



# **Brown Eyed Handsome Man: The Life and Hard Times of Chuck Berry**

*Bruce Pegg*

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## **Brown Eyed Handsome Man: The Life and Hard Times of Chuck Berry** Bruce Pegg

*Brown Eyed Handsome Man: The Life and Hard Times of Chuck Berry* draws on dozens of interviews done by the author himself and voluminous public records to paint a complete picture of this complicated figure. This biography uncovers the real Berry and provides us with a stirring, unvarnished portrait of both the man and the artist. Berry has long been one of pop music's most enigmatic personalities. Growing up in a middle-class, black neighborhood in St. Louis, his first major hit song, "Maybellene," was an adaptation of a white country song, wedded to a black-influenced beat. Thereafter came a string of brilliant songs celebrating teenage life in the '50s, including "School Day," "Johnny B. Goode," and "Sweet Little Sixteen." Berry's career rise was meteoric; but his fall came equally quickly, when his relations with an underage girl led to his conviction. It was not his first (nor his last) run in with the law. He scored his biggest hit in the early '70s with the comical (and some would say decidedly lightweight) song "My Ding-a-Ling." The following decades brought hundreds of nights of tours, with little attention from the recording industry. Bruce Pegg offers the definitive, though not always pretty, portrait of one of the greatest stars of rock and roll, a story that will appeal to all fans of American popular music.

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