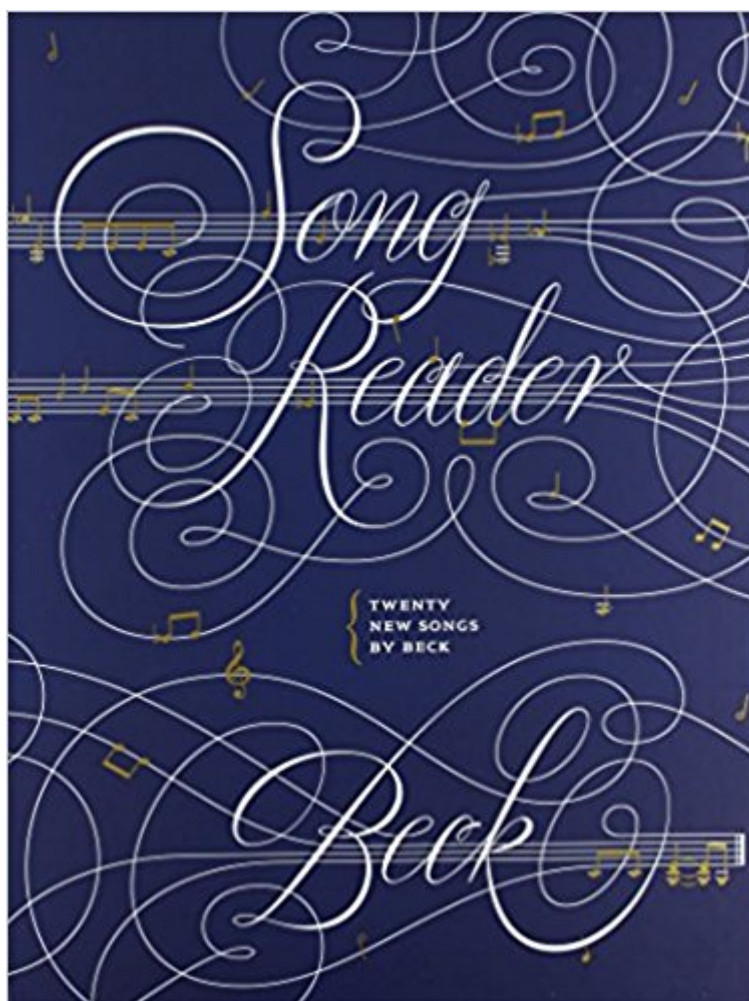


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# Song Reader



## Synopsis

In the wake of *Modern Guilt* and *The Information*, Beck's latest project comes in an almost-forgotten form; twenty songs existing only as individual pieces of sheet music, never before released or recorded. Complete with full-color, heyday-of-home-play-inspired art for each song and a lavishly produced hardcover carrying case, *Song Reader* is an experiment in what an album can be at the end of 2012; an alternative that enlists the listener in the tone of every track, and that's as visually absorbing as a dozen gatefold LPs put together. The songs here are as unfailingly exciting as you'd expect from their author, but if you want to hear "Do We? We Do, or Don't Act Like Your Heart Isn't Hard" bringing them to life depends on you. Featuring original art from Marcel Dzama (who created the imagery for Beck's acclaimed *Guero*), Leanne Shapton, Josh Cochran, Jessica Hische, and many more. Including an introduction by Jody Rosen (*Slate*, the *New York Times*) and a preface by Beck. Readers (and select musicians' renditions of the songs) will be featured on the McSweeney's website.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"[A] visually stunning and captivating album; For anyone with an ear (or an eye) for music, this album is the perfect opportunity to abandon your seats, join the stage and become a participant rather than just a spectator." Zink Magazine "Visually sumptuous; A bold artistic

challenge and a madcap creative gauntlet in a pop-culture landscape that favors instant gratification."#151;American Way

Since 1993, Beck has released eleven albums; two of them, *Odelay* and *Sea Change*, were included on Rolling Stone's list of the 500 Greatest Albums of All Time. As a producer and collaborator, he's worked with dozens of other artists, including Charlotte Gainsbourg and Thurston Moore. He lives in Los Angeles.

