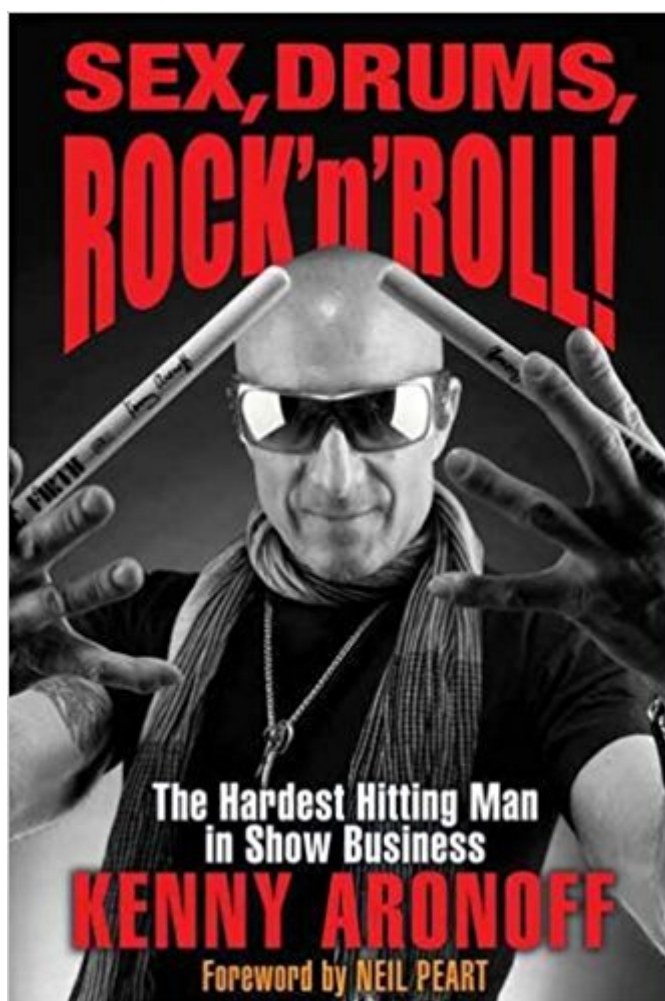


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# Sex, Drums, Rock 'n' Roll!: The Hardest Hitting Man In Show Business



## Synopsis

Talent, energy, dedication, discipline, passion, innovation, education, drive, mind, body, spirit, vision, honor, truth, and drums make the man: Kenny Aronoff. Voted by Rolling Stone magazine as one of the greatest drummers of all time, Aronoff is arguably the most sought-after recording and touring beat master ever. Ignited by the Beatles' appearance on The Ed Sullivan Show in 1964, Aronoff's passion for drumming fervently grew and carried him from the kit in his childhood living room in the Berkshires to Bernstein at Tanglewood to Mellencamp, Etheridge, Fogerty, Smashing Pumpkins, the Rolling Stones, the Beatles - his heroes - and beyond. But none of this would have been possible without his fierce work ethic and unique approach to drumming-an integration of all parts of his being, along with meticulous attention to note-for-note detail, feel, and what the song needs. Both a leader and a team player in the mission to realize a greater good - an unforgettable recording, a riveting show - Aronoff brings it every time. Through any setbacks - heartaches, failures, injuries, or plain fatigue from the rigors of the biz - Aronoff has stayed the arduous and wild rock 'n' roll course. His tale of what is possible with unrelenting dedication to one's bliss is an inspiration to all. *Sex, Drums, Rock 'n' Roll!* details Aronoff's youth in the Berkshires and the Midwest, from his early inspirations to his serious classical and jazz study, which gave him the foundation to be able to play - anything. The failure of a first rock band in his early twenties had a silver lining: it freed him up for an audition that would change his life - John Mellencamp. His work with Mellencamp catapulted Aronoff to the top of the charts with such hits as "Hurt So Good", "Little Pink Houses", and "Jack and Diane" and paved the way for session and recording work with droves of remarkable artists: Melissa Etheridge, John Fogerty, Bon Jovi, Stevie Nicks, Smashing Pumpkins, the BoDeans, Paul Westerberg, Celine Dion, Iggy Pop, Elton John, Bob Dylan, Alice Cooper, Brian Wilson, Meat Loaf, Joe Cocker, and countless others. In addition to his work as a world-famous recording and touring drummer, Aronoff finds time to be a dedicated teacher and has shared his expertise with students all over the world, teaching clinics for Tama and Zildjian. Heading into his fourth decade of rocking hard, Aronoff shows no signs of slowing down. Featuring rare photos, testimonials from major artists and from those who know him best, a chronology of live performances, a discography, and a foreword by Neil Peart, this book is the story of one of the greatest musicians of all time.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Kenny Aronoff shares his inspirational, cautionary, and captivating story of reaching the highest levels of the music business in his autobiography *Sex, Drums, Rock n Roll!* Aronoff may not have the name recognition of some rock stars, but he is immensely respected within the industry as a rock drummer par excellence. Aronoff discusses his childhood, formal musical training, and his first big break with John Mellencamp, which eventually led to work with other artists in the musical who's who. As one might expect, Aronoff has a few crazy, sordid tales to tell about life on the road, but *Sex, Drums, Rock n Roll!* succeeds because he also shows a thoughtful, reflective side. Aronoff tries to portray personality conflicts fairly and from all sides, and his technique of including brief comments by the people in question is highly effective. Aronoff displays a striking and relentless drive to achieve his goals. From his early classical studies to competing with other drummers for work, he never gives up, always pushing himself to practice harder and do better. This aspect transcends drumming and becomes an overriding theme in his life. Of course, there's a price to one's personal relationships that goes along with flying around the country at a breakneck pace, and Aronoff is not shy about detailing his difficulties in this respect. He's blunt and honest about his own shortcomings, and about applying the same effort to improving his family life as he does to his drumming. The book consciously does not drift too far into drummer-speak; while there are a few descriptions of triple flam-a-diddles, a one-hand press roll, and the like, *Sex, Drums, Rock n Roll!* is always more about Aronoff's personal journey. Rock-and-roll fans will enjoy reading about Aronoff's adventures with Mellencamp, John Fogerty, Bob Dylan, Paul McCartney, and other big names, but in the end, what makes the book work are the same things that propel Aronoff's music: a steady beat, impeccable timing, and always hitting hard. --Foreword Reviews

