting than most, although except for the music and the moments of happiness, that may not be a good thing. For example, in 1994 he kicked heroin — after spending four months in jail. Also, he had seven failed marriages before marrying fellow musician Allison Moorer. Mr. Earle says, “Trust me, when you’ve been married as many times as I have, you figure out that you’re at least part of the problem.” Giving up heroin and stopping being an alcoholic just might help marriage number eight to work. By the way, Mr. Earle is interested in politics, although some politicians are not interested in him. At a political event, a friend wanted a photograph of Mr. Earle with Al and Tipper Gore, but Mr. Earle says that the Gores “pretty much levitated [in] trying to avoid it.” During the 2008 Democratic Presidential primary contest between Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton, Mr. Earle said, “It does make a difference to me if it’s Clinton or Obama, but I won’t publicly go on record to say which one I prefer. I’ve learned it probably doesn’t benefit the candidate for me to do that.”¹⁹²

- Mandy Patinkin is an excellent singer, although he is best known for his performance in Rob Reiner’s movie *The Princess Bride*, in which he said these famous lines: “Hello. My name is Inigo Montoya. You killed my father. Prepare to die.” His singing has touched people. He says, “Generally, you have very little connection with the audience — to whoever is buying the CDs. But individuals have come up to me and said, ‘I can’t tell you how you got me through chemotherapy, or my father’s death, or the death of my child.’ You just don’t know how people are using the music.” During the 2008 United States Presidential campaign, he went door to door to urge people to vote for Barack Obama. Mr. Obama, who became President Obama, certainly had an enthusiastic organization. One irritated woman told him, “Will you tell your supervisors that four people have already come by today?” Mr. Patinkin remembers, “Then a minute later she came running over — I guess her neighbor had told her who I am — and she says, ‘Oh, my God. I’m so sorry. Will you come in and have some salmon?’ I said, ‘No, no. It’s OK. Just vote for Obama.’”¹⁹³

- Back in 1956, when Yugoslavia was under the control of the dictator Josef Broz Tito, a Yugoslav consul-general confessed to theatrical guru Danny Newman that he never missed a performance at the Chicago Civic Opera by the baritone Tito Gobbi. Mr. Newman said that he understood that because Mr. Gobbi was a truly great baritone, but the consul-general replied, “Yes, but that’s not the real reason I love him so much. You see, Mr. Newman, Yugoslavia is a communist country and not very popular here. So your Civic Opera House is the only place in this country where I can publicly yell my head off with “BRAVO, *Tito!* BRAVO, *Tito!*”¹⁹⁴

- Tom Morello, the Harvard-educated (in political science) musician in Rage Against the Machine, once worked a day job as the late California Democratic Senator Alan Cranston’s scheduling secretary, a position in which he worked mostly at raising money. One day, a crying woman called the Senator’s office to complain about Mexicans moving into her neighborhood. He called the woman a racist, and he told her to go to h*ll, remarks for which he got into trouble. Mr. Morello says, “That’s when I realized, if in my job I can’t tell a racist to go to h*ll, I’m not in the right job.”¹⁹⁵

Practical Jokes

- In 2008, a practical joke called “rickrolling” arrived on the Internet. In rickrolling, Internet users are promised one thing, but given something else. For example, someone might search for “Keira Knightley upskirt photo” — I am not making this up — and when they click on the link hoping to see a Keira Knightley panty shot, they are instead linked to a videoclip of Rick Astley singing the song “Never Gonna Give You Up,” a song the writer of this book likes a lot. Of course, people may wonder, Why Rick Astley? Aren’t there worse singers and worse songs from the 1980s? Writer Alexis Petridis wonders why “Let’s All Chant,” by a couple of British radio personalities named Pat and Mick isn’t used in this kind of practical joke. The song was so bad that the names “Pat and Mick” were used in cockney rhyming slang in which a word or phrase that rhymes is used instead of the regular word. Instead of saying, “That lager made me sick,” slangsters said, “That lager made me Pat and Mick.”¹⁹⁶

- Steve Pollak, an elementary schoolteacher, member of the Phish, and songwriter of “Suzy Greenberg,” has perhaps the best-ever rock-and-roll nickname. In 1982, he was attending a boarding school, Taft, which inhabited a 220-acre tract in Watertown, Connecticut. One wild night, he donned orange goggles and a tapestry and started spouting the wisdom of the ages — or what a sophomore considered to be the wisdom of the ages — to a group of stoned friends,

who promptly dubbed him the “Dude of Life,” a nickname that stuck. The Dude was known for his antics on stage; for example, he threw rubber chickens from the stage to the fans. The rubber chickens bore handwritten messages from members of the band. One rubber chicken bore the message, “One day I’ll have such an orgasm that my...(To be continued on next bird).”¹⁹⁷

- Jazz violinist Joe Venuti used to go out with his bassist, Irving Edelman, and eat Italian food with him after they had finished performing. He also played a practical joke on Mr. Edelman by putting a little bag of sand in his bass after each performance, so that the bass got heavier and heavier. Mr. Venuti didn’t explain the joke until Mr. Edelman came to him and said that he was going to quit because all the Italian food he had been eating had caught up to him and it was getting too difficult for him to carry his bass.¹⁹⁸

