

Endless Endless

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Synopsis

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An inspiring, revelatory exploration of the genesis and impact of the fabled Elephant 6 collective and the baffling exodus of its larger-than-life luminary, Neutral Milk Hotel frontman Jeff Mangum

Years after its release, Neutral Milk Hotel's *In the Aeroplane Over the Sea* remains one of the most beloved and best-selling albums in all of indie music, hailed as a classic so influential as to be almost synonymous with the ongoing vinyl revival. But despite its outsized impact, a question looms even larger: why did frontman Jeff Mangum, just as the record propelled him to the brink of music superstardom, choose instead to disappear entirely? The mystery has perplexed listeners for decades—until now.

In barely two years, Neutral Milk Hotel rose from house show obscurity in Athens, Georgia, to widespread hype and critical acclaim, selling out rock clubs across the country and gracing the tops of numerous year-end best-of lists. But just as his band was reaching the escape velocity necessary to ascend from indie rock success to mainstream superstar, Mangum hit the eject button. After the 1998 release of *Aeroplane* and a worldwide tour to support it, Mangum stopped playing shows, releasing new music, or even doing interviews. He never explained why, not even to his friends or colleagues, but thanks to both the strength of *Aeroplane* and his vexing decision to walk away from rock stardom, Neutral Milk Hotel's impact only grew from there. In *Endless Endless*, Adam Clair finds the answer to indie rock's biggest mystery, which turns out to be much more complicated and fascinating than the myths or popular speculation would have you believe.

To understand Mangum and Neutral Milk Hotel and *Aeroplane* requires a deep dive into the unconventional inner workings of the mercurial collective from which they emerged, the legendary Elephant 6 Recording Company. *Endless Endless* details the rise and fall of this radical music scene, the lives and relationships of the artists involved and the colossal

influence that still radiates from it, centered around the collective's accidental figurehead, one of the most idolized and misunderstood artists in the world, presenting Mangum and his collaborators in vividly human detail and shining a light into the secret world of these extraordinary and aggressively bizarre artists.

In this deeply researched account, *Endless Endless* examines not just how the Elephant 6 came to be so much more than the sum of its parts, but how community can foster art—and how art can build community.

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