

# backbeat

and other chaotic rhythms



## Billy Bragg: The Joe I Knew

### Redefining Punk

Like most of us forty somethings these days, I am gradually rebuilding my record collection. I picked up the Pogues, Elvis (Costello, not Presley), the Talking Heads, and, of course, the Clash, when the salesperson says, "I guess you're really into punk." I never thought so at the time. I wasn't into the Sex Pistols or the Ramones. I didn't have a mohawk or studs either. But, as I reflect more and more about the Punk era, I've come to realize that a lot of the Punk ideals about individual expression and non-conformity hit pretty close to home. In rediscovering my Punk roots, I rediscovered Joe Strummer and have been spreading the word ever since.

— Robert Hoselton

**Joe Strummer and the Mescaleros:  
Streetcore (2002)  
Global a Go-Go (2001)  
Rock Art and X-Ray Style (1999)**

Bragg excerpt from BBC News 2002

The Clash were the greatest rebel rock band of all time. Their commitment to making political pop culture was the defining mark of the British punk movement.

They were also a self-mythologising, style-obsessed mass of contradictions. That's why they were called The Clash. They wanted desperately to be rock stars but they also wanted to make a difference.

While Paul Simon flashed his glorious cheekbones and Mick Jones threw guitar hero shapes, no-one struggled more manfully with the gap between the myth and the reality of being a spokesman for your generation than Joe Strummer.

All musicians start out with ideals but hanging on to them in the face of media scrutiny takes real integrity. Tougher still is to live up to the ideals of your dedicated fans. And if he didn't change the world he changed our perception of it. He crossed the dynamism of punk with Johnny Too Bad and started that punky-reggae party.

He drew us, thousands strong, onto the streets of London in support of Rock Against Racism. He sent us into the garage to crank up our electric

guitars. He made me cut my hair. The ideals that still motivate me as an artist come not from punk, not even from the Clash, but from Joe Strummer.

The first wave of punk bands had a rather ambivalent attitude to the politics of late 70s Britain. The Sex Pistols, The Damned, the Stranglers, none of them, not even the Jam, came close to the radicalism that informed everything the Clash did and said. The US punk scene was even less committed. The Ramones, Talking Heads, Heartbreakers and Blondie all were devoid of politics. Were it not for the Clash, punk would have been just a sneer, a safety pin and a pair of bondage trousers.

He was the White Man in Hammersmith Palais who influenced the Two Tone Movement. He kept it real and inspired the Manic Street Preachers. And he never lost our respect. His recent albums with the Mescaleros found him on inspiring form once again, mixing and matching styles and rhythms in celebration of multi-culturalism.

One of the hardest things to do in rock'n'roll is walk it like you talk it. Joe Strummer epitomised that ideal and I will miss him greatly.

## BOOK REVIEW:

## The Wizard of Ads by Roy H. Williams

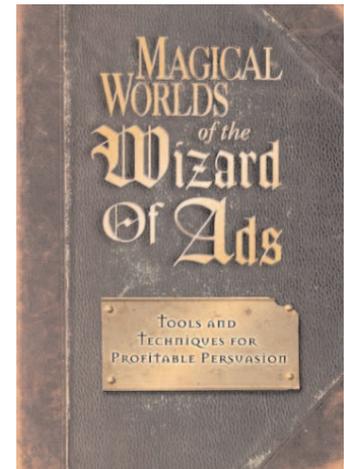
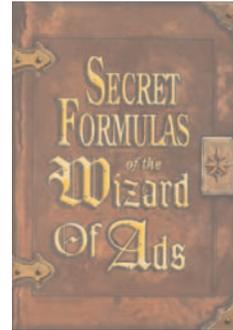
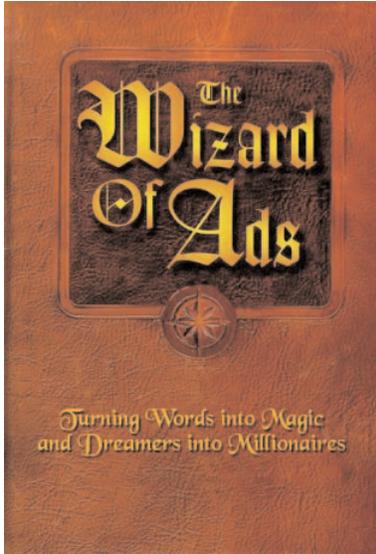
Ok, even I admit that I hide the cover when I'm reading (and re-reading) these books out in public. ...And, the occasional radio commercial you might hear about "The Wizard of Ads" lecture series is a little scary in the cultish, Waco, Texas/it's only koolaid sort of way. But...