- Pianist J.W. “Blind” Boone owned a watch that cost \$1,000, an enormous amount of money at the time. He used the watch to play a practical joke on children, whom he told that the watch could foretell the future. In 1888, he told one group of children that the watch had told him that Benjamin Harrison would defeat Grover Cleveland and become President of the United States. In fact, Harrison did defeat Cleveland, and so the children believed that Blind Boone’s watch could predict the future.¹⁹⁹

- Leo Slezak would sometimes play a joke on small-town German audiences. During a concert, he would sing a little-known piece by a giant of music such as Schubert or Schumann, then say that his pianist had written the music just recently. The small-town German audience would applaud as the pianist took his bows.²⁰⁰

Chapter 5: From Prejudice to Work

Prejudice

- In the early 1970s, all-girl bands were largely regarded as novelty acts, making it difficult for the real thing — all-woman rock band Fanny — to find acceptance. After considering a number of women's names for the name of the band and deciding on "Fanny," band members then discovered that their record company's publicity department was coming up with slogans such as the double-meaning "Get behind Fanny." Occasionally, people thought that Fanny was an all-female vocal group who sang topless while the real band, composed of men, played the musical instruments. While touring in Joliet, Illinois, band members discovered that the promoters were expecting a topless band. Some of the costumes the record company had the band wear were skimpy and risqué, getting them banned from London's Palladium at one point. Bass guitarist Jean Millington remembers, "I wore a tank top made from coins. I had to wear pasties or the coins would pinch my nipples. June's outfit was turquoise, Jean wore crystals, and Nickey's shirt had sequins. It was all very Las Vegas showgirl." Nickey Barclay played keyboards, June Millington (Jean's older sister) played lead guitar, and Alice de Buhr played drums. When they recorded their first album — self-titled — few people took them seriously. Alice remembers, "We got asked all the time about the male studio musicians who must've played on the album. Those questions stopped after the third or fourth album." Despite the BS, Fanny released six albums and had two top-40 hits: "Charity Ball" (1971, #40) and "Butter Boy" (1975, #29). In the liner notes to Fanny's 2002 4-CD compilation *First Time in a Long Time*, Bonnie Raitt calls Fanny a "real rock band full of smart, tough, and talented women — who could really play."²⁰¹

- African-American jazz musician Branford Marsalis has faced racism. As a student in Boston, he and two white friends went into an all-white and very tough neighborhood in South Boston. Some white teenagers with baseball bats saw Branford and didn't like his color, so they attacked him and his friends. Branford got away and ran for help to a gas station. A really big white man with a *chain* came to the rescue. He told Branford, "They're [messing] with you 'cause you're black, aren't they? I hate that." Then the man and his son rescued Branford's friends. Branford, noting the white man's help, says, "I can't really indict the *whole* neighborhood."²⁰²

- African-American blues musician Buddy Guy played with a white boy when he was a child, but eventually adults told the boys that they couldn't play together because of their racial differences. This puzzled the boys because at night they could shine a flashlight through their hands and their hands looked the same. Mr. Guy says, "We didn't have no lights or streetlights, so after it got dark, you could take a flashlight and shine it up to your hand and see red blood. Whether you were black or white, you could see that there. Me and him saw that, and I said, 'Somebody's lying.' Underneath, we're all the same."²⁰³

- While in New Brunswick, conductor Pierre Monteux stopped at a group of cabins where he wanted to stay the night. However, a woman in the office told him, "Sorry, I have nothing!" Just then, a young girl went to the woman and whispered to her, telling her who Mr. Monteux was. The woman then said, "Excuse me, sir, I did not know that you were Someone. I think that I can accommodate you." Mr. Monteux bowed to the woman and said, "Madame, everyone is Someone. *Au revoir*."²⁰⁴

Problem-Solving

- Veteran singer-songwriter Jill Sobule keeps writing and singing, but record companies keep dying. What to do if you want to record a new album? She set up a Web site called <jillsnextrecord.com> and solicited donations from her fans so she could make her next album. She needed \$75,000, and in less than two months, happily, she got \$75,000. Of course, she worried that she would get much less: “It’s one of those things I was never quite sure if it was ever going to work, and so far it has. The initial fear is that it would just be my mother and some cousins donating, and it could’ve been humiliating.” To get the money, of course, she offered incentives. In the words of music writer Greg Kot: “\$10 bought a free digital download of the album, \$200 earned free admission to any Sobule show this year [2009], \$500 ensured that the donor would be mentioned in a song at the end of the album, and \$5,000 booked a Sobule concert in the donor’s living room.” Her idea worked, but it has a cost. The social networking she does takes time, and in a six-week period she wrote no songs. Still, she got her album recorded; it is titled *California Years*.²⁰⁵

- Early in his career, tenor John L. Brecknock was determined to get himself out of his own jams — not always with good results. While singing a love duet on stage with Catherine Wilson, he had a mental blackout and could not remember the words. Ms. Wilson whispered the correct words to him, but he was so concentrating on getting himself out of the jam that he did not listen to her. She repeated the words, and this time he whispered back, “I know what I’m doing.” After a few more seconds, he remembered the words and recovered. In his autobiography, *Scaling the High Cs*, Mr. Brecknock writes, “... if I had allowed myself to be guided by someone who knew better, the situation could have been resolved within a couple of bars of music, rather than a couple of pages — and without making the conductor pull his hair out in the pit.”²⁰⁶

