



Ready, Steady, Go!: The Smashing Rise and Giddy Fall of Swinging London

Shawn Levy

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It's the summer of 1966... The fundamental old ways: chastity, rationality, harmony, sobriety, even democracy: blasted to nothing or crumbling under siege. The city glows. It echoes. It pulses. It bleeds pastel and fuzzy, spicy, paisley and soft. This is how it's always going to be: smashing clothes, brilliant music, easy sex, eternal youth, the eyes of everybody, everyone's first thought, the top of the world, right here, right now: *Swinging London*.

Shawn Levy has a genius for unearthing the secret history of popular culture. The *Los Angeles Times* called *King of Comedy*, his biography of Jerry Lewis, "a model of what a celebrity bio ought to be—smart, knowing, insightful, often funny, full of fascinating insiders' stories," and the *Boston Globe* declared that *Rat Pack Confidential* "evokes the time in question with the power of a novel, as well as James Ellroy's *American Tabloid* and better by far than Don DeLillo's *Underworld*."

In *Ready, Steady, Go!* Levy captures the spirit of the sixties in all its exuberance. A portrait of London from roughly 1961 to 1969, it chronicles the explosion of creativity—in art, music and fashion—and the revolutions—sexual, social and political—that reshaped the world. Levy deftly blends the enthusiasm of a fan, the discerning eye of a social critic and a historian's objectivity as he re-creates the hectic pace and daring experimentation of the times—from the utter transformation of rock 'n' roll by the Beatles and the Rolling Stones to the new aesthetics introduced by fashion designers like Mary Quant, haircutters like Vidal Sassoon, photographers like David Bailey, actors like Michael Caine and Terence Stamp and filmmakers like Richard Lester and Nicolas Roeg to the wild clothing shops and cutting-edge clubs that made Carnaby Street and King's Road the hippest thoroughfares in the world.

Spiced with the reminiscences of some of the leading icons of that period, their fans and followers, and featuring a photographic gallery of well-known faces and far-out fashions, *Ready, Steady, Go!* is an irresistible re-creation of a time and place that seemed almost impossibly fun.

From the Hardcover edition.

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