I'm a musician so its no surprise that I like to listen to music. However, while I like writing my own music, its rare that I am motivated to cover someone else's tunes. That's just how I am. But when I heard about *Song Reader*, my attitude changed. I just received my copy of *Song Reader* and I'm excited about it. Here's a collection of songs by a popular artist that noone has heard before. With nothing to compare it to, it's easy to understand why there have been so many interpretations submitted already, from musicians of all skill levels and ages. The contents of this 'album' are on high quality paper with color artwork. I thought this was going to be more like a song book, but its a collection of individual sheet music, and its well done. 20 songs, plus a variety of 'bonus' material filling out the sheets, will keep you busy. I haven't read sheet music in a long time. While I may not be able to play some of the songs, at a minimum I can read the chords. If you get stuck, its just a matter of time before readers release a SoundCloud or YouTube track to kickstart your musical process. I gave this four stars because I've had tons of fun learning and recording these songs. While I can't say I like all the songs, I feel like I got my money's worth, both in the physical package and overall entertainment value. I'm not sure what non-musicians would 'do' with *Song Reader*, perhaps other reviewers will comment on what led them to purchase it. I'm not a collector of 'fan' material so I don't know if this would be interesting to a long-time Beck fan or not. It will be interesting to see how long the *Song Reader* buzz lasts. You can listen to or submit your Youtube or SoundCloud recordings of songs at the official site:[...] However, [songreader.net](http://songreader.net) does not yet give you any means to filter through the lot of good and not-so-good covers of the material. I recommend you also check out this group on SoundCloud where you can easily pick out well-played tracks and listen to the cream of the crop:[...]

Leave it to Beck to deliver his musical versatility in a format once loved by hundreds of millions, now virtually (heh) abandoned: sheet music. All twenty songs are charmingly rendered in easy-to-follow notes/chords/lyrics, and adorned by many different visual artists with a multitude of mostly retro

covers. There are many back-of-the-songsheet oddities (ads, fictional songs and "songs"), as you would expect from Beck + McSweeney's. Even if you are not a musician, this is a really cool object to hold and view and consider. The songs? Mostly very good. A few are difficult (the one in 7/4, for example), a few are a little uninspired, but about half of them are REALLY good. Beck has reigned in his impulse towards excessively surreal lyrics, for the most part, in an attempt to make them more approachable. You can find online YouTube versions, but most of the interpretations I've checked out are not very impressive. If you are a musician, try them out yourself. More fun than a barrel of sea monkeys!

While I am really really enjoying this collection for the sake of the songs it contains, the packaging is almost the best part: every song has gorgeous cover art and a hilarious fake ad on the back that is extremely true to the vintage sheet music which inspired the album. The arrangements are pretty straightforward and it is a treat to get to play through "unreleased" Beck songs, plus the actual physical product is so much fun!

This book was for my son who is in his forties now. He loved it. Sometimes he carries it around with him to peruse it when he is waiting somewhere. I was hoping he could use the sheet music for his guitar, and he probably will.

Beck has written these songs to mirror the sheet music that, in days yore, everyone went to music stores to buy and then played on piano, guitar or ukelele. Each song has its own sheet music, complete with fabricated ads on the back page. It's an adventure.

Bought this as a Christmas present for my 15yo son who is an advanced-intermediate pianist. He LOVES it. Months later he is still exploring the songs.

I don't play music but love Beck and plan on framing these pieces. Incredible artwork by themselves and even better when musicians come over.

This was a gift for a musically inclined friend and he loved it. Each song is it's own individual sheet music. The art is terrific and in some cases very humorous. Even if you're not a fan of Beck anyone who plays piano would love this.

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