- During his US American tour of 1883-1884, Colonel James H. Mapleson took his opera company out West where in Sacramento, California, a San Francisco reporter wished to interview prima donna Adelina Patti. Colonel Mapleson tried to put off the reporter, but the reporter insisted on an interview, threatening, “I have come hundreds of miles to interview Patti, and see her I must. Refuse me, and I shall simply telegraph two lines to San Francisco that Patti has caught a severe cold in the mountains, and that [rival prima donna Etelka] Gerster’s old throat complaint is coming on again. Do you understand me?” Understanding the damage to his profits that would occur if the San Francisco newspapers were to report that his leading prima donnas were not able to sing, Colonel Mapleson allowed the reporter to interview Ms. Patti.²⁰⁷

- Tour manager Bob Whittaker says, “There are 50 ways to get one thing done on tour.” Of course, you have to be quick-witted to figure out the best way to get something done. Once, he and the band were running very late and it looked like they would miss an important flight. Fortunately, Mr. Whittaker saw a man wearing a fluorescent yellow jacket. Although the man had absolutely nothing to do with check-in, Mr. Whittaker gave him \$100 and told him to walk to a certain place. Mr. Whittaker and the band followed the official-looking man, and Mr. Whittaker says, “Just by doing that, we cut quite a few lines and made the flight.”²⁰⁸

- Jews and blacks have both endured prejudice — a very good reason to make music together. During the Jim Crow era, Robert “Red Rodney” Roland Chudnick, who was both redheaded and Jewish, played trumpet with jazz saxophonist Charlie “Bird” Parker as the only white

member of Bird's quintet. When the quintet played in the South, they ran into a problem with laws making it illegal for white and black people to share a stage together. Bird solved the problem by claiming that Red Rodney was a light-skinned black person, and he called him "Albino Red" on stage. (To help with the deception, Red Rodney also sang a blues song.)²⁰⁹

- During a duet at the Metropolitan Opera, tenor Franco Corelli ran out of breath while soprano Birgit Nilsson kept singing a high note. (Met general manager Rudolf Bing blamed this on the conductor, Leopold Stokowski, who had neglected to let the singers know how long the note had to be held.) This made Mr. Corelli angry, and he threatened to not finish the opera. Mr. Bing was able to calm him down by telling him to bite Ms. Nilsson's ear during their love scene in the next act. This made Mr. Corelli happy, but fortunately he only told Ms. Nilsson that he was going to bite her ear — he did not actually bite her.²¹⁰

- In September of 1969, tenor John Brecknock was given the role of Paris in Jacques Offenbach's *La Belle Hélène* at the London Coliseum. This was an important role for him at the time, and it was in an important venue. Of course, he got stage fright, and just before he was supposed to go on stage, he turned to baritone Derek Hammond-Stroud and said, "I can't go on. I don't want to make a fool of myself." The next moment he was flying onto the stage — Mr. Hammond-Stroud had given him a mighty shove. Of course, once he was on stage, Mr. Brecknock was forced to sing.²¹¹

- Early in his career, Broadway musical star Ben Vereen went on the road, so he sublet his apartment to a friend who neglected to pay the rent. The landlord changed the locks to Mr. Vereen's apartment, making him officially homeless. For a while, Mr. Vereen climbed the fire escape, entered the window, and slept in his own bed at night, leaving by the window during the day so he wouldn't run into his landlord.²¹²

- While Lillian Nordica was singing in Wagner's *Rienzi*, several women members of the chorus walked on stage carrying alcohol torches. One woman accidentally tipped her torch, and some alcohol fell to the floor and started burning. Still singing, Ms. Nordica walked over to the flame, stepped on it, and put it out — without missing a note.²¹³

- Jazz pianist Erroll Garner used to carry a Manhattan telephone directory with him on tour. The standard piano bench wasn't high enough for Mr. Garner, but when he placed the Manhattan telephone directory on top of the piano bench, the height was just right.²¹⁴

- During World War II, soprano Kirsten Flagstad was in Norway so she could be with her husband. A friend asked her what she would do if the Nazis asked her to sing. She replied, "I am not going to sing for them. You know a singer can always be ill."²¹⁵

- Bluesman Robert Johnson was very successful with women. He simply asked them for he wanted: "Can I go home with you? Can I be with you?" Many of them said yes.²¹⁶

Recordings

- James Todd Smith, aka LL Cool J, knew from an early age that he wanted a record deal. When James was 11 years old, his grandfather bought him a set of turntables, a microphone, two speakers, and a mixer — everything James needed to develop into LL Cool J. And when he started making homemade tapes and sending them to record companies, his mother bought him a drum machine so he could make better tapes. The gifts and James' hard work paid off. Rick Rubin, co-creator of Def Jam Records, heard and liked the tape and met James, who told

the white Jewish USAmerican, “Yo! I thought you were black!” Of course, James didn’t care whether Rick was black or white, Jewish or non-Jewish. He said, “I didn’t care if Rick Rubin was purple and worshipped penguins. He could have been Ronald McDonald, as long as I got a record deal.”²¹⁷