I'm often asked by clients to speak about branding, or effective campaigning, or the value of advertising on new product development. I've learned in the past few years that one of the most effective tools that I can bring to the table for the client is the "Wizard of Ads" series of books. In fact, to date, I've given about twenty of these books to clients only to have them come back within a matter of weeks to increase (and in one case triple) their visual communications budgets with us.

So, what is it about these books? Once you overcome the design of the book and accept the approach as a playful hook (did I mention that the inside pages have the torn and burnt look you would expect from your basic wizard's spellbook?), then you begin to see the real value of the series. Each book is organized into approximately 200 pages of marketing theory ranging from how the human brain physiologically receives and interprets messaging through sight and sound to how to place radio ads to the study of effective ad copy.

If I were teaching a course in marketing, branding, ad copy, or design, these books would form the basis of study.

Each topic is approached in an anecdotal way over only 2 pages. Spartan? Maybe. But, the great thing about it is the subtlety that he uses to keep hammering the topic into your brain from different perspectives. Like the *Tao te Ching*, or the *Art of War*, the key is to read a page and reflect. Each topic delivers something that you should know to succeed and one thing that's interesting to know. The temptation, of course, is the urge to read all three books



back to back (and you will). The series is highly captivating and will restore your enthusiasm to your brand development. You'll find that you go back to the books again and again.

Williams is the president of an advertising firm in Texas who made his name in the development of highly successful retail campaigns. His approach and enthusiasm is highly contagious.

I think what makes him so appealing is his ability to bring divergent areas into a focused insight. For example, to be a good ad copywriter? Study poetry. For Williams, the unexpected interplay of words is the poet's domain. And, it is precisely that twist that allows the brain to recall your brand.

The next time you're in a bookstore, slip into the Marketing section and grab *Secret Formulas of the Wizard of Ads*. Cover it up with a magazine and proceed to the counter when its not terribly busy. You won't have spent a better \$25 for your business this year.

— Robert Hoselton

## What is Branding?



*I know, I know... more Roy Williams. I've taken the following excerpt about Branding from Secret Formulas of the Wizard of Ads. I think you'll quickly see what I mean about his style. And, with John in sunny Cuba, and Lisa bugging me to get another Backbeat done, I thought this was a pretty effective use of space.*

— Bob

“Branding” is the hot new buzzword favored by smooth-talking ad people who always seem to speak as though it were something new and mysterious. I have yet to find even one of these suits who has the slightest idea of how branding is accomplished in the mind.

Branding is far from new. Ivan Pavlov won a Nobel prize for his research into branding in 1904. Remember the story? Day after day, Pavlov would ring a bell as he rubbed meat paste onto the tongue of a dog. The dog soon began to associate the taste of the meat with the sound of the bell until salivation became the dog's conditioned response. In psychological terms, this is implanting an associative memory — in other words, “branding,” in its full glory.

There are three keys to implanting an associative memory into the mind of your customer. The first key is consistency. Pavlov never offered food without ringing the bell, and he never rang the bell without offering food. The second key is frequency, meaning that Pavlov did it day after day after day.

The third key, anchoring, is the tricky one. When an associative memory is being implanted, the new and unknown element (the bell) has to be associated with a memory that's already anchored

in the mind (the taste of meat). Frequency and consistency create branding only when your message is tied to an established emotional anchor. Pavlov's branding campaign was anchored to the dog's love for the taste of meat. If the dog did not love meat, the frequent and consistent ringing of the bell would have produced no response other than to irritate the dog.

If I say, “It's a Norman Rockwell kind of restaurant,” you immediately think of the place as being cozy, happy, warm, innocent, and kid-friendly, right? Your assumptions about the restaurant are anchored to your feelings about the art of Norman Rockwell. If I frequently and consistently cause you to associate the restaurant with Norman Rockwell, I am implanting an associative memory into your mind — branding.

