How to Add Album Artwork to MP3

Nowadays almost all the music player would display mp3's album artwork, in fact adding album artwork to mp3 is easy and simple.

Guide

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I have bought a lot of CDs since high school, an important reason is the well-designed album artwork. Sometimes I even buy a CD without knowing who the singer is but just because the beautiful cover. Like the photo below.

With the release of iPod, consumers begin to be able to view mp3's artwork on player, which is a big good news for people like me. But here comes the problem, not all the mp3 files are containing artwork image.

In this situation, we need to add album artwork to mp3 manually.

Some ABCs about the cover image in mp3 files

In 1996, some contributors built a meta information standard for mp3 files to record the file information like song's title, author, genre, release year, etc.. This kind of meta information standard called "ID3" tags.

At the very beginning of the history of ID3, it didn't record the cover image information. Until 1998, a new specification called ID3v2 was created, it added the feature to record mp3's album artwork information.
