



## Every Anxious Wave

*Mo Daviau*

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Good guy Karl Bender is a thirty-something bar owner whose life lacks love and meaning. When he stumbles upon a time-travelling worm hole in his closet, Karl and his best friend Wayne develop a side business selling access to people who want to travel back in time to listen to their favorite bands. It's a pretty ingenious plan, until Karl, intending to send Wayne to 1980, transports him back to 980 instead. Though Wayne sends texts extolling the quality of life in tenth century "Mannahatta," Karl is distraught that he can't bring his friend back.

Enter brilliant, prickly, overweight astrophysicist, Lena Geduldig. Karl and Lena's connection is immediate. While they work on getting Wayne back, Karl and Lena fall in love -- with time travel, and each other. Unable to resist meddling with the past, Karl and Lena bounce around time. When Lena ultimately prevents her own long-ago rape, she alters the course of her life and threatens her future with Karl.

A high-spirited and engaging novel, Mo Daviau's **EVERY ANXIOUS WAVE** plays ball with the big questions of where we would go and who we would become if we could rewrite our pasts, as well as how to hold on to love across time.

## Every Anxious Wave Details

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Author : Mo Daviau

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## From Reader Review Every Anxious Wave for online ebook

### Tom Mathews says

4.5 stars

Have you ever noticed that mixing romance and time travel often ends badly? And yet authors still toy with the idea. Fortunately one of them is first-time novelist Mo Daviau. She has written a quirky story that combines a whole litany of elements that practically guarantee a messy ending; love, time travel, over-the-hill rock stars, damaged hearts and even a cataclysmic asteroid event. What could possibly go wrong?

And yet, somehow she pulls it off. Granted, the initial hook, time-traveler gets stuck in Pre-Columbian Manhattan with no way to get home, turns out to be less compelling than it originally sounds but the resulting relationship that evolves when ex-rocker-turned-bar-owner Karl hires emotionally-crippled astrophysics doctoral candidate and college DJ Lena to work on the wormhole in Karl's apartment closet is absolutely delightful. Both characters are very easy to relate to which makes all of their trials and tribulations all the more engaging.

What I found most intriguing though is how the novel addresses a question that we all have asked ourselves at one time or another; namely what would happen if we went back and changed one or more of the negative aspects of our lives. I, for one, would love to be able to go back and put my dad's second marriage on ice, or even my own first marriage for that matter. But if I did, what good things would also never happen? Ay, there's the rub, as Hamlet would say.

If you are one of those who takes time-travel novels seriously and will reject a book on the grounds that it is farfetched, this may not be the book for you. But if you are like most people who enjoys what Dr. Who refers to as that wibbly-wobbly, timey-whimey stuff because of the paradoxical situations that their protagonists face, then you may well enjoy Every Anxious Wave. It addresses very real subjects such as aging, death, rape and the emotional trauma it causes. It also has a lot to say about rock music and its history.

Bottom line: I highly recommend Mo's debut effort. If I could, I'd go back in time and read it again.

\*Quotations are cited from an advanced reading copy and may not be the same as appears in the final published edition. The review book was based on an advanced reading copy obtained at no cost from the publisher in exchange for an unbiased review. While this does take any 'not worth what I paid for it' statements out of my review, it otherwise has no impact on the content of my review.

FYI: On a 5-point scale I assign stars based on my assessment of what the book needs in the way of improvements:

\*5 Stars – Nothing at all. If it ain't broke, don't fix it.

\*4 Stars – It could stand for a few tweaks here and there but it's pretty good as it is.

\*3 Stars – A solid C grade. Some serious rewriting would be needed in order for this book to be considered *great or memorable*.

\*2 Stars – This book needs a lot of work. A good start would be to change the plot, the character development, the writing style and the ending.

\*1 Star - The only thing that would improve this book is a good bonfire.

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## **Tim Hicks says**

Feh. Didn't work for me.

