



Kid A

Marvin Lin

Download now

Read Online →

Kid A

Marvin Lin

Kid A Marvin Lin

It was virtually impossible to ignore Radiohead's Kid A when it was released in early October 2000. But the Album was more than just a ten-track collection of songs written by five musicians from Oxfordshire, more than the weird follow-up to the critics' fashionable go-to record of choice OK Computer, more than what the Village Voice described as the biggest, warmest recorded go-fuck-yourself in recent memory. Kid A was an event. By pulling Kid A from its canonical status and grounding the album in various contexts, Marvin Lin explains not only why Radiohead suddenly adopted a new songwriting methodology, but also how properties like genre and authenticity distracted us from understanding our reactions to it. From bovine growth hormones and neurological impulses to Dada poetry and bandwidth throttling, the book articulated the politics behind both Radiohead's music and our listening experiences. But in a period of socio-political unrest, is listening to Kid A a waste of time? In and through the album, Lin seeks to answer this question by examining what Kid A does to us over time, what Kid A tells us about the future, and whether it's possible (or even desirable) to use Kid A to transcend time altogether.

Kid A Details

Date : Published November 25th 2010 by Continuum

ISBN : 9780826423436

Author : Marvin Lin

Format : Paperback 149 pages

Genre : Music, Nonfiction

 [Download Kid A ...pdf](#)

 [Read Online Kid A ...pdf](#)

Download and Read Free Online Kid A Marvin Lin

From Reader Review Kid A for online ebook

Angie says

Lin is a guy I'd like to have a beer with.

Chris Sarda says

I really liked this book, even if it did veer off into the unknown at some points.

If someone called this book pretentious they wouldn't be wrong. But for the most part it was enjoyable, interesting, though provoking and it even talked about Kid A a little bit.

Castles says

It's a nice take on Kid A, quite far from what I have in mind when listening to the album, and of course, it's mostly an academic argument meant to be served to some professor out there. Even so, it's still interesting and worth a while for Radiohead's fans and people who like philosophical books about rock and roll and serious discussions about music and its meaning.

If you liked this book you would love "Radiohead and philosophy", which is about the same in style, but much richer and discuss more albums and contains some real gems.

Joe says

I love the 33 1/3 because each one is so different and varied despite feeling a bit cheated once in a while.

While Radiohead has long been my favorite band and I have read just about anything that is about them, this was a mildly interesting take on them as artists and not really focused on the album. It does not have chapters on each song like many of these do. It deals with theories of music, art, media and I am probably going on too long here.

As long as you don't mind a small 140 page book that blabbers and is a bit pretentious, this is nice quick read to knock some mental cobwebs away and give some thought to the more academic side of music and media.

Jeremy Allan says

Lin is full of good ideas about one of the best albums of its generation. He doesn't quite deliver on the form he promises, or even some of his arguments, but he does introduce interesting theoretical ways of thinking about an album often caught in the grips of a critical mode without rigor. For this, I am grateful to the author. I do wish he had been able to further develop (and maybe come to a persuasive conclusion about) his ideas on the temporal aspect of what makes Kid A a unique aesthetic artifact. At the very least, though, he

managed to provide a nice array of quotes that mostly demonstrate that Radiohead itself is not to be blamed for much of the more fanatical response that has been associated with *Kid A*.

Jason says

The introduction to the book, focusing as it does on Lin's "time thesis," is pretentious and overly academic, in a bad way. If you can get past that, though, the rest of the book is great. Lin looks at the lyrics and the music but focuses more on the context of the most experimental number one album on record. Lin critiques the befuddlement of other music critics who tried to pin down the genre of Radiohead's genre-busting hybridization; discusses the notion of "musicking" or of music-making as a participatory activity rather than a stable, preserved thing; explains how the initially "weird" sounds of *Kid A* became "normal" as repeated listenings literally rewired the nervous systems of the listeners; and points out the paradoxically non-political politics—the sense of dislocation and overwhelm so familiar to citizens of the early 21st century—embedded in *Kid A*'s music and lyrics. And as a bonus, this book got me to listen to my Radiohead albums again, which is the real point of books like this, isn't it?