Subtitled 'The Hardest Hitting

Man in Show Business,' this autobiography by versatile session and touring drummer Kenny Aronoff is a testament to the adage that 'success happens when opportunity meets preparation.'...The overall story told here is one of hard work- from hours of practice to keeping a ridiculous schedule that can involve doing a late-night session or concert in one city and then flying overnight to a different city (or country) for a morning session or rehearsal. So many rock or celebrity autobiographies only focus on the successes and glories; Aronoff has certainly had his share of those, but he balances out those stories with descriptions of the hard work and challenges, making this a valuable read for anyone wishing to nurture and sustain a career in the music business.

--Rhythm Scene Magazine "This master drummer...writes with a fan's flair and passion for the music; the pages fairly burst with energy and Aronoff's love of rock and roll." - Houston Press In colorful and conversational language, Aronoff details events throughout his rich life; the lesson here is ultimately about having a dream and working everyday to make it come true. --Desert Star

Kenny Aronoff is one of the most famous rock n roll drummers alive. In his nearly four decades behind the kit, he has played with the greatest acts, from John Mellencamp to Bob Dylan. He has taught and performed all over the world on the best stages. He has held many posts, from house drummer for the Kennedy Center Honors to kit man for Paul McCartney and Ringo Starr on the Beatles CBS TV special The Night That Changed America. Aronoff remains one of the most active and in-demand live and session drummers in the music business. He lives in Los Angeles.

I just started reading the new book by drummer Kenny Aronoff, "Sex, Drums, Rock 'n' Roll: The Hardest Hitting Man in Show Business," which Kenny definitely is. He's a tremendous drummer, has played with just about everybody, and hails from my old stomping grounds of Indiana University. (In fact, he used to play with some pals of mine in a jazz-fusion group called Streamwinner, which gets a few shout outs in the book.) My favorite story from Kenny's new book concerns his first recording with John Cougar Mellencamp, the "Nothing Matters and What If It Did" album. Kenny had only recently joined the band, and was used to playing very busy jazz rock fusion on a big kit. (That's how I initially heard him back in Bloomington -- he was a monster!) Anyway, the band flies out to LA to record with legendary producer Steve Cropper (of Stax Records fame), and it was Kenny's first time in a big-time LA recording studio. Unfortunately, Cropper only had a limited time to record the album, and Kenny just wasn't cutting it. So they "fired" Kenny from the recordings and brought in session drummers Ed Greene and Rick Shlosser to cut the rhythm tracks. Instead of getting all pissed off like anyone else would have, Kenny took this as a humbling and a learning experience.

