

The Vinyl Countdown

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TRAVIS ELBOROUGH

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Vinyl may be final nail in CD's Coffin ran the headline in a Wired magazine article in October 2007. Ever since the arrival of the long-playing record in 1948, the album has acted as the soundtrack to our lives. Record collections--even on a CD or iPod--are personal treasures, revealing our loves, errors in judgment, and lapses in taste. In The Long Player Goodbye, Travis Elborough explores the way in which particular albums are deeply embedded in cultural history, revered as works of art, or so ubiquitous as to be almost invisible. While music itself has experienced several different movements over the past sixty years, the album has remained a constant. But the way we listen to music has changed in the last ten years. In the age of the iPod, when we can download an infinite number of single tracks instantaneously, does the concept of the album mean anything? Elborough moves chronologically through relevant periods, letting the story of the LP, certain genres, youth cults, and topics like sleeve designs, shops, drugs, and education unfurl as he goes along. The Long Player Goodbye is a brilliant piece of popular history, an idiosyncratic tribute to a much-loved part of our shared consciousness, and a celebration of the joy of records.

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