Patrick McCoy says

I have been a Radiohead fan since their second album, *The Bends*. *OK Computer* solidified their reputations as torch bearers of rock. But their follow up to that, *Kid A*, was not so well-received. Marvin Lin's excellent analysis of *Kid A* for Continuum's 33 1/3 series explores the impact of this album. I think he is right in calling it a "grower." I remember that it took me several listenings to appreciate the sonic rumblings. But as lead singer Thomas Yorke points out, it may not be melodic, but it is rhythmic—so not so inaccessible. I think this is especially apparent on a song like "National Anthem"—with its active bass line. I think all of their albums since *OK Computer* have been "growers" and this came up recently when talking with a friend about the latest *King Of Limbs*, which has grown on me with each repeated listen. Lin has divided the book into several sections with abstract conceptual titles to discuss different aspects of the album and band: *Kid A*-Aesthetics, Authenticity, Abstraction, Acclaim, Adaptation, Activism, Apocalypse, Agency, Ascension. Furthermore, I find this volume to be both a personal and generalized abstract foray into the what *Kid A* is since Lin talks about the personal importance of the album and the band and also draws somewhat tenuous connections between things like Dadaism and critical theory when discussing the album. But he also points out relative facts, like the fact that this album re-entered the Billboard Top 200 10 years after its release in 2010. I also like that he mentions Chuck Klosterman's claim from his book *Killing Yourself To Live* that *Kid A* is the soundtrack to September 11th, 2001 despite the fact it was released in 2000, with his track by track analysis. Overall, it was an enlightening look at an album that had fallen into obscurity on my iTunes. This book inspired me to give it several closer listens and as a result I gained a greater appreciation for the album. I think if that's the case, then the undertaking was well worth the effort.

Ben Winch says

I think there's a good book in here, somewhere. I think this guy's smart. I still don't think much of *Kid A* (I listened again, to fragments, while I read this, made curious by Marvin Lin's descriptions, which are inspired), but I don't need to. It's irrelevant to Lin's thesis whether I like it or not, nor is he entering into argument re its "worth"; he wants to discuss *time*, and music's relation to it, and to place *Kid A* in its time (helpful to me, to give it context – which is really all I picked this book up for, since years later, though in

fact I lived through and remember its release, I'm still puzzled by its, and Radiohead's, critical caché), and to suggest how *Kid A*, and by extension music, might *rupture* time (a theory which I'll admit has grown on me).

So there's this:

The temporal art par excellence thrives on its confrontation of the very thing which makes it art.

(Richard Klein)

Or this:

Music, therefore, acts as both a mirror and a prophecy of society: we can see where society is headed if we can hear where music is headed.

(Marvin Lyn)

And this:

There's no such thing as music. Music is not a thing but an activity, something that people do.

(Christopher Small)

Now, I'm not quite buying into these arguments, but I appreciate having them elucidated. I find Lin knowledgeable and I believe *he* comprehends his mission, even if I don't. I mean, I like the idea that *Kid A* "stretched" if not "our" ears then its listeners' ears, and that music (or for that matter any artform) can predict the future above and beyond its author's/authors' knowledge of said future. On the other hand, when he starts paraphrasing Einstein and claiming "the standardised, linear time [...] upon which we've structured modern society is in fact just one way to perceive time, if not an entirely false way altogether" I just think of Borges ("A New Refutation of Time") and wonder how such abstract theorising could possibly relate to everyday life. Okay, I get it: transcendence, the eternal. On a metaphorical level, I totally agree. And *maybe* if Lin had a bit more follow-through here I'd be applauding, but this part, for me, fails to coalesce.

Oh, and while I'm critiquing: where the hell was the copy-editor? I didn't count, but I estimate at least five fully-fledged bloopers, plus ten or twenty cringeworthy grammatical contortions. Unfortunately, the book gives the impression of a one-man show – a thesis for a university course, printed as handed in.

Not bad, not brilliant, but Marvin Lin, I think, knows his stuff. I only wish he hadn't been racing for a deadline. Still, illuminating.

Martyn says

I didn't always agree with the author, in fact I didn't always *understand* the author, but this book is well researched, beautifully written and structured and is thought provoking in the extreme.