I hate music-geek stories, to begin with. At least this one lacked the orgasmic descriptions of what it's like to play in a band and how The Outsiders Will Never Understand.

I hate time-travel stories that just casually handwave the technology, and use it carelessly. Yeah, sure, if you could travel in time, wouldn't you go to a 1990 concert by the Pustulent Zits? Not, say, the Crucifixion, or ancient Babylon, or to see Shakespeare? And a guy is in 980 AD but can still text because, like, the satellites are still up, and a month later his phone still has a charge. Pfui.

The characters are dull as dishwater, and I didn't care what happened to them. SO much so that I couldn't finish the book.

There may be a good story here, but this book is a fraud as science fiction.

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## **Razvan says**

First reaction upon finishing this shorter than it feels book:

" I wish I could go back in time and convince myself not to read this book"

"Bullshit!"

"oh for fuck's sake!!"

You know what it's about: a guy discovers a wormhole in his apartment and being a has-been rock star and good guy and dreaming of the better times in the past and ETC he uses this to go to the epic rock concerts of the past. Sometimes he sells tickets to rock concerts of the past. When his friend Wayne is stranded by mistake in 980 [ where, coincidentally, no rock concerts are taking place ] he needs to retrieve him with the help of a astrophysicist he finds online : Lena Gedulding.

Obv, he falls in love with Lena and bla bla bla, they start using the wormhole to change her shitty life and in the process changing her to a new - better - person...but you know, in the essence, she's still the one he falls in love with no matter what timeline.

So, what's wrong with this book? sounds interesting, right?

Yeah, first of all: the science is wack. Ok, we don't have time travel wormholes so we don't really know what can be possible but the fact that we could time travel with the power of love is ridiculous to 980 and back!

Another science fact: one of the invention that better Lena comes with is some sort of time dilatation phone: you can call/text people in the past. I kid you not, that's actually used as a bonding device between our hero and his future step-daughter...to basically no consequence of instantly changing the future by meddling in the past.

Another oddity is how he talks about having a wormhole like it's no big deal. Whoa, dude! That's not really all that common and really, how can one believe that sharing with so many people via the concert business wouldn't lead to the government taking over your wormhole and maybe even putting you in a cage somewhere?

Look, I can suspend my disbelief but even suspended it scoffs at the whole stupidity.

There is also a huge part about his former band, Axis, and it's feminist pro-curvy girls songs that saved big girls, one of whom is Lena and a great big deal about someone being a PIN and someone being a CUSHION! basically meaning that, you know, soulmates and such and big girls deserve love too! I don't know what to make of all this, it seems to have almost no impact on the whole story but also is treated as the most important shit ever. Ok. I found it annoying and repetitive.

And of course, one can accuse me that I don't get music, I don't understand having a passion and deep regret to never seeing Queen live or some other sacred monster of rock'n'roll in their prime and being there is like an epiphany and whoa! How can you expect to get this book when you are so [tone]deaf?! Well, fair point. Also: fuck that, a good book should make me feel it. I didn't.

As for the characters: Lena is annoying in all the timelines, except for the best timeline in which she is smart, successful, amazing and still in love with this guy of course.

The shining star is Wayne, who even from 1000 years in the past still sends deep meaningful funny texts to our hero [ yeah, the science lives on ].

So, it should have been a wacky cool love story, but it's just a mangled mess that I am happy to leave behind and never return to it ever. I urge you to do the same.

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### **Diana says**

I've wanted to read this book for a while, and bless bookoutlet because I got my hands on a signed copy for something like \$6. After a long, dry reading spell, I finally began again a month ago as though I've been starved for literature (which I have.) Hence the urban fantasy binge because dear sweet baby jesus, it's my favorite thing on this planet in terms of reading material. SUPER glad I finally got to this.