He begged Mellencamp to let him stay in LA (they were going to fly him home) and attend the recording sessions as a fly on the wall, which he did. Kenny learned a ton from the session pros and applied it to his own style going forward, turning a negative experience into a positive one. I don't know too many other musicians who would have sucked it up and taken it the way Kenny did in that situation. This solidifies my opinion of Kenny as not just a great drummer but a true stand up guy and role model. (FWIW, I interviewed Kenny for my Complete Idiot's Guide to Playing Drums book, and he was a joy and an inspiration to talk to. As busy as he is, I'm glad he found the time to talk to me!) In any case, if you want an inside look at the music business from a legendary drummer's point of view, check out Kenny's book. It's a good read!

As a musician and a lover of drums, Mr. Aronoff has given this reader a rare window on how much discipline and motivation it takes to literally master this incredible instrument. This is a true musical history which starts in the womb where Kenny heard his twin brother Jonathan's heartbeat. It left an imprint. His relationship with his family is a loving one. They provided him with a platform and encouraged him to play. In truth, they could not get him to stop. He learned by sheer determination. It was when he first saw Ringo Starr that he knew the sounds of rhythm would be his calling. While reading I was fascinated by how he believed a band should be formed like a team. Like his family. Good drummers are very hard to find. When he first auditioned for John Cougar Mellencamp. However, Mellencamp did not think he was the right drummer for the band. He soon found out otherwise. He played on John's best recordings while he and bassist Toby Myers played amazingly together. A brilliant team. When he left the Mellencamp band he soon got calls from everyone. In my opinion, the more simplistic (Mellencamp) a tune is, the harder it is to play. Especially, to keep the sound and beat in the pocket. Kenny, I could say is the Mozart of drum playing. He can play anything. As a student at UMass he played classical percussion and of course tympani's. While playing with an orchestra it is valuable to count out the rhythm with precision. Kenny's big mistake was that he came in at the wrong time which left him humbled and embarrassed in front of his peers. A lesson learned but a valuable one. He later went to Indiana University, Bloomington and the rest is musical history. I will not tell you everyone he has played with because you wannabe drummers or lovers of other instruments need to read this. Not only is he a highly disciplined player, like above he is a humble one. If you are into sleazy autobiographies on rock stars this is not for you. Kenny is a musician's musician. And he has shown it by giving lessons to students while recording with Mellencamp and being creative with his art. I was also fascinated how much he loved Bloomington. And how he described it. A young boy who idolized Ringo Starr from the East Coast

ends up in the heart of the United States, Indiana, and becomes one of the most famous, versatile drummers of all time. What made me teary eyed was when he was granted his childhood wish to play with Ringo Starr. He is so versatile that he has played rock, country, jazz and symphony. He is an unbelievable and rare artist and from what I read a very kind and giving man. Neil Peart in the Forward said it best: "Hold on to that thought for when you get to John Mellencamp's acid comment about Kenny and his "ambition." As if there is something wrong about wanting to play with everybody in the world--and then doing it. As Dizzy Dean said, "It ain't braggin' if you can back it up. Kenny Aronoff can back it up."

You've heard his grooves a million times but did you know what went on behind the scenes to produce that music? This book is amazing even if you aren't a drummer. If you are a drummer, it is a must read. Mr Aronoff is a yet unexpected, but incredible writer who shares first hand accounts of his dealings with the world's finest musicians and all the drama behind the music. His story is a struggle to make it to the top of an industry and become one of the tops in all of music by working harder than almost anyone in the business. It has correlations far beyond the reach of music so it is a good read for anyone who wants to learn how to be a success in any area of life. Well done Kenny!!

Kenny has been one of my favorite drummers for many years. I had at one time hoped for a drum career like his, but little things like talent got in the way! However, loving the artist does not always make for a good autobiography (i.e. Chrissie Hynde, Pete Townsend, etc) But Kenny pulled no punches, and ended up with a really good book outlining the hard work, sacrifice, and real life behind the scenes of a working drummer. I really enjoyed the format of having quotes from pertinent people sprinkled throughout the stories, and that it followed his career closely without slagging other musicians or the women in his life. It can sometimes be difficult to tell one's story and admit shortcomings in parenting, or spouse loyalty. But Kenny does it with candor and truth. He is responsible for some of the greatest songs in the genre, and I for one thank him for his hard work and dedication!!! We all have gotten to enjoy the results. Thanks Kenny!

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