

A MYTH-SHATTERING BIOGRAPHY

of a friendship that changed the world

“No writer has ever gotten to the heart of the John/Paul saga as brilliantly as Ian Leslie. This extraordinary book sheds light on a cultural mystery: how two nowhere boys from Liverpool formed a teenage bond that transformed the future, and in so many ways, invented it. *John and Paul* is a bold, original, empathetic revelation of why our world is still fascinated by this friendship—and still trying to live up to it.”

—Rob Sheffield, author of *Dreaming the Beatles*

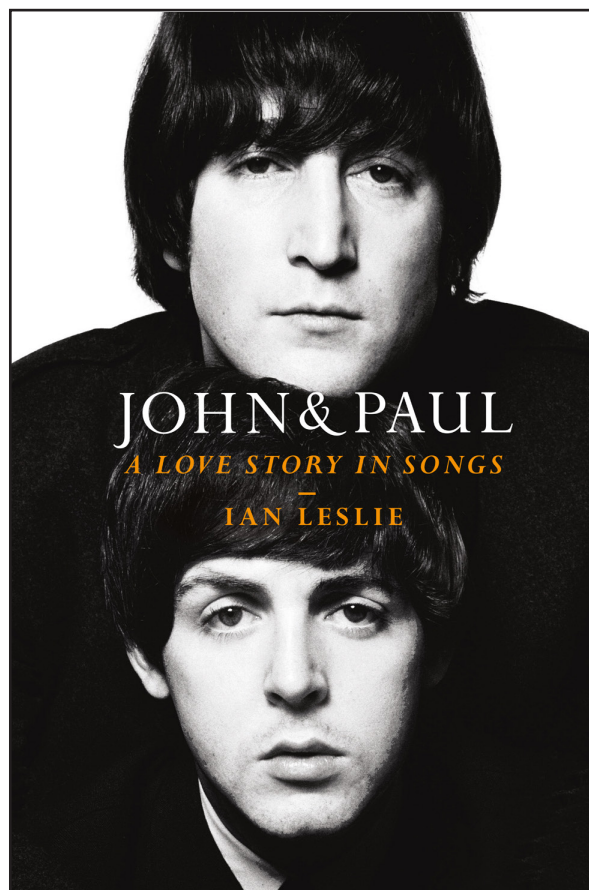
A NEW TELLING OF A STORY WE THOUGHT WE KNEW

John and Paul includes:

A unique format: Each chapter is anchored in one song that relates chronologically to the ever-changing story of the John/Paul relationship. *John and Paul* is the first book focused on the friendship of John Lennon and Paul McCartney.

Rare photos throughout and in photo inserts.

An eye-opening perspective: *John and Paul* is written by a writer of acclaimed books on human psychology.



JOHN AND PAUL: A Love Story in Songs by Ian Leslie

On Sale 4.8.25

HC 9781250869548 | 352 pages | \$30 US / \$40 CAN

Ebook 9781250869531 / \$14.99

Digital Audio 9781250386465 / \$26.99

BIOGRAPHY

IAN LESLIE is the author of acclaimed books on human psychology and behaviour, translated into over a dozen languages. Malcolm Gladwell describes him as “one of my favourite writers.” Previous books include *Curious*, about the desire to learn, and *Conflicted*, on the art and science of productive disagreement. Ian has written for the *New York Times*, the *Atlantic*, the *Financial Times*, and the *Economist* on culture, technology and psychology, and he has spoken to companies and conferences around the world on the themes of curiosity, creativity, and conflict. He is the author of a popular Substack newsletter, *The Ruffian*, and a fellow of the Royal Society For Arts. Ian lives in London with his wife and two children. He has been a Beatles fan since he was seven.