- Cleveland-based production team the Kickdrums is made up of two people: Matt Penttila and Alex Fitts. They have worked hard, and such luminaries as 50 Cent have used their beats. At times, they have gone to New York with lots of self-produced CDs, and they have stood outside record companies handing out CDs to anyone who passed by, hoping to get one of their CDs into the hands of someone in A&R (Artists and Repertoire). Of course, many people who get a CD are not in A&R. Mr. Penttila says, “If they give you a weird look, then you know it’s a janitor.” Still, says Mr. Fitts, “You start with the guys you can get to. It benefits both sides, because then the low-level A&Rs take it to their boss, and it’s like, ‘I discovered this new talent.’ Eventually, you get a call from a big-time A&R about the CD you gave somebody else.”²¹⁸

- When the Swedish punk/new wave group the Hives recorded “Try It Again,” they felt that the chorus of the song was like a cheer. They had seen a football game played by Ole Miss, were impressed by the cheerleaders, and arranged for five or six Ole Miss cheerleaders to sing the chorus. Hives bass player Dr. Matt Destruction was very happy that the cheerleaders came to the studio to record the song. They wore their cheerleading outfits and were enthusiastic and happy, and best of all, they smelled good. Dr. Matt Destruction remembers, “The studio was smelling like beer and farts [...] and then they came in and it smelled like strawberries and flowers for an entire day. It was really, really fun. They’re cheerleaders, so we were happy, everybody, the whole day.”²¹⁹

- Enrico Caruso was not satisfied with the quality of many of his recordings because he felt that they did not offer a faithful reproduction of his singing. One day, he offered to play his newest recordings for a group of friends. After listening to the recordings he played, all of his friends assured him that the recordings were excellent and in fact were the best recordings he had ever made. However, Mr. Caruso then said, “No more — please! It makes me too sad. These are not my records at all. They were made by an unknown tenor who is not even included in the catalogue of the better artists!”²²⁰

- Willie Nelson is a true original. For one thing, his legal real first name is Willie instead of William. For another, he has produced much, much original country music that has at times baffled record producers and companies. For example, in 1975, Mr. Nelson recorded the concept album *Red Headed Stranger* for Columbia Records, his first record for them. A producer was baffled: “Did he make this in his living room? It’s a piece of sh*t! It sounds like he did this for about two bucks. It’s not produced.” The album is now considered a classic.²²¹

- How many recordings a duo has sometimes depends on how they count. In the summer of 2008, Jennifer Daniels and her husband, Jeff Neal, headed to the studio to make their fourth recording. Or it’s their sixth, Jennifer says, if you count their Christmas EP and the “one that we’re embarrassed to sell.”²²²

Rehearsals

- Jacques Thibaud was both a violinist and a golfer, and he made lots of money at each occupation. One year, he was booked to play the Beethoven Violin Concerto at the

Concertgebouw in Amsterdam, but it quickly became apparent at a rehearsal that he was making many, many more mistakes than he should be making. Conductor Pierre Monteux asked him what was wrong, and Mr. Thibaud replied, “I haven’t had time to work this summer — there are so many golf tournaments.” Mr. Monteux said, “You’d better watch out. Your golf will ruin your violin technique.” To Mr. Monteux’s surprise, Mr. Thibaud told him, “I’m only afraid the violin will ruin my golf.”²²³

- Sergei Rachmaninoff — a very punctual man — was supposed to rehearse with Leopold Stokowski, but the conductor was busy rehearsing a Tchaikovsky symphony. Mr. Rachmaninoff waited a few minutes, then strode to the piano and hit a loud chord. Of course, everything got very quiet very quickly. Mr. Rachmaninoff said, “The piano is here; I am here; it is 11 o’clock. Let us rehearse.” Mr. Stokowski then began to rehearse Mr. Rachmaninoff and let the Tchaikovsky symphony wait.²²⁴

- Violinist Bronislav Huberman would not rehearse with conductor Pierre Monteux. Just before a rehearsal, he would send Mr. Monteux a telegram saying, “You know it, I know it, the orchestra knows it; will see you at the concert!” Actually, Mr. Huberman was correct. He, Mr. Monteux, and the orchestra had worked together so much that they knew the music they would perform together, and so the concerts always went well.²²⁵

- Conductor Arturo Toscanini was passionate about music and wanted all of his musicians to put their blood into their work the way he did. At a rehearsal, he told his orchestra, “Put your blood! I put *my* blood!” (By the way, Arturo Toscanini enjoyed listening to music on records — while listening, he had a habit of holding his baton and conducting.)²²⁶

Revenge

- Jazz musician Louis Armstrong ran into prejudice while performing in the Jim Crow South. On one concert tour, the white wife of his manager did the managing and traveled with Mr. Armstrong and his band. She arranged for the buses they traveled in, and she always ordered a bus with a soft back seat for Mr. Armstrong. Once, a bus she had ordered in Memphis arrived, but it did not have the soft seat she had ordered, so she began to argue. Somehow, the police showed up. They saw a white woman and a lot of black men, so they arrested the black men. The Memphis police chief said that one way to get out of the difficulty was for Mr. Armstrong and his band to perform on Memphis radio, and the black musicians had to agree although they had done nothing wrong. Mr. Armstrong got a measure of revenge, however, by dedicating a song to the Memphis police chief: “I’ll Be Glad When You’re Dead, You Rascal, You.”²²⁷

