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Reality Radio: Telling True Stories In Sound (Documentary Arts And Culture, Published In Association With The Center For Documentary Studies At Duke University)



Synopsis

Over the last few decades, the radio documentary has developed into a strikingly vibrant form of creative expression. Millions of listeners hear arresting, intimate storytelling from an ever-widening array of producers on programs including *This American Life*, *StoryCorps*, and *Radio Lab*; online through such sites as *Transom*, the *Public Radio Exchange*, *Hearing Voices*, and *Soundprint*; and through a growing collection of podcasts. *Reality Radio* celebrates today's best audio documentary work by bringing together some of the most influential and innovative practitioners from the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, and Australia. In these nineteen essays, documentary artists tell--and demonstrate, through stories and transcripts--how they make radio the way they do, and why. Whether the contributors to the volume call themselves journalists, storytellers, even audio artists--and although their essays are just as diverse in content and approach--all use sound to tell true stories, artfully. Contributors: Jad Abumrad, Jay Allison, Damali Ayo, John Biewen, Emily Botwin, Chris Brookes, Scott Carrier, Katie Davis, Sherre DeLys, Lena Eckert-Erdheim, Ira Glass, Alan Hall, Natalie Kestecher, The Kitchen Sisters, Maria Martin, Karen Michel, Rick Moody, Joe Richman, Dmae Roberts, Stephen Smith, Sandy Tolan

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Customer Reviews

Radio has suffered corporate deadening just like other "traditional" media, yet it retains an edge thanks to public, community, and college stations and the popularity of radio

documentaries. Biewen, audio program director for Duke University's Center for Documentary Studies, offers a lively history of creative documentary radio in his introduction to 19 passionate, instructive, and unexpectedly moving essays by innovative audio journalists and artists who "use sound to tell true stories artfully." Such artists include the Kitchen Sisters, who write about their "deep need to bear witness and try to heal the culture through stories and revelations," and Ira Glass, who generously reveals just how much patience, effort, and luck are involved in creating *This American Life*. Jad Abumrad's description of his work with Robert Krulwich on the wacky *Radio Lab* series is matched by provocative accounts of radio diaries and bold audio performance art and Katie Davis's beautiful essay about her collaborations with Washington, D.C., teens in *Neighborhood Stories* and the practice of "deeper listening." Invaluable and many-faceted coverage of a thriving, populist, and mind-expanding art form. --Donna Seaman --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

[Biewen] offers a lively history of creative documentary radio in his introduction to 19 passionate, instructive, and unexpectedly moving essays by innovative audio journalists and artists who use sound to tell true stories artfully. . . . Invaluable and many-faceted coverage of a thriving, populist, and mind-expanding art form.--Booklist What is striking about this collection is how clearly the reader can 'hear' the diverse voices and stories, despite the print medium. . . . A wonderful and accessible read. . . . Highly recommended.--Choice An incredibly important contribution to the field of public media, one that will invite introspection, spark creativity, and hopefully teach people that the first step in learning is listening.--Public Radio Makers Quest 2.0 This book is valuable for those who believe radio's future is in the art of storytelling and can be a particularly good resource for students enrolled in radio narrative or radio/audio documentary classes, and a valued tool for faculty teaching documentary, narrative, audio drama, and radio writing.--Journal of Radio and Audio Media Biewen . . . chronicles this rebirth of the documentary . . . profiling a new breed of radio producers who . . . are willing to get involved with their subjects, reveal parts of their own lives, and paint vivid pictures with sound.--Duke Magazine

If you're involved in radio, podcasting, or even video blogs, this book is worth reading. I liked it because it explained to me what the spoken word can do that other media can't... or can't do well, anyway. If you'd like to make your recordings richer, more compelling, and more interesting to your listeners, learn from the best. That's what you'll find in this book. This book expanded how I look at

podcasting, and the kinds of recordings I want to make. I was a little uneasy buying this book, because it seemed a little expensive for stories I might not learn from. I shouldn't have worried. From the first few pages, the "ah-HA!" moments were worth every cent. Before relaunching my podcasts, I'm re-reading this book. I was almost overwhelmed, the first time, because this book wasn't what I expected. Reading it the first time, it was as if someone had lifted the curtain and showed me an entire landscape of ideas and approaches that take recordings into a new dimension.

I have been a listener of public radio and the audio documentary format for many years. I always look forward to stories from NPR and PRX. This is the ideal gift for any fan of *This American Life*, *Radiolab* and *All Things Considered*. With chapters written by the likes of Jad Abumrad and Ira Glass, this gives a real glimpse into not only the inner workings of these shows but the very essence of the ideas leading up to them. This is not just a book for the fan of PBS, it is for anyone interested in storytelling and journalism. With so much of our TV time taken up by cheap reality programming and radio with inflammatory talk shows, this book really restored my faith in the fundamentals of radio reporting and storytelling.

I really dug this book. Like any bios, many of those included in this book offered surprises. (Who'd have thought the great Emily Botein began adulthood as a pastry chef?) I appreciated the great words of wisdom from superstar producer Jay Allison, and the insights of the brilliant young producer - and co-host of *RadioLab* - Jad Abumrad... The book is a great read. I enjoyed learning the backstories of the many public radio greats that I enjoy listening to each week...

It's not a technical manual, so if you're trying to learn more about recorders and microphones, this isn't the one for you. If you want to know how to build a story, give this a read. Also pick up NPR's book *Sound Reporting*.

Thanks to "*This American Life*" and similar shows, audio storytelling has entranced more and more people. Listen closely and you'll hear the hinges squeak as this book opens the door to the world of the magic that emerges when storytellers meld careful listening, writing and speaking.

Brilliant. A "must have" if you are interested in creating radio documentaries. The real stories of radio artists struggling to create the craft and the art of radio documentaries is extremely helpful if

you are trying to find your own radio "voice."

No matter: however much I may dislike NPR's political propagandizing, I do recognize that they have raised the audio documentary to an art form. Jonathan Kern's "Sound Reporting: The NPR Guide to Audio Journalism and Production" is the bible of creating this art form. This book is the collected stories, in essay form, of some of those who create the art. Exclusive of the opening and closing essays, there are 18 essays here from creators of audio documentaries. All of them are excellent. There are no dull essays in this book. Each reveals, to one degree or another, the mind of the creator: what drew them to the audio medium, given up for dead in the middle of the 20th Century. What stories they are trying to tell. Often, they include their techniques for producing their audio documentaries, how they let the subjects lead, for example, or how they made the sounds or edited the components to achieve the effect they intended. Some the essays struck me as a bit pretentious, but not overwhelmingly so. On the whole, this is a marvelous book that paints vivid portraits in written words of those who create vivid portraits, most often, in the spoken word. Be sure to check out page 205 for a link to a site containing samples of the essayist's work and much more. Jerry

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