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Mind Over Music
MUSICOPHILIA: TALES OF MUSIC AND THE BRAIN by Oliver Sacks. KNOFF, 2007. HARDCOVER, \$26.

Music is not necessary for human life to exist. It has no symbols, images or representations. And yet, for all music's apparent uselessness, it makes humanity what it is; we are a species of musicophiliacs. That is, we love music for what it does to us emotionally, spiritually, physiologically. But what interests Oliver Sacks here, as it interested him in *The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat* and earlier works, is the many variations in how individual brains process internal and external stimuli (this time the stimulus is music). Time and time again in *Musicophilia*, Sacks reaches the same conclusion: Music seems to transcend the brain and enrich and enhance our concrete sense of self.

As is particular with Sacks, he focuses on case studies, usually patients he has had over the many years he has held private practice. Most have had lifelong maladies, such as John S., a young man with Tourette's syndrome whose uncontrollable tics are tempered by "certain kinds of music heavy with rhythm," while others have had split-second disasters affect their brains in profoundly curious ways. Tony Cicoria, a surgeon with no musical inclinations, is transformed into an obsessive composer and piano prodigy after he is struck by lightning. But perhaps the most intriguing and bittersweet case Sacks describes is that of Clive Wearing, who, due to an attack of herpes encephalitis, has anterograde and retrograde amnesia; he remembers very little of his past and can make no new memories. Clive has an attention span of about 15 seconds and yet, almost miraculously, he can sing, conduct small orchestras, play his piano. Through music, Clive finds a present light to grasp onto from the brink of darkness. Sacks' tome, textbookish in its breadth, lends credence to what T.S. Eliot writes in *The Four Quartets*: "You are the music / While the music lasts." — *Chuck Adams*

Milton's Wet Dream
THE SHOCK DOCTRINE: THE RISE OF DISASTER CAPITALISM by Naomi Klein. METROPOLITAN BOOKS, 2007. HARDCOVER, \$28.

It seems at once absurd and absurdly low, the price of this new book by journalist Naomi Klein (*No Logo*). Americans

aren't used to spending \$28 for a book thanks to the curious lag in hardcover prices compared to inflation. And it's so painful to read Klein's book, a narrative tying torture to economic theory, that even the hopeful final chapter barely rouses a flickering flame of optimism. Who would pay for *that*? Yet for her meticulously researched tome, for her clarity in explaining just how Milton Friedman and his minions came to dominate world economic discourse by throwing their lot in with the ilk of Augusto Pinochet, whatever recompense she earns can't be enough.



It's a global view, her discussion of shock economics, and its theory is clear: Friedman's Chicago School disciples believe free-market capitalism is the answer to every problem. But many governments try to regulate or soften free markets. In order to remake a state for unrestrained free-market capitalism, the people must be less able to resist. And that happens after a crisis — say, Pinochet's coup in 1973 (and other U.S.-funded dirty wars in Latin America) or, obviously, Sept. 11. Klein links the sudden rise in fortunes of rapacious transnational companies (Jeremy Scahill's *Blackwater* would be a great companion read) to their ability to capitalize on disasters. The Friedmanites don't cause the disasters; they're just incredibly well-prepared to take advantage of chaos. But, Klein notes, people and governments in Latin America are fighting back — and so can we. Friedman would *hate* it if you used the "socialized" library services to check out *Shock Doctrine* or if you banded with friends to purchase it. Small gestures indeed, but another economist, E.F. Schumacher, reminds us that small is beautiful. Or perhaps powerful: Friedman stood only 5 feet tall. — *Suzi Steffen*

Attention Must Be Paid
HOLD EVERYTHING DEAR: DISPATCHES ON SURVIVAL AND RESISTANCE by John Berger. PANTHEON,

2007. HARDCOVER, \$21.



This slim volume of essays and elliptically crafted thoughts alternately provokes and reassures. Berger, most famous for *Ways of Seeing*, addresses with his characteristic power everything from September 11 to the reasons suicide bombers might choose that path. I found it challenging to stay with him as he bounced between the 2005 bombings in London and the outrageous police state occasioned in Britain by the War on Terror, but his thoughtful meditations on the despair of the poor (especially Palestinians) give power to a narrative Americans rarely get to hear.

One of the reasons Berger seems so provocative, clearly, is that much of the

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