- These anecdotes fall into the category of dirty tricks rather than harmless pranks. Alfred Hertz was forced to use a cane when walking very far. As conductor of Wagnerian operas at the Metropolitan Opera from 1902 to 1915, he used to leave his cane at the side of the orchestra pit, then walk to the podium. Musicians who disliked him would get his cane, then grease it. And in 1968-1969, youths threw eggs at several opera-goers at Milan. Why? The opera-goers were very well dressed, and the youths wanted opera to be democratized.²²⁸

Success

- Hillary Scott is one of the vocalists of Lady Antebellum (the other members are Charles Kelley and Dave Haywood), and she and the band are making a success — and she is grateful for it. On April 15, 2008, the band’s self-titled debut album came out. At 3 a.m., Ms. Scott was

in a Wal-Mart in Nashville, watching as the band's album was stocked in the new-releases section, in between James Otto and Mariah Carey. She even started to cry. Ms. Scott says, "I was so overcome with emotion. Not only because I had worked my whole life for this, but because of how much we'd worked since we got together. These songs were our babies. I can't tell you how overwhelming this was. I just lost it."²²⁹

- Eminem got his big break because Interscope Records executive Jimmy Iovine left Eminem's EP titled *The Slim Shady EP* on his garage floor. Rapper and music executive Dr. Dre visited Mr. Iovine and saw the EP. He liked the cover, insisted on hearing the EP, and was impressed by what he heard. Dr. Dre says, "In my entire career in the music industry, I have never found anything from a demo tape or a CD. But when Jimmy played me this tape, I said, 'Find him. Now.'" Of course, Eminem has had enormous success as a rapper, but he says that he is prepared if he ever stops being successful in music because he can go back to his first job: washing dishes.²³⁰

Television

- Johnny Ramone, lead guitarist for the Ramones, was a baseball fanatic. According to Howie Pyro, musician for D Generation, sometimes at a concert Johnny would be watching a baseball game on a TV set that was off to the side of the stage, not even looking at his guitar, but "just playing like a machine." (In his juvenile delinquent phase just after graduating from high school, Johnny always enjoyed finding a TV set that someone had thrown in the garbage. He would lug it up to a rooftop, watch for pedestrians to come along, and then drop the TV set in front of them.)²³¹

- In 2008, Ringo Starr released a new album titled *Liverpool 8*. Mr. Starr feels strongly about his music, and he was supposed to play the title song on the TV show *Live With Regis and Kelly*. However, when the producers wanted to reduce the performance time of the title song to 2 minutes and 30 seconds down from 4 minutes and 15 seconds, Mr. Starr said, "God bless and goodbye," and then walked away.²³²

Titles

- Stephin Merritt, frontman for The Magnetic Fields, tends to think up titles to 26 songs at one time because he finds that it helps his creativity to think up a song title for each of the letters of the alphabet. He says, "This helps me come up with songs like 'Xavier Says' and 'Zombie Boy' that I otherwise might not think of." Some people who listen to his lyrics may consider him a pessimist, but Mr. Merritt points out, "A pessimist is always right in the long term. If you read anybody's biography, you know the ending."²³³

- Many of the early Ramones' songs had "I Don't Wanna" in the title: "I Don't Wanna Go Down in the Basement," "I Don't Wanna Walk Around with You," and "I Don't Wanna Be Learned / I Don't Wanna Be Tamed." Dee Dee Ramone joked, "We didn't write a positive song until "Now I Wanna Sniff Some Glue."²³⁴

War

- While Lily Pons and André Kostelanetz were entertaining the troops during World War II, they heard of a general who had been asked for the password while out walking. The general didn't know the password, so the sentries asked him, "Who is Frank Sinatra?" The general

replied, “A d*mn poor singer!” Apparently, this answer was correct, as the sentries allowed the general to pass.²³⁵

- During World War I, tenor Henry Wendon was with a fellow British soldier in Palestine when his companion suddenly fell to the ground during one of their walks. He thought something was wrong, but his friend had seen some black tulips growing in the wild, and he asked Mr. Wendon to help him dig some bulbs for his garden back home in England.²³⁶

- Music can exert a powerful effect on human beings. In December 1937, during the Spanish civil war, African-American actor/singer Paul Robeson went to Spain. While there, he sang — soldiers on both sides of the conflict called a truce for an hour just so they could hear his concert.²³⁷

Work

- Ludo works hard to build an audience. Phil Kosch, a member of Chicago’s Treaty of Paris, learned how driven the band was when he invited them to play a free show in Naperville, Illinois. He says, “We kind of neglected to tell them it was under a canopy, next to a river with this really bad sound system.” This kind of free show with bad venue and bad sound equipment was not a problem for Ludo; instead, it was an opportunity to further build their audience. Members of Ludo work hard to reach the audience, for Ludo has worn out two vans in four years. They definitely make sure to spend time with the audience. On the Warped Tour, members of Ludo were shocked that members of other bands did not spend time shaking hands with members of the audience. And audience members do appreciate that kind of contact. In 2006, the band played their “Cinco de Mustache” show in St. Louis. Present was an Island Records vice president, who was impressed by seeing “1,200 kids singing along to all the songs,” says Dan Friedman, a lawyer who handles Ludo’s record contracts. In fact, the vice president was so impressed that he offered Ludo a record deal, saying, “You’ll have paper within a week.”²³⁸

