



## Twisting My Melon

*Shaun Ryder*

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Shaun Ryder has lived a life of glorious highs and desolate lows. As lead singer of the Happy Mondays, he turned Manchester into Madchester, combining all the excesses of a true rock'n'roll star with music and lyrics that led impresario Tony Wilson to describe him as 'the greatest poet since Yeats'. The young scally who left school at fifteen without ever learning his alphabet had come a very long way indeed. Huge chart success and a Glastonbury headline slot followed, plus numerous arrests and world tours - then Shaun's drug addiction reached its height, Factory Records was brought to its knees and the Mondays split.

But was this the end for Shaun Ryder? Not by a long shot. Two years later he was back with new band Black Grape, and their groundbreaking debut album topped the charts in possibly the greatest comeback of all time. Even his continuing struggle with drugs did not stem the tide of critically acclaimed tracks and collaborations as he went on to prove his musical genius time and again. And then there was the jungle...

Rock'n'roll legend, reality TV star, drug-dealer, poet, film star, heroin addict, son, brother, father, husband, foul-mouthed anthropologist and straight-talking survivor, Shaun Ryder has been a cultural icon and a 24-hour party person for a quarter of a century. Told in his own words, this is his story.

## Twisting My Melon Details

Date : Published September 15th 2011 by Bantam Press

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Author : Shaun Ryder

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## From Reader Review Twisting My Melon for online ebook

### Nathan says

For me this book lies very close to my heart. As a teenager I grew up with the Mondays and teh Stone Roses etc It is a funny insight into the man and the band, How they formed together as kids and couldn't read or write let alone play music.

They way he talks about his drug habits though are quite disturbing, he talks about smack and crack cocaine like it was lemsip. There are lots of funny stories and old pictures in the book and I would really recommend it.

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### Joanne says

Loved this book, a brilliant read! Very entertaining, and I would definitely recommend it! Particularly if you were in your teens or early twenties in the late 80s and early 90s and remember the whole Madchester Rave On thing! I was 16 and at Eccles College when the Happy Mondays first reached the UK top 40 at the end of 1989 and appeared on Top of the Pops, on the same show as the Stone Roses, so I remember it well! I believe he has another autobiography, What Planet Am I On? so I will have to look for that one!

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### Jonesy\_laaa says

3.5 stars

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### Twan says

Buzzin'

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### Stephen says

A so so book that couldn't really catch my attention for long periods, three stars is probably kind as it's not a good read overall and 5/10 is a more suitable rating. The first 150 pages are more about the scummy things that he and his friends got up to than the actual music or the band. Taking drugs (which ok was always going to be there) and robbing people and credit cards etc. Unless you grew up with the madchester seen it will probably disappoint and bore you.

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### Steven Palmer says

As expected, an anarchic jaunt through the rise and fall and partial rise again of those cheeky Mancunian

caners. The book pulls no punches and it is no surprise to hear of Shaun's early criminal exploits and growing fondness for illegal substances. While hardly a beacon of outstanding literature, there are plenty of laughs as we follow Shaun and the boys on their adventures and misadventures in the music business. A few eye opening moments as he reveals some of the truth behind the fractures.

A definite read for anyone who came through the Madchester era

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### **John Berrill says**

Excellent autobiography both funny and sad in places.

Sean comes across as both funny and a lot more intelligent than people might expect

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### **Louise says**

I dont read a huge amount of biographies, but when I do, I do it because I want to know a bit more about that person..

I dont feel I know anymore about Shaun Ryder than I did before (well, kids and marriage maybe) reading this.

I know quite a bit about what drugs he took, and what drugs he sold, and how badly the film 24 hour party people got most of his story... but there was too much foggy times due to drugs, which in fairness is just him being honest.

For anyone who came on board the Ryder wagon with I'm a celebrity, they will be very disappointed as that hardly gets a mention.

shame ,was hoping for abit more from this.

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### **Gary Donnelly says**

You're just not rock n roll until you've lived rock n roll. And the legend that is Shaun is pure rock and roll. Loved it.

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### **Samuel Tyler says**

The best autobiographies are warts and all, but dirty needles, stealing and mashed lyrics are perhaps a little too much. 'Twisting My Melon' is the autobiography of Happy Mondays and Black Grape front man Shaun Ryder and is told in his eclectic style. It is good to hear an authentic voice when reading a biog, but does this work when that voice is crazy as Ryder – yes it does. It is the honesty and slightly misshapen nature of this book that makes it a good read. Ryder will not win any prizes for his writing style, but you feel his presence on every page, be it shooting down a daft story about himself, or telling an even worse one you never even knew.

Many artists will try to use their autobiographies to airbrush their past and makes themselves sound better

than they are – but how many divorces can you have before something must be at least a little wrong with you? Ryder does not do this and tells it how it was, his mistakes and his successes. He is prone to defending his corner, which makes sense, so you may want to read alternative biogs by other people he mentions to see more than one side of the story.

