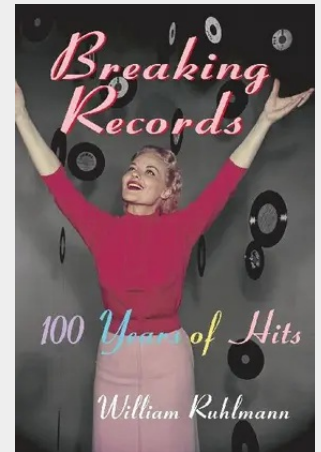


Breaking Records

100 Years of Hits

This book is intended as a survey history of the American record business as it developed during its first full century. It already existed, just barely, when the century began, and by the start of the twenty-first century, whatever its troubles, it had become a very big business: 785 million albums in 2000 might not have represented much of an increase over the previous year, but it was still a lot of records. The story of the industry's development is a financial and commercial one, concerning sales, competition, and economic forces, and it is also a musical one, concerning musicians and songwriters. The history of a country's music is, to an extent, the history of the country itself, and much more could be said—indeed, much more has been said—about that than can be attempted here. But it is hoped that with this overview the reader will gain a certain perspective on that history and the way that the creation of an art form interacts with the machinery of its distribution—or has, thus far, anyway.

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