



Sessions with Sinatra: Frank Sinatra and the Art of Recording

By Charles L. Granata

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Frank Sinatra was not only the greatest popular singer of the century—he was also the ultimate recording artist. In addition to introducing and perfecting a unique vocal style, he was also his own in-studio producer—personally supervising every aspect of his recordings, from choosing the songs and arrangers to making minute adjustments in mike placement. One of the thrills of listening to Sinatra is wondering how he did it—and this book explains it all, bringing the dedicated fan and the casual music lover alike into the recording studio to glimpse the fascinating working methods he introduced and mastered in his quest for recorded perfection. Featuring 100 photographs of Sinatra working with orchestras and arrangers, listening to playbacks, and, of course, singing, *Sessions with Sinatra* tells the whole story of how he created the Sinatra sound and translated the most intense personal emotions into richly worked-out songs of unrivalled expressiveness.

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Sessions with Sinatra: Frank Sinatra and the Art of Recording By Charles L. Granata Bibliography

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Granata, producer and director of Sinatra's Columbia recordings, offers a rare glimpse into the work that went into making the Sinatra sound. He covers all the technical details, from Sinatra's early pioneering of the microphone as instrument to transcripts of his many studio directions and casual late-night jokes. Granata summarizes the major recording eras in Sinatra's career, from the Columbia years (1943-1952) to his Duets work in the mid-1990s with singers such as Bono and Chrissie Hynde. With a foreword by adoring sound engineer Ramone and afterword by Nancy Sinatra, this testimony to Sinatra's studio time is weakened only by its unwavering homage. But much can be read between the lines. What is said (Sinatra is quoted, "You can never do anything in life quite on your own.... Making a record is as near as you can get to it") and what can be extrapolated (Sinatra did not, perhaps, appreciate the debt owed to songwriters, musicians, producers and arrangers) can make for good reading. Late in the book, Granata confesses, "Sinatra's personal relationships with the musicians were complex.... Maybe Sinatra feared the old adage, 'Familiarity breeds contempt.'" It's evident throughout that Sinatra asserted his ideas and ego masterfully, creating his unique sound and image with an iron will. Those who enjoyed Bill Zehme's book on Sinatra's style, *The Way You Wear Your Hat*, will welcome this look at the technique, skills and behind-the-scenes action involved in one of the longest, most successful singing careers in U.S. history. 100 photographs. (Nov.)

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From Kirkus Reviews

For all the mountains of verbiage expended on Frank Sinatras personality during his life and since his death, very little has been written about Sinatra as a singer and recording artist. Granata, who has had access to all the extant unedited tapes of Sinatra's hundreds of sessions in the studio, ably fills that gap here. Granata is project director of the massive re-release of Sinatra's Columbia recordings; his essay in *Frank Sinatra and Popular Culture* (1998) was singled out for praise in reviews of that collection, and provided a foretaste of this longer study of Sinatra as singer and musician. As he points out, Sinatra's career coincided with several important developments in the technology of sound recording, spanning nearly seven decades from the era of wax master recordings to the digitally recorded compact disc. Sinatra sang through the big band era to the post-modern post-rock era, from mono to stereo, from lacquer and shellac to magnetic tape. As a result, this erudite but lucid volume comprises not merely a history of Sinatra's career but also a crash course in the developing story of preserving music in recordings. Granata, who never lets you forget that Sinatra was a supremely gifted musician, includes interviews with dozens of the men and women who worked with him in the studio, illustrating his working methods. The result is a truly musical biography that charts the most important part of Sinatra's legacy, his singing. If you can only buy one Sinatra book after you've bought all the hundreds of records or CDs this is the one to have. -- *Copyright ©1999, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved.*

Review

"...Here's how it works: Pour yourself a drink in honor of Ol' Blue Eyes and read about Only the Lonely, then pop a disc in and let the brilliantly calibrated self-pity of 'Guess I'll Hang My Tears Out To Dry' wash over you. Or peruse Granata's re-creation of the sessions for the vivacious Ring-A-Ding Ding!, Sinatra's swinging 1961 collaboration with Johnny Mandel, then put it on and get up and snap your fingers to 'The Coffee Song.' You won't be sorry that you did." -- *Dan DeLuca - Philadelphia Inquirer & Chicago Tribune, March 5, 2000*

"...This magnificent book, loaded with photos, is a must-read for Sinatra followers, singers and potential singers, fans of the recording-studio scene and Great American Songbook enthusiasts." -- *Philip Elwood, San Francisco Examiner, Jan. 14, 2000*

"...written with such affection for the artist's abiding creative intelligence that the music itself virtually flows from the pages." -- *Lee Hildebrand, Express Online, August 2000*

"Mr. Granata's amazingly detailed accounts of the legendary records the singer made should become an essential part of any library..." -- *Lee Milazzo, The Dallas Morning News, November 12, 2000*

"Sessions with Sinatra," a new book about the singer's studio sessions, is breaking all records for sales of a celebrity book, and is the favorite gift among Hollywood insiders...this beautiful book gives readers a keen sense of each recording session." -- *Alice O'Neill - Los Angeles Features Syndicate, January 7, 2000*

Frank Sinatra lives on in his recordings and, less directly, in the books about him, a flood that has yet to abate. Unlike the Sinatra-as-celebrity titles, this one focuses on the music, examining the singer's career in the recording studio. A painstaking researcher, Granata has overseen the restoration of Sinatra's vintage recordings and recaps key recording sessions in documentary detail, showing that Sinatra supervised everything from song selection to microphone placement. He illuminates Sinatra's work by analyzing his distinctive vocal qualities and depicting his relationships with songwriters and other collaborators; above all, he extols the contributions of Sinatra's arranger of choice, Nelson Riddle. By clearly explaining technical developments from wax discs used in Sinatra's early sessions to the digital process that allowed him to collaborate with other superstars on his final project, "Duets," Granata also provides a pocket history of modern sound recording. Finally, by showing how much thought and effort Sinatra put into his recording sessions, Granata reveals how seriously - despite his breezy, devil-may-care persona - he took his craft. -- *Gordon Flagg - Booklist, November 15, 1999*

"If you grew up with Sinatra or found him along the way, this is a book you'll relish." -- *The Tampa Tribune, April 2, 2000*

Users Review

From reader reviews:

John McDole:

Have you spare time to get a day? What do you do when you have far more or little spare time? That's why, you can choose the suitable activity for spend your time. Any person spent their particular spare time to take a walk, shopping, or went to the particular Mall. How about open as well as read a book entitled Sessions with Sinatra: Frank Sinatra and the Art of Recording? Maybe it is for being best activity for you. You know beside you can spend your time with your favorite's book, you can cleverer than before. Do you agree with their opinion or you have other opinion?

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