So, if *Ready Player One* was a love letter to the 80s, *Every Anxious Wave* is a love letter to the tubby 90's indie grunge rock nerd. I laughed, I overidentified, I fucking loved the utter batshittery of a spontaneous closet wormhole, used only to go see concerts of the past (shit yeah, dude; I would never have left that closet). There's this huge thread of fat acceptance politics and mental illness, and the fucked up things we do (and that are done to us) that lead to who we are (and that managed to dovetail creepily into some discussions we've been having in my house lately about the honesty of saying you'd never change a thing). Everything that matters to me is touched here: music, parenting, fat girl life, science, academia, self-doubt, time travel, asshole landlords. there is literally nothing here that I didn't want to read about. I more than once texted snippets to people I thought would find them amazing little bits of quote.

Bottom line, it's a tall tale, so don't hope to reconcile any actual science here; go with the crazy and let it tell

you the story. So good.

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### **Charlie Anders says**

This is a brilliantly different look at time travel, with a goofy, irreverent voice and a lot of silly ideas. When a bartender and former indie rock star finds a wormhole in his closet, he decides it should only be used to allow people to attend rock concerts in the past. You can see Jimi and the Beatles and Janis Joplin perform live! But then his friend decides to go back to 1980 to save John Lennon -- and winds up in 980 instead due to an error. It's as ridiculous and fun as it sounds, although there are times when it doesn't entirely make sense (even more than most time travel stories tend not to make sense after a while.)

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### **Jessica says**

Started off fun and exciting but slowly turned into a bit of a soap opera. Didn't love the characters all that much. Had some great pop culture and music references that I really liked.

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### **Jeff Raymond says**

This book is often described as *High Fidelity* with time travel. This is an accurate description in so, so many ways, and a book that I fell in love with within the first twenty or so pages and just blew through until the end.

Effectively, a guy finds a wormhole in the closet of his apartment. A former guitarist for a well-regarded and now-defunct indie rock band, he does what any music lover does and uses it to see old concerts. He quickly monetizes the wormhole, gets caught up in an issue with his landlord, meets up with a theoretical physicist to try and figure out what's going on, and really messes with the timeline in the process.

If there are two things I love in life, it's time travel books and indie rock. A combination of the two was going to be a winner for me regardless, but this works in part because it doesn't take itself too seriously while still doing a good job (at least on a basic level) of making the time travel work. There are tons of indie rock references throughout, and much of the history behind the plot takes place in the Boston area at one of my favorite now-defunct rock clubs, and it's just a solid read. Not perfect by any stretch, and things kind of get weird in the end, but it's not a big enough deal for me to get hopped up over. This was probably one of my favorite things I've read this year, and is just an enjoyable ride throughout.

A must for time travel aficionados, a must for those who love the indie rock of two decades ago, and a pleasant light read from start to finish. Highly recommended.

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### **Jessica says**

**3.5 stars.**

So this is the kind of person I am.

On my way home from working a conference in Woodley Park, I got off the Red Line at Dupont Circle to get some empanadas. Left unchecked in Dupont Circle, I am going to wander into Kramerbooks because, well, hi. (I feel like Politics & Prose is considered the more acceptable answer to the question of favorite DC bookstore, but I gotta be honest – I lean a little more towards Kramer because I love their layout and their brunch is delicious-if-pricey and I sort of hung out with Elena Kagan there once. If you stretch the definition of “hung out” to include “watched her browse the fiction section from the sidewalk while waiting for my sister-in-law.”)

Anyway.

I went there after my conference and promptly gathered up about six books that are on my to-read lists but not available from my library system. I read the first paragraph of each of them and after much hemming and hawing, I walked out of the store with this one. Which I’d kinda forgotten that I’d saved here on Goodreads. I have no idea where I heard about this but I saw it on the shelf at Kramer and was like, “Oh yeah. This is like fifth-tier, maybe-I’ll-think-about-reading-it list stuff.”

Then I read the first paragraph, and it was a dollar or two cheaper than the others so I went with it.

I’ve seen this described as *High Fidelity* with time travel, and no more perfect summary can there be.