April says

Marvin Lin's "Kid A" follows the author's personal relationship with music from transcendence to academia and back again. As he states early in the book, it is not his intention to propose one thesis and then follow it through to the end. Rather, each chapter ruminates on a different theme while progressing in a roughly linear

(and roughly academic--though I don't think he is currently an academic) fashion. The journey contains some interesting stops along the way. Some of the ruminations include:

Viewing music as an object makes it more naturally commodifiable

Music is not an object, it's an activity (it's a 'script' not a 'text')

Music physically changes the brain

Music could be a subtle kind of future prediction because it "explores much faster than material reality can, the entire range of possibilities" (a quote from Attali)

& etc.

As someone who loves to listen to music, but isn't versed in the discussions of that world, I enjoyed this book, and that's why I'm giving it 4 stars. If I wanted heavy theory, I'd go straight to the Attali myself. But as a lover of Radiohead and music in general, I definitely enjoyed the ride.

Patrick Book says

Subtitle: See How Many Big Words And Obscure Theories I Know

Sonic says

This is absolutely fantastic! This is what these 33&1/3 books are for, in my opinion. Lin wrestles with the content and the intent on one of my favorite albums by one of my favorite bands. He discusses how music can bring us transcendence! He even discusses time!

Yes, this book is excellent.

Paul Lyons says

Continuum's 33 1/3 series has always been hit or miss...having suffered through the best and worst of them over the years...yet this latest one is a real doozy...a cerebral bore that actually makes you think less of the album you're reading about...

Kid A is a pretty good album, or CD, or whatever you want to call it. There's some good tunes on there like "Everything In Its Right Place", "The National Anthem", "Optimistic" and more...yet Marvin Lin's book isn't about that. In fact, I have no idea what the book was about...even though I read every stinkin' word of it. It's not about the songwriting, nor is about the making of the album. Instead Lin circles around the album, yet never really faces it head on. He quotes a lot of people...band members for sure, yet also folks who have nothing to do with Kid A...people like media scholar Marshall McLuhan, and French philosopher Michel Foucault...then Lin discusses the nature of music, music listening, music distribution as well as sociopolitical and ecological concerns in relation to Radiohead's music and general philosophy....In other words...snore. Here's a sample:

"What's interesting to me is not when someone decides to "identify" with country or Tropicalia, but how one goes about understanding musics whose traditions and signifiers either lack basic ties to geography/social identity or function as intentional subversions of them."

Fantastic...thanks Marvin Lin, except the book is called Kid A, not What Interests Marvin Lin. I don't give a damn what interests you. You know what interests me? Staying on topic. You should try it sometime. Here's another sample of rhetoric that put me to sleep:

"While the industry has since made tentative steps to embrace digital music - licensing music to online companies, promoting digitally, streaming music, etc. - it's still hedging its bets on the use of power to control the digital revolution. In fact, the industry is now desiring to curtail piracy by working with internet service providers (ISP) to explore the possibility of protocol blocking..."

Hey! What the bloody hell does that have to do with Radiohead's cool album Kid A? The answer is simple...it doesn't. Ugh, I was afraid this would happen. A while back I read Dai Griffiths 33 1/3 book on Radiohead's OK Computer, and it was also awful, just a bunch of techno-intellectual B.S. I suppose I no longer have the patience for books like these...especially when they don't provide any new nor interesting information, and do nothing to enhance the listening experience...

Usually, after I finish reading a good 33 1/3 book, I sit back and listen to the album that the book is about. When the book is good, the album-listening experience afterward can be wonderful...almost as if you're hearing the music for the first time. Well, I listened to Kid A once again, after having experienced the 147 painfully slow pages of Marvin Lin. I listened to the entire album, and yes...some lyrics stood out, because they were mentioned in the book. Yet for the most part, I thought to myself..."Nope, this Kid A book has nothing to do with the Kid A album...it completely missed the mark." Thank you Marvin Lin, yet I would like my time back now...as well as my album. I will simply enjoy it on my own, without any of your intellectual filler getting in the way...

Rob says

There's a moment early on in this short album-specific treatise when it seems like we're going to slip into Academic Verbosity City, which is not a cool rock n' roll place to hang out - even if you're dissecting the multifaceted attributes of a cerebral game-changing album - 'cause the grass is brown and the girls are, well, somewhere else.