- The Ramones worked hard at their concerts, touring constantly and playing even when they were ill. In their early days, bass player Dee Dee Ramone was making \$125 a week but had a \$100-a-day drug habit. Still, he showed up on time for concerts — for one thing, Johnny Ramone fined band members \$25 for showing up late. One concert, because of the drugs, Dee Dee was ill, so he made his way to the side of the stage and vomited — but he kept on playing! Also early in their career, Johnny Ramone was playing guitar so fast and furiously — creating a wall of sound with his downstrokes — that he cut his fingers. He kept playing although so much blood ended up on his T-shirt that the audience thought he had smuggled in blood capsules to use in the act. Later, as a result of the relentless touring, Johnny developed such thick calluses on his fingers that it was impossible to cut them.²³⁹

- The Bangles had several hits in the 1980s, and like other bands, occasionally a member left the band and was replaced. For example, in 2005 bassist Michael Steele left the band. Why? Reality got in the way. Most of the Bangles have children, and they put family first, fitting in Bangles time whenever they can. Ms. Steele was the only member of the band without children, and Bangles lead singer Susanna Hoffs says, “Fair enough: she doesn’t have kids, so she has more time to really devote to music, and it was probably extremely annoying to her when Back to School Night or something might bring down an entire tour, y’know? But that’s just how it is for us. But I really wish her well.”²⁴⁰

- At age 16, White Rabbits bass player Adam Russell dropped out of high school because he was annoyed that his teachers insisted that he listen to them instead of reading books such as philosophy texts by Nietzsche, *Moby Dick*, and physics textbooks during class. Later, he moved to New York where he played music and got a job in the Strand bookstore, for which he had to take a test before being gainfully employed. The test included such questions as “Who wrote *The Age of Innocence*?” and “Who wrote *Catcher in the Rye*?” Not surprisingly, he had no trouble passing the test.²⁴¹

- Edwin McArthur served for many years as the accompanist to soprano Kirsten Flagstad. Both she and her husband, Henry Johansen, liked Mr. McArthur, and they decided to help get him started in a conducting career. Therefore, Mr. Johansen asked Mr. McArthur to type a letter of intent so that Ms. Flagstad and Mr. Johansen could sign it. Mr. McArthur protested, “But this is something I cannot do. Please get someone else.” But Mr. Johansen replied, “Edwin, you are not the conductor yet. For the moment you are my secretary. Now get out your typewriter and do as I say.”²⁴²

- Musicians see a lot of ups and downs. Joe “Bean” Esposito was nominated for a Grammy with Brenda Russell for the song “Piano in the Dark” in the late 1980s. However, he was dropped from his label — Capitol Records — and needed money. A friend told him about a painting job that paid \$17.50 an hour. Mr. Esposito took the job — it was at Capitol Records. Mr. Esposito remembers, “The day of the Grammys, I’m scraping the wallpaper off the wall and that night I go to the Grammys. Whatever doesn’t kill you, my friend, makes you stronger.”²⁴³

- Early in their career, the Rolling Stones went to Chess Records to record at the legendary studio where so many of their music heroes had recorded — they were even able to meet Muddy Waters! But what shocked them was that their hero was working as a roadie because people weren’t buying his records at the time. Stones bassist Bill Wyman said, “As kids we would have given our right arm to say hello to [him], and there’s the great Muddy Waters helping carry my guitar into the studio It was unreal.”²⁴⁴

- In 1943, composer Samuel Barber joined the United States Army, then transferred to the Army Air Forces, where he was given his duty. No, he was not ordered to fight in the war; instead, he was ordered to write a symphony that honored the military. According to his friend and fellow composer Gian Carlo Menotti, “Barber was probably the only soldier in the United States who never learned to take a gun apart and put it together again.”²⁴⁵

- Jack White of White Stripes fame keeps busy, and he always has. For example, when he and the others started the White Stripes, he was in three different bands. He is married to the model Karen Elson, and in 2009 his children, Scarlett and Henry, were three years old and one year old, respectively. How does Mr. White stay so busy and have children, too? He jokes, “I’ve been told I have children. I’d really love to meet them one day.”²⁴⁶

- Benny Goodman was like Fred Astaire — both wanted to be great, not good, and both were willing to put in the necessary number of hours to avoid being merely good. (Being good enough is not good enough for truly gifted people.) Frank Sinatra — who also put in the necessary hours to be great — once asked Mr. Goodman why he was constantly playing the clarinet. Mr. Goodman replied, “Because if I’m not great, I’m good.”²⁴⁷

- Being a celebrity photographer has its privileges. Richard Young was so good at his job of shooting stars that ex-Beatle George Harrison invited him to his home to take some photographs of him. Mr. Young drove up to Mr. Harrison’s gate and rang the bell. Seeing this, a couple of school kids said to him, “You’ll never get in there, mate.” With perfect timing, the gate opened and Mr. Young drove up the driveway.²⁴⁸
- Some musicians can spend months recording an album, but back when folk singers Woody Guthrie and Cisco Houston were in the Merchant Marines, they had two days off in New York City. They used the time well — they went to Moe Asch’s studio, where they recorded 135 songs!²⁴⁹
- Ignace Paderewski practiced many hours each day for several years to develop into a world-class pianist. After Queen Victoria heard one of his concerts, she told him that he was a genius. “Perhaps,” Mr. Paderewski replied, “but before I was a genius, I was a drudge.”²⁵⁰

Appendix A: Bibliography

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Appendix B: About the Author

It was a dark and stormy night. Suddenly a cry rang out, and on a hot summer night in 1954, Josephine, wife of Carl Bruce, gave birth to a boy — me. Unfortunately, this young married couple allowed Reuben Saturday, Josephine's brother, to name their first-born. Reuben, aka "The Joker," decided that Bruce was a nice name, so he decided to name me Bruce Bruce. I have gone by my middle name — David — ever since.