This book kind of plunks you down *in media res*, with everything sort of already happening: our narrator, Karl, is a bartender in Chicago who’s discovered a time travel portal in his closet. Formerly the guitarist of a cult-followed 90s alternative band, music is the primary tool that Karl uses to relate to the world and to organize the people in it. So he sets up a business with his wormhole, in which he sends people back in time to see concerts they might’ve missed the first time around or whose emotional highs they just wanna relive.

Which raises the question – what concert would you go to? Maybe I’ve spent too much time with people who talk and think about 90s indie rock so much or maybe I’m not cool enough for this question, but the first thing I thought of was Jeff Buckley. *Grace* is easily my favorite album I’ve ever discovered post-artist death.

Anyway.

Karl’s got some rules for his time travel venture: go back for the length of the show and immediately come home, so souvenirs, no photos, no interacting with the past. Easy enough, right? Ha.

Karl runs this business with his computer nerd friend Wayne and things are all good until Wayne gets it in his head that he wants to go back to December 1980 and stop Chapman from murdering Lennon. But – oops – Karl makes a typo and sends Wayne back to the year 980 instead. So Karl goes in search of a physicist who might be able to help him bring Wayne home and that brings him together with Lena, an overweight, tattooed former Riot Grrrl with her fair share of emotional baggage. While working to rescue Wayne, Karl and Lena embark on something that kind of looks like a relationship and ultimately leads Karl towards more time-travelly hi-jinks.

And, I mean, what can go wrong with time-travelly hi-jinks, right?

So here’s my complaint. We don’t get to know the characters before they’re responding to this one particular situation and so they didn’t really take shape as fully developed people. I didn’t really see why Lena and

Karl became a Thing. I feel like Daviau based these characters on the kind of people she's got floating around in her own life (or perhaps herself!) and so they looked like fully formed characters to her while she was writing, but she never took the time to develop them for the reader's benefit. At least until we hit maybe the 67% mark, by which point it was a little too late.

But I actually liked this book! Enough to round three-and-a-half stars up to four. Which doesn't sound like glowing praise, but actually is something. The time travel stuff is handled fairly well for someone who doesn't really like reading intensely sci-fi time travel where there's a lot of focus on world-building and how the physics works. It works because she says it does and I was okay with that. She manages to sprinkle in some nice use of foreshadowing and by the time she brings everything full circle, she'd done so with some level of heartwarming. I had some emotional reactions by the end, at which point I was drawing mental comparisons to George Bailey and *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind*. But the road to get there was a little too choppy. Daviau introduces some darker, heavier elements that didn't reeeeaaally work for me, mostly because the characters weren't developed enough before things got dark. If she had taken the time to write a more solid introduction to Karl and to Lena, to give some more weight to the decisions they make early on, I think this book maybe could've packed a more considerable emotional wallop. But because she dropped us in on what could or should have maybe been the second or third chapter of the book, the book stays somewhere just above average for me. I think a lot of people might have fun with it if they don't mind the lack of character depth or aren't sticklers for time travelling explanations, but for me this book is solid B-territory.

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### **Myriam says**

This book has just been published and it feels outdated. Old. It tries too hard to be funny and it just isn't. The characters have no personality and, most of all, they're not believable.

What attracted me to the book was 1. It sounded like something I wouldn't necessarily want to read, and I wanted to get out of my comfort zone and 2. The female lead is an obese woman, with whom the MC falls in love. You don't see that everyday. Alas, she is the character I found most absurd. She's a PhD in Astrophysics, so I would imagine her to be very smart and profoundly knowledgeable on the topic. Well, she blurts out idiotic things! Like "there were two moons in 980". WHAT?! Author, who told you this?! Because they lied to you!

I can't believe I actually read that line. Amongst other things.

