

SINGER. SONGWRITER. AUTHOR.

KNOWN FOR LYRICS THAT BLEND THE PROFOUND WITH THE PROSAIC, THIS MUSICIAN'S MEMOIR IS AS ENTERTAINING AS HIS SONGS ARE CATCHY.

The first time Ben Folds thought about writing a memoir, he was drunk, on an aeroplane. "I'd been asked enough times to give advice to young artists, and I just thought, why not? I wrote something that did the rounds among certain circles... it felt like it made an impact in a way that music sometimes has a hard time doing," muses the singer and multi-instrumentalist whose career spans three decades and more experimental music projects than you can poke a keytar at. "When you're a professional musician, things are held to a different standard. But to write something in a different format, I realised it has the ability to reach people in a different way."

Aided by the inspired combination of high altitude and alcohol, the idea for Folds' memoir, *A Dream About Lightning Bugs: A Life of Music and Cheap Lessons*, was born. The title is a reference to a dream Folds had as a kid, one that continues to shape his understanding of the artist's role today. "I saw all of these lightning



Out August 1, \$35; simonandschuster.com.au

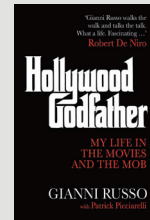
"To me, that's what an artist is, someone who points things out to people. It's all there, the artist just bottles it up."

bugs, but no one else could see them until I pointed them out," he tells us, in his stream-of-consciousness manner. "To me, that's what an artist is, someone who points things out to people. It's all there, the artist just bottles it up."

His ability to spin an idiosyncratic yarn is usually confined to the four-minute mark of a ballad. But in *A Dream About Lightning Bugs*, Folds' beguiling reflections dance freely from page to page. "I'm really just doing what I do with music but I'm doing it in a different language. Sometimes I think it's good to say the same thing using a different language," he says. From memories of a childhood spent playing self-taught piano in working-class North Carolina to some rollicking tales of life on the road, Folds' storytelling ability is the kind that renders the medium irrelevant.

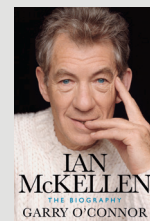
Ben Folds will bring his book tour to Australia from August 22–31

Three new biographies



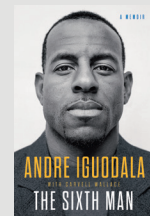
HOLLYWOOD GODFATHER

It's no secret Gianni Russo has a penchant for embellishing the truth but this is a real page-turner – if you're not fussed about a clear separation of fact and fiction, that is. \$33, out now; simonandschuster.com.au



IAN MCKELLEN: THE BIOGRAPHY

West End legend, Hollywood royalty and an LGBTQ icon, there's really no one more deserving of a biography than McKellen. Luckily, O'Connor's account does his fascinating life all the justice it deserves. \$35, out September 5; hachette.com.au



THE SIXTH MAN, ANDRE IGUODALA

He's known for his performance on the basketball court, but it's Iguodala's actions outside of the NBA – his business savvy, philanthropy and activism – that leap off the pages of this memoir. \$28, out now; penguinrandomhouse.com.au