

Publisher Spotlight: GIBSON HOUSE PRESS



Every issue, we'll take a look at an indie publisher. This month, Deborah Robertson of Gibson House Press tells us all about her company.

IndiePicks: Please introduce us to Gibson House Press.

Deborah: An independent press based in the Chicago area, Gibson House Press

publishes novels by musicians in the belief that songwriters and musicians of all kinds are uniquely connected to storytelling. While the creativity of these authors has its inspiration in music, the books are not necessarily about music. We are interested in good stories and good music, in the voices of musicians, in promoting their fiction.

We produce beautifully designed original trade paperbacks (and e-books) at our own pace, thoughtfully developing our authors and list and cultivating readers. We are fortunate to have a supportive distributor, IPG, committed to presenting our books to bookstores and libraries and an exceptional team of advisors and independent publishing professionals committed to our mission.

IndiePicks: How did you decide to start your publishing house?

Deborah: I was looking for my next “project” and reading about some of the ways in which technology made it easier to experiment in the publishing business. So, I just started trying things and learning by doing (or perhaps learning by failing). As I was developing and professionalizing the business, I was attending a lot of music fests and performances and noted that some favorite musicians were publishing novels, memoirs, and other literature, or had a creative writing degree, or their songwriting just seemed to have epic narratives. The idea of musician-novelists became my focus.

I've always been interested in publishing. I was an English Lit major, and early in my career did editorial work and book reviewing. From there I moved into nonprofit public relations and ultimately arts and humanities programming for libraries. Working with so many accomplished artists, designers, editors, marketing professionals, and others throughout my career helped me refine my taste and recognize great talent.

IndiePicks: Share a moment you're particularly proud of.

Deborah: I'm very proud to have discovered the two debut novelists we are publishing in 2017, one through a trusted colleague/advisor and one “over the transom.” They are both gifted individuals whose work validates my concept and mission.

IndiePicks: What do you have in the works right now?

Deborah: I'm very excited about our two 2017 authors and their titles: Courtney Yasmineh's *A Girl Called Sidney* is a gritty coming-of-age novel featuring a truly resilient character who must turn her back on her difficult family and who ultimately finds her way through perseverance and a passion for making music. Nancy Burke's *Undergrowth* delves deep into an epic clash of indigenous and outside cultures, family ties, and greed in the Amazon rainforest, where an uncontacted tribe, mercenaries, government agents, and well-meaning advocates struggle for control of natural resources amid complex relationships. [Editor's Note: Reviews for both of these titles can be found on p. 10 of this issue.] Both authors have new albums coming out in 2018—Courtney's seventh and Nancy's second.

We also have several manuscripts in the pipeline for 2018 and continue to seek new work by musician-novelists.

IndiePicks: What do you like about being an independent publisher?

Deborah: It's always fun (and by fun, I mean risky, challenging, exhilarating, and terrifying) to work for yourself. I love finding and working with creative people and I find it thrilling to bring readers to and promote the work of artists who might not otherwise get the attention they deserve from mainstream publishers. Equally satisfying is assembling and working with an expert, very experienced team of independent publishing professionals who make every step of the process enjoyable: from manuscript editing to book and cover design to marketing and event planning, and small business development.



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