"My approach will instead be ruminative rather than scientific, lateral rather than direct. And if the distinction between music as a product and music as an activity allows us to conceptualize Kid A as a temporal activity, allowing us to assess the musical experience as also an experience of time, then perhaps we can see how shifting taste is as important as the sounds themselves, how time itself is music's biggest enemy, how the desire for transcendence can in fact be a socio-political impulse rather than the pointless, mystified experience to which we often ascribe it."

And then there's this:

"Entering the studio without a clear aesthetic purpose is commendable, but to act on impulses of both depersonalization and renewal for an astonishing 18-month recording session nearly justifies the deification of Radiohead."

Cue sinking heart, right in time to descending glissando that famously kicks off Everything In Its Right Place...

But hang on there. Young Marvin Lin (now that could be a cool musician name, though he might not think so - and by the way, I only call him "young" here because he makes a big deal out of it in the intro, not to

belittle him or his views or his words) despite the obvious traction of his ivory tower years, is working and feeling here, not just daisy-chaining concepts. And he is a musician too, albeit a bookish one. And he loves talking about music, which means that ultimately the sentence quoted above that insinuates that "we" are wont to belittle "transcendence" as a "pointless, mystified experience" goes back into the ugly little loan box it squirmed from, and out comes some much more appealing stuff. Which helps "us" to start imagining that maybe Lin was being tongue-in-cheek with the deification thing too.

To be honest, he carries on in more or less the same zone as far as tone goes (although it doesn't feel quite as oppressive), so the rollicking rock bio crowd should probably look elsewhere: this one expects you to know your aesthetics from your zeitgeists and hybridisations.

"Using an enormous platform from which to disseminate new ideas, new sounds, and new approaches, Radiohead didn't merely evince an already established aesthetic; they mandated a fresh composition built on dexterous hybridization, a cobbled-together approach that was, in retrospect, more culturally fitting than the styles they so blatantly appropriated. Kid A wasn't about weirding out their fanbase; Kid A was about change."

But there's plenty of information and thought here too, touching on a lot of the things that Radiohead came to symbolise in the wake of OK Computer, the nexus between arty and intellectual and "principled" and instinctive. Lin does indeed get what their journey has been about, even if his is a rather dry and echo-y way to share it with us. He also comments pertinently on the quantum leap that their albums from The Bends onwards made after the rather derivative bower-bird confections on Pablo Honey (in which they even essentially rip off Neil Young and a Big Country album track together on 'Prove Yourself'). Already more or less written off as likely one hit wonders in 1994, they started to search, using what they had learned as mere springboards for steps into the increasingly unknown.

Kid A was the first bold leap, pushing away all the signature elements that their music had been known for (in particular Jonny Greenwood's feted guitar work). But it was an album that you had to keep going back to listen to, whose disappointment soon turned to a form of wonder. I remember listening to How To Disappear Completely on headphones on a 5am train to the airport. It was truly spooky, chilling me deeply, sparking on my nerve endings and making me want more. And now, 15 years later, I'm still hearing things in the album, yet it feels organic. The way Lin captures this complementary quality in the album is indeed excellent, noting how many critics and outlets were forced to backtrack on their initial dismissals as the album grew on (and perhaps in) them.

I guess I would have preferred this book to be a little more like its subject: elusive, touching, surprising, dreamy, maybe even a little confused. Instead our host has been involved - both in the academic world and as a well-known music critic - in the peddling of instinct as (quasi-)certainties, and his approach seems to encompass several different kinds of pigeonholing. That said, this is a tough gig, because this album has inspired more than a decade of in-depth comment. It's a good thing that Lin really is thorough and that his arguments are incisive enough to keep us there with him. And, best of all, this book also allows us to spend a good few hours in the eye of a timeless musical storm that is worth going back to plenty.

Nathan says

In the first few chapters, Lin had me going, believing that this was actually going to be one of the stronger books in the collection. I turned page upon page, interested to see his correlation between transcendence, Radiohead, and music. Sadly, he seems to have lost his own focus about mid-book, instead choosing to veer in the direction of musical criticism, but in the philosophical fashion. It read like a poorly written college

textbook, and alienated my feelings towards the beginning. I ended this book knowing little more about Radiohead and Kid A than I did going into it, which is a shame.