Photo by Chris Floyd

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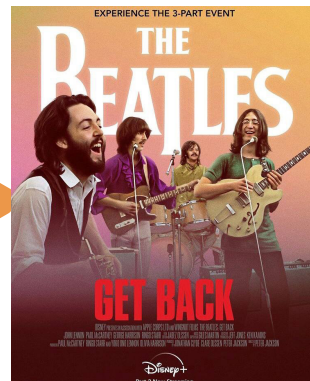
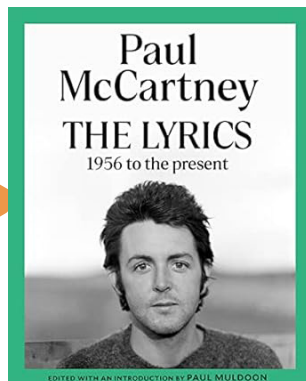
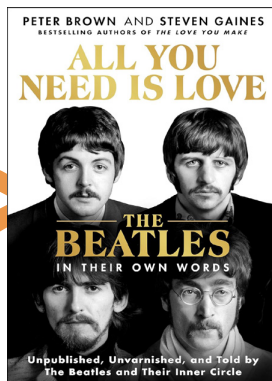
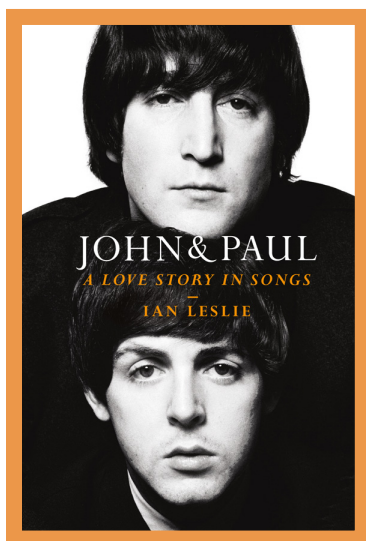
"We desperately need a new Beatles narrative. Since prior books don't get to grips with the central relationship of the band, none of them get the story of the Beatles right. They are also hampered by outdated cultural prejudices about masculinity and about the role of women in the Beatles' story. Most of the standard books, even those published this century, are written through the very problematic cultural lens of the 1970s and 1980s. We are well overdue for a fresh take." —Ian Leslie

PRAISE FOR IAN LESLIE

"One of my favorite writers."
—Malcolm Gladwell

"Ian Leslie's writing is a cool bath of sanity in a world of frenzied hot takes."
—Helen Lewis, *The Atlantic*

"I don't think anyone is writing as well about The Beatles as Ian Leslie is right now."
—Pete Paphides, music writer



JOHN AND PAUL is for fans of...

AN INTERVIEW WITH IAN LESLIE

WHY DID YOU DECIDE TO WRITE THIS BOOK?

There have been no major books on the John and Paul relationship, which is remarkable, since John and Paul are the nucleus of the group. It was these two meeting and catching fire which led to the earthshaking explosion of creativity we know as the Beatles. It was these two who wrote the vast majority of the group's songs and who effectively acted as joint leaders. It was a split between these two which caused the breakup of the group.

Personally, I've always found the story of John and Paul fascinating. What is it about these two individuals and their chemistry that created this momentous, 20th-century-changing cultural phenomenon? How did their relationship evolve over time, and how did their feelings about each other feed into the songs we know and love? These are questions I've been dwelling on for years. When it struck me that none of the many Beatles books cover them in depth, I knew I had to write one myself.

WHY IS IT SUBTITLED "A LOVE STORY IN SONGS"?

John and Paul are usually talked about as rivals or competitors, and people pick one or the other as their favorite ("I'm a John guy"). It's become a kind of culture war. To me, this misses what's so extraordinary and beautiful about the partnership: Each man created the other's sensibility. There was no "Paul" without John; no "John" without Paul. Both men acknowledged this. It was the intensity of the connection they had which ignited the Beatles. When these two teenagers met they bonded over music and over grief (both lost their mothers). From then on, music and emotion — including the emotions they felt for each other — were inseparable. It wasn't plain sailing. This was a grand (heterosexual) romance, passionate, tender, and tempestuous. The volatility fed into the music. That's why I tell the story through songs. I believe you can't understand the music of the Beatles without understanding the story of John-and-Paul, and vice versa.

WHAT DO PEOPLE MOST OFTEN GET WRONG ABOUT LENNON AND MCCARTNEY?

So much! First of all, people don't realize how close they were and how much they meant to each other, even when estranged. Second, people get their personalities wrong — John is usually seen as difficult, deep, and visionary, Paul as sentimental, glib, scheming. These are misleading caricatures, formed decades ago by a generation of rock critics. In *John and Paul*, I show how each man was very different to how they are seen today — and much more interesting. I also show that the standard narrative of their creative partnership is deeply flawed. We misunderstand so much about the music they made. I want readers to come away from *John and Paul* with a thrillingly new sense of what these two geniuses were like and with a new appreciation of what made them great. I also hope readers find the story as moving as I do.

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