Being named Bruce David Bruce hasn't been all bad. Bank tellers remember me very quickly, so I don't often have to show an ID. It can be fun in charades, also. When I was a counselor as a teenager at Camp Echoing Hills

in Warsaw, Ohio, a fellow counselor gave the signs for “sounds like” and “two words,” then she pointed to a bruise on her leg twice. Bruise Bruise? Oh yeah, Bruce Bruce is the answer!

Uncle Reuben, by the way, gave me a haircut when I was in kindergarten. He cut my hair short and shaved a small bald spot on the back of my head. My mother wouldn't let me go to school until the bald spot grew out again.

Of all my brothers and sisters (six in all), I am the only transplant to Athens, Ohio. I was born in Newark, Ohio, and have lived all around Southeastern Ohio. However, I moved to Athens to go to Ohio University and have never left.

At Ohio U, I never could make up my mind whether to major in English or Philosophy, so I got a bachelor's degree with a double major in both areas, then I added a Master of Arts degree in English and a Master of Arts degree in Philosophy. Yes, I have my MAMA degree.

Currently, and for a long time to come (I eat fruits and veggies), I am spending my retirement writing books such as *Nadia Comaneci: Perfect 10*, *The Funniest People in Comedy*, *Homer's Iliad: A Retelling in Prose*, and *William Shakespeare's Hamlet: A Retelling in Prose*.

If all goes well, I will publish one or two books a year for the rest of my life. (On the other hand, a good way to make God laugh is to tell Her your plans.)

By the way, my sister Brenda Kennedy writes romances such as *A New Beginning* and *Shattered Dreams*.

Appendix C: Some Books by David Bruce

Anecdote Collections

250 Anecdotes About Opera

250 Anecdotes About Religion

250 Anecdotes About Religion: Volume 2

250 Music Anecdotes

Be a Work of Art: 250 Anecdotes and Stories

The Coolest People in Art: 250 Anecdotes

The Coolest People in the Arts: 250 Anecdotes

The Coolest People in Books: 250 Anecdotes

The Coolest People in Comedy: 250 Anecdotes

Create, Then Take a Break: 250 Anecdotes

Don't Fear the Reaper: 250 Anecdotes

The Funniest People in Art: 250 Anecdotes

The Funniest People in Books: 250 Anecdotes

The Funniest People in Books, Volume 2: 250 Anecdotes

The Funniest People in Books, Volume 3: 250 Anecdotes

The Funniest People in Comedy: 250 Anecdotes

The Funniest People in Dance: 250 Anecdotes

The Funniest People in Families: 250 Anecdotes

The Funniest People in Families, Volume 2: 250 Anecdotes

The Funniest People in Families, Volume 3: 250 Anecdotes

The Funniest People in Families, Volume 4: 250 Anecdotes

The Funniest People in Families, Volume 5: 250 Anecdotes

The Funniest People in Families, Volume 6: 250 Anecdotes

The Funniest People in Movies: 250 Anecdotes

The Funniest People in Music: 250 Anecdotes

The Funniest People in Music, Volume 2: 250 Anecdotes

The Funniest People in Music, Volume 3: 250 Anecdotes

The Funniest People in Neighborhoods: 250 Anecdotes

The Funniest People in Relationships: 250 Anecdotes

The Funniest People in Sports: 250 Anecdotes

The Funniest People in Sports, Volume 2: 250 Anecdotes

The Funniest People in Television and Radio: 250 Anecdotes

The Funniest People in Theater: 250 Anecdotes

The Funniest People Who Live Life: 250 Anecdotes

The Funniest People Who Live Life, Volume 2: 250 Anecdotes

The Kindest People Who Do Good Deeds, Volume 1: 250 Anecdotes

The Kindest People Who Do Good Deeds, Volume 2: 250 Anecdotes

Maximum Cool: 250 Anecdotes

The Most Interesting People in Movies: 250 Anecdotes

The Most Interesting People in Politics and History: 250 Anecdotes

The Most Interesting People in Politics and History, Volume 2: 250 Anecdotes

The Most Interesting People in Politics and History, Volume 3: 250 Anecdotes

The Most Interesting People in Religion: 250 Anecdotes

The Most Interesting People in Sports: 250 Anecdotes

The Most Interesting People Who Live Life: 250 Anecdotes

The Most Interesting People Who Live Life, Volume 2: 250 Anecdotes

Reality is Fabulous: 250 Anecdotes and Stories

Notes

[← 1]

Source: Colonel J.H. Mapleson, *The Mapleson Memoirs*, p. 221.

[← 2]

Source: Hugh Vickers, *Even Greater Operatic Disasters*, p. 19.