Also, what should move the action and motivate the characters should be that the MC's best friend is stuck in the past and can't come back to the present. The MC and his girlfriend talk about that a lot but they don't do anything about it whatsoever! They prefer to sunbathe on the attic and listen to old music. Okay. Even when he goes to the future and could discover from people who have mastered time-travel how to bring back someone who had been lost in the time space continuum, he just... doesn't. WTF?!

I'm so mad. I don't understand HOW this could have been published.

I tried to suspend my disbelief as long as possible but midway through the book I realized it wasn't just bizarre and nonsensical. It was just bad.

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### **Jenni says**

It book really surprised me. I thought it was going to be really funny and ridiculous. I mean the premise sounds a guy finding a wormhole in his closet and using it to go see his favorite bands in the past. But it was actually a pretty heartfelt story. I moved quickly and a few times I got a bit muddled with all the time jumping, but I thought that it added an interesting dynamic to the story telling.

It will definitely make you think about the things that happen in a person's life that makes them who they are. And what if anything we might change in our own lives given the chance, even if it meant losing something we have to an unknown.

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### **Joan Concilio says**

This is my one must-read recommendation for 2016. Especially, but not only, if you love music and humans and science and hope.

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### **Elizabeth says**

I listened to this book. I was really into the first part of the book because it was set in Chicago and I could picture the neighborhood described. I was interested in the time travel notion of going back in time to go to concerts of bands that you have always wanted to see (at venues you always wanted to see them at!) . Someone please take me back in time to see U2 at Red Rocks (my personal fantasy). So the book was humming along and the protagonist Karl was likeable. He designates smart rules for use of the wormhole so that nothing will be altered in the future. He is not so careful on inputting a date, however, and accidentally sends a friend to prehistoric times. He wants to fix this so he enlists help from a physicist (Lena) who he falls in love with. This is when the book turns into a love story. And that is fine. What threw me was when the wormhole started to be used to go forward, into the future. And the book turned dystopic. I was bummed with this turn of events because once altering of time began (this is how Lena used time travel) why weren't they smart enough to alter the future? And why didn't they alter the future for their friend whose child was ill? Most likely, I was starting to run a whole different story in my head. That happens sometimes when listening. Anyway, I was totally digging the subplot of the landlord who went back in time and fell in love with Freddie Mercury! And admittedly, the ending was beautiful and showed that despite wherever you are on the time continuum (!), being blessed enough to be in love and be with that person is the best possible circumstance/outcome.

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### **Lucy says**

This relentlessly creative and fast-moving novel opens like a late-night rock-and-roll question: "If you could time-travel to any concert in history, which one would you go to?" In *Every Anxious Wave*, washed-up indie rocker Karl Bender discovers that his closet is the portal to a time-travel wormhole; with a simple laptop program he and his friend Wayne can transport travelers to any place and time they choose. The two guys start a booming business sending eager rock fans back to see their favorite gigs, albeit with one rule: don't change anything, and come home right afterwards. But rules are made to be broken...

Read the rest of Andrew's review and see the author's book playlist [here](#).

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### **Kelly says**

though this book was by no means perfect, I really really enjoyed it. of COURSE you have to suspend your disbelief a bit where time travel is concerned - and that's really not a problem for me. To me this had the perfect blend of fun plot, good character development, and EMO NOSTALGIC YEARNINGS (MY FAVE). It kind of reminded me of ready player one in how readable & fun it was, w/ some high fidelity and back to the future mixed in.