The buying public is your dog. If you desire a specific response from it, you must tie your identity to an emotional anchor that's already known to elicit the desired response. If you make such an association consistently and frequently, branding will occur. But don't expect too much too soon. It takes a lot of repetition to train the dog to salivate at the sound of your name.

Do you have the patience, Pavlov?

## What would it sound like?



It's always difficult to express what your vision is for your next campaign. Often the client knows “what I don't like”, but has trouble voicing what it is they do like. Without clear direction, a lot of time and money can be wasted.

This makes clear, and effective communication paramount to a studio developing visual concepts. We're always on the lookout for new ways of helping clients and designers create a common vision.

One of the most effective tools that we've

come across is to ask the client to express their vision in terms of music. Because of strong musical archetypes, we tend to share certain looks and feels about different music. Celine and Britney produce a completely different approach than the Sex Pistols.

The next time you're launching a new product, ask yourself, “What would it sound like?” Is your next campaign Miles Davis, Robert Johnson, or David Bowie (uh, the Ziggy or Reality tour?). It might help you avoid a lot of confusion.

## What's your type?

Normally page 4 is designated for an article that will help our clients understand an important detail in the life of the graphic designer. Each designer has an area that particularly appeals to them. For some, it's paper; for others it's colour. However, every designer will agree that fonts represent the core to delivering the client message. Each font has a character and maturity. It may sound like a "soft, touchy feely thing", but font selection has a huge impact on the impact of a finished piece. If you don't think so, just imagine a lawyer's letterhead with the font "Lemonade" for the logotype. Uh, pass.

One set of unsung heroes in the graphic design business are the typeface designers — you want to meet weird group, yikes. How about Eric Gill who designed Gill Sans for the London underground. While designing typefaces, and rendering erotic illustrations, he would prance around his studio in the nude! Nonetheless, some of the most emotionally attached designers are font designers. In the graphic design business, it's considered quite rude to alter a font in any way — sort of like pouring a bottle of ketchup on your steak tartar at the Ritz.

Recently, we found a short article about typefaces from Unisource. We thought that you might (enjoy probably isn't the right word), uh, understand your designer a bit better the next time they go on (and on) about the psychological impact and amazing appropriateness of their font selection.

There are 12 ways to describe the serifs on a typeface, three ways to describe its width and seven ways to describe its weight. It's all very subtle stuff, but it does make a difference.

The most basic way to describe a typeface is as a *sans serif* or a *serif*. Serifs are the little "feet" that extend off letters in many fonts. They have

their origins in the chisel marks that were made when letterforms were carved in stone.

Groups of typefaces are classified on a timeline, starting in 1490 with Old Style and progressing to Italic, Transitional, Modern, and Egyptian, ending with the first Sans Serif, around 1816.

### Width & Weights

Typefaces have *normal*, *expanded* and *condensed* widths (and variations on these). Each width can have a range of weights: *extra light*, *light*, *regular*, *book*, *bold*, *extra bold*, and *black*.

### Posture

There's *oblique*, slanted letter forms that don't differ in structure to their upright counterparts, which are known as the *roman* form. There's *italic*, which is different from the roman letter of the same typeface and is based on handwriting. And then there's *script*, italic letter forms that, when typeset together are connected by strokes making them appear to be written.

### Small Caps

*Small Caps* are capital letters that have been designed to match the weight and height of the lowercase letters of a typeface. They are used within body text and are excellent for abbreviations and acronyms, which would visually overpower the page if written in *full caps*. Some typefaces don't have small caps.

### Old Style & Standard Numbers

*Old style numbers* were designed to match the lowercase letter forms of a typeface; like small caps, old style numbers are used within body text and are not found in all typefaces. *Standard (or lining) numbers* are used when you want to make strong alignments, for example in tabular settings.

### Weight & Width (using Gill Sans)

condensed  
**condensed bold**  
light  
normal  
**normal bold**  
**extra bold**  
extended  
**extended bold**

### Posture

*oblique* slanted letter forms  
*italic* based on handwriting  
*script* connected with strokes

### Small Caps (using Times)

SMALL CAPS lower case

### Old Style & Standard Numbers

1234567890 1234567890  
(old style) (standard)