I cannot say that I came out of reading 'Twisting' particularly liking Ryder; his proclamations of petty thievery and drug dealing in particular should never sit easily, but that is part of the book's charm. I learnt a lot about an alternative life style in this book and you cannot say that of many autobiographies. Readers may finish the book angry, but any sense of emotion invoked by a book is a good thing.

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### **Nigeyb says**

'Twisting My Melon' was published in 2011, shortly after Shaun had appeared on "I'm A Celebrity Get Me Out Of Here" (something I was unaware of). I like Shaun and his music, and so when I saw it in the library I got it out to read on a whim, and I'm glad I did.

How Shaun Ryder is still even vaguely functional is a miracle. He must be cut from the same cloth as Keith Richards, or Lemmy, and would probably survive a nuclear explosion. As you might imagine, he has spent most of his adult life as a functioning addict and has taken virtually every drug going. What's great about 'Twisting My Melon' is that, whilst he's frank and matter of fact, he doesn't over egg it and makes it all sound pretty sordid. Which it is.

When he wrote this book he was clearly in a better place than for many years. I hope that still applies. He really was a maverick alchemist who was the catalyst for some era defining music, and that he managed it with both the Happy Mondays, and again with Black Grape, shows that his talent and instincts were generally spot on.

Although there is nothing particularly surprising in 'Twisting My Melon' it's still a great read. Shaun Ryder has got a hell of life to recount and, if you like his music and are interested in him as a person, then it's got lots of great insights.

At his best Shaun Ryder is a surreal, profane, joyous, eclectic poet whose bizarre rhymes somehow marry popular culture, drug and literary references, odd slogans, and doggerel with hook laden pop songs. That he was rarely straight during his most productive years is nothing short of a miracle.

4/5

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### **Bernadette Hehir says**

Loved this book and couldn't put it down. Huge fan of Shaun and the Happy Monday's and Shaun has a great story to tell.

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## **Philip Smith says**

Shaun doesn't really have a great writing style (as could be expected). In many ways it's like reading a story narrated by my dad ("I got a house on Market Street in Salford, just off Bradford Road, behind the Pig and Bucket pub" kind of stuff.) He also takes for granted that the reader is familiar with some of the more well-known anecdotes, adding his own clarifications to the legends. so if you've not already heard them, you're left guessing. But otherwise it's a decent book for anyone interested in Madchester, the Mondays or indie in general.

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## **Mary says**

Now, I knew before I borrowed this book from the library the risk I was taking. They say you should never meet your idols. Though no-one in the right mind would cast Ryder as an idol.) I would add to that, be very wary of the memoirs of those characters you find interesting. Hearing someone tell their story always alters your perception of them. Sometimes, as with Mandelson, you are pleasantly surprised. Others and I think a little more often they disappoint. That's probably because they're human and I've built up an image I like to think of them as in my mind. The worst was Gordon Ramsay, I read his autobio and liked him a lot less once I'd finished. I then read Marco Pierre White's and was amazed how he'd managed to write a book about himself, I'd read it and I knew very little more afterwards. he managed to hide his true self behind words.

Now Shaun Ryder, the local legend I grew up hearing about. Star of many a scandalised newspaper article. Centre of many urban myths. The man who seemed to epitomise the Madchester dream. I knew very little past the facade that had been erected around him and his bands. I didn't watch I'm a Celebrity.

I knew reading this would give the legend back the bog standard humanity. The question was would I like what I read? In truth, it didn't give me huge feelings either way. He came across as pretty selfish at times but not too badly. It would be nice to read an account from someone else in the band. He's not too complimentary about most of them. Without ever seeming to see that he must have been hell to work and tour with.

He tells his story pretty light heartedly. The scrapes he gets himself into are far from funny but the way he tells it you can't help but see an amusing side. It's written well by him and his ghost writer in that you can fly through it. This isn't a book to ponder over and weigh up the morals. That would be painful. Pick it up, go along for the ride and enjoy it. Just be glad he can remember as much as he has!

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## **Jim says**

There are people in life who makes things happen. There are people who have things happen to them. And there are people sitting around wondering "What happened"? Welcome Shaun Ryder, who represents all three in one sitting. Unfortunately, judging by this book, Shaun is stuck more in the "What happened?" camp due to the drugs and booze he's consumed over the years. He either can't remember stuff or chooses not to. A lot of the book feels as if it's been pieced together from other people's recollections and not necessarily the main players either. If you're looking for tales of how he and Bez painted various towns red over the years, for example, forget it. On the evidence presented here, he can't even really recall who Bez is. If you add up the references to his partner in crime it totals all of about, oh, two and a half pages. So Ryder can't remember

or doesn't want to, and I suspect it might be the latter, although he is quite open that he brought Bez into his band to take attention off himself. Maybe it was a job too well done in the end.

This is quite an engaging book, but it's not deep and meaningful and sheds no great light into a rock star's life. It gives more insight into the life of a scally growing up in Salford, but that's quite interesting. The music career is a blur, and any self-examination is shoe-horned into the final chapter, probably demanded by the publisher. You end up thinking there must be more to it than what is printed here, but clearly Shaun is not the man to ask.

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