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### **karen says**

this is a book with an irresistible hook: High Fidelity with time travel.

that is the perfect opportunity for a joyful, if flimsy, romp full of pop culture references and fanboy/girl gushing and a little romance slapped on top because a book's gotta have one of those.\*

and it started out that way.

it's got that same kind of bittersweet nostalgia as High Fidelity:

*Wayne and I shared that common affliction plaguing single men with limited prospects and self-destructive tendencies: we regarded our pasts with such love and loss that every day forward was a butter knife to the gut. Our twenties had been full of rock music and courage. The future made us older, but our wisdom was dubious. Wayne and I avoided the pain of tomorrow with alcohol and old rock bands. Pavement on the jukebox, the heavenly reddish glow of neon signs, and sentences that started with "Remember when..."*

heavy on the get-off-my-lawn old(er)-man bitter:

*A pack of talentless teenagers who played covers of Liz Phair songs like they meant nothing ...*

and then lo! on PAGE TWO karl discovers that there is a time-traveling wormhole in the floor of his bedroom that permits passage back in time. and he rents it out to others for \$\$, with very specific rules: the wormhole can only be used to visit concerts from the past, no souvenirs, no photos or audio recordings, no interactions of any kind, no leaving the venue, and no staying longer than the duration of the concert.

and despite all the "jeeez, mom" rules, this concept is fun, fun stuff - this is like first date icebreaking conversation starters - what concert would you go to if you could?

even though there's only one answer: oingo boingo farewell tour halloween 1995

and now we are on a date.

and of course - time travel is complicated and mistakes are made, and karl's data entry typo sends his **best** only friend wayne back to 980 manhattan, where the lack of technology problematizes wayne's return journey and requires the recruitment of an astrophysicist who is coincidentally also a passionate music-lover

and also karl's type. apparently.

all of these things - the farfetched premise, the reliance on coincidences, the fast pace at the expense of explanation - all of these set up an expectation for the kind of book this should have been: frothy, escapist, nothing you have to think or feel too hard about, a bit of rock and roll fun with silly pretty meaningless lines like:

*Lena moved her foot over to mine, to hold it. We were holding feet like cautious lovers in a storybook about secrets.*

and it is indeed popcorn-lit for a while, but then it goes a bit dark; darker than the premise would suggest, but not dark in a way that i found enjoyable. the writing wasn't strong enough to support the tonal switch - you need to *earn* your darkness, or it can be alienating to the reader who has become caught up in this light fantasy until now. the characters aren't developed enough to pull off a story with any depth - they still think they are back in that rock and roll time travel book they auditioned for.

on the subject of characters - i found both karl and lena to be profoundly unlikeable and they seemed so ill-suited to one another, i never understood if i was meant to be rooting for them to get together or for them to realize they had no chemistry. i never understood their insistence on being together - she's mercurial, he's gormless, there's no sparks flying anywhere. he's like a burr that's attached to her just cuz she walked by and she's always trying to shake him off. the synopsis sez this book will address "how to hold on to love across time," but these two can't even hold on to love across a chapter. also, his only consistent criterion for romantic attraction seems to be "damage" which is usually a sinister quality in a man.

this book glosses too much. which is fine in the kind of book i thought it was at the start. a "we're just having fun here!" book can get away with a freewheeling nose-thumb at details like

how does time travel work??

"it just does, wheeeeeee!!!"

why are they in a relationship with each other?

"they just are, wheeeeeee!!!"

but once you start introducing things like rape, body image, infant mortality, etc - you're not a wheeeeeee!! book anymore and serious books require a little more effort. don't get me wrong - i am absolutely fine with there being no explanation for time travel. if time travel existed and you tried to explain the "how" to me, i guarantee i would not understand it. but i would kinda like to know what these characters see in each other. to be fair, this same question is addressed in the book, but it's waaaayyy at the end, which is too little too late for a book positioning itself as a music geeky romance and you have to just roll with it for a long time before the question is even asked. and never, i would venture, satisfactorily answered.

i'm grateful to have won this through firstreads, and for a debut it's got a lot going for it, but there's some shaky first-timer bits that'll probably all be tidied away by book #2. it's a medium-three.

\*i mean, inasmuch as High Fidelity is a "joyful romp," focusing as it does on a bitter and sad man who uses music as an insulating barrier between himself and the world and can't maintain relationships but probably

gets the girl in the end anyway. (i only saw the movie and i don't remember the ending, but i'm guessing that's what happens because who would turn down john cusack, right?)

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