[← 3]

Source: Jim Bessman, *Ramones: An American Band*, pp. 133, 177.

[← 4]

Source: Rose Heylbut and Aimé Gerber, *Backstage at the Opera*, pp. 154-155.

[← 5]

Source: Richard Young, *Shooting Stars*, pp. 160-161.

[← 6]

Source: Glenhall Taylor, *Before Television*, p. 29.

[← 7]

Source: Alan Light, *The Skills to Pay the Bills: The Story of the Beastie Boys*, p. 155.

[← 8]

Source: David E. Thigpen, *Jam Master Jay: The Heart of Hip Hop*, pp. 71-72.

[← 9]

Source: Grace Moore, *You're Only Human Once*, pp. 139-140.

[← 10]

Source: Dick Richards, compiler, *The Wit of Noël Coward*, p. 85.

[← 11]

Source: Lisa A. Chippendale, *Yo-Yo Ma*, p. 73.

[← 12]

Source: Frances Alda, *Men, Women, and Tenors*, p. 69.

[← 13]

Source: Stuart A. Kallen, *Great Composers*, p. 49.

[← 14]

Source: David Ewen, *Dictators of the Baton*, p. 186.

[← 15]

Source: Gary Valentine, *New York Rocker: My Life in the Blank Generation with Blondie, Iggy Pop, and Others, 1974-1981*, p. 51.

[← 16]

Source: Herbert H. Breslin, editor, *The Tenors*, pp. 13-14.

[← 17]

Source: Mark Bego, *Julian Lennon!*, p. 105.

[← 18]

Source: Michael Deeds, "Work ethic helps newcomer Sarah Johns find country music success."
McClatchy Newspapers. 18 April 2008 <<http://www.popmatters.com/pm/news/article/57536/work-ethic-helps-newcomer-sarah-johns-find-country-music-success/>>.

[← 19]

Source: Jacques Lowe, *Jazz: Photographs of the Masters*, p. 43.

[← 20]

Source: Rick Kogan, "Singer Yoko Noge left Japan for Chicago with nothing but her love of the blues." *Chicago Tribune*. 25 March 2008 <<http://www.popmatters.com/pm/news/article/56567/singer-yoko-noge-left-japan-for-chicago-with-nothing-but-her-love-of-the-bl/>>.

[← 21]

Source: Jennifer Maerz, "Meet the Rosenthals." *San Francisco Weekly*. 7 May 2008
<<http://news.sfweekly.com/2008-05-07/news/punk-family-values/full>>.

[← 22]

Source: Dave Simpson, 'I went to her gig and she was wearing a little G-string.' *The Guardian*. 8 August 2008 <<http://www.guardian.co.uk/music/2008/aug/08/popandrock>>.

[← 23]

Source: Jon Bream, "Music remains a family affair for percussionist-drummer Sheila E." *Star Tribune* (Minneapolis). 27 June 2008 <<http://www.popmatters.com/pm/article/60266/music-remains-a-family-affair-for-percussionist-drummer-sheila-e/>>.

[← 24]

Source: Angelina Krahn, "The Curious Career of Kimya Dawson: From Moldy Peaches to *Juno* to *Sesame Street*." *Shepherd Express*. 11 April 2008 <<http://www.expressmilwaukee.com/article-1620-from-moldy-peaches-to-juno-to-sesame-street.html>>.

[← 25]

Source: John O'Mahony, 'Adults are idiots.' *The Guardian*. 7 April 2008
<<http://music.guardian.co.uk/electronic/story/0,,2271495,00.html>>.

[← 26]

Source: Will Harris, "A Chat with Billy Bragg, singer/songwriter." Bullz-eye.com. 20 October 2008
<http://www.bullz-eye.com/music/interviews/2008/billy_bragg.htm>.

[← 27]

Source: Schuyler Chapin, *Leonard Bernstein: Notes from a Friend*, p. 44.

[← 28]

Source: Terri Dougherty, *Beyoncé*, p. 35.

[← 29]

Source: [Dara Nai](#), "Interview With Pat Benatar." 16 March 2008

<<http://www.afterellen.com/music/2008/3benatarversusgogos?page=0%2C1>>.

[← 30]

Source: Stanley I. Mour, *American Jazz Musicians*, p. 40.

[← 31]

Source: Pat Rediger, *Great African Americans in Music*, p. 41.

[← 32]

Source: Alan Wagner, *Prima Donnas and Other Wild Beasts*, pp. 126-127.

[← 33]

Source: David Blum, *Quintet: Five Journeys Toward Musical Fulfillment*, p. 137.

[← 34]

Source: Glenhall Taylor, *Before Television*, p. 41.

[← 35]

Source: Jacques Lowe, *Jazz: Photographs of the Masters*, pp. 76-77. Also: David Ewen, *Listen to the Mocking Words*, p. 122.

[← 36]

Source: Jack L. Roberts, *Garth Brooks*, pp. 56-57.

[← 37]

Source: Anne E. Neimark, *Johnny Cash: A Twentieth-Century Life*, pp. 45-47.

[← 38]

Source: Rebecca Steffoff, *Plácido Domingo*, p. 87.

[← 39]

Source: H. Allen Smith, *The Compleat Practical Joker*, p. 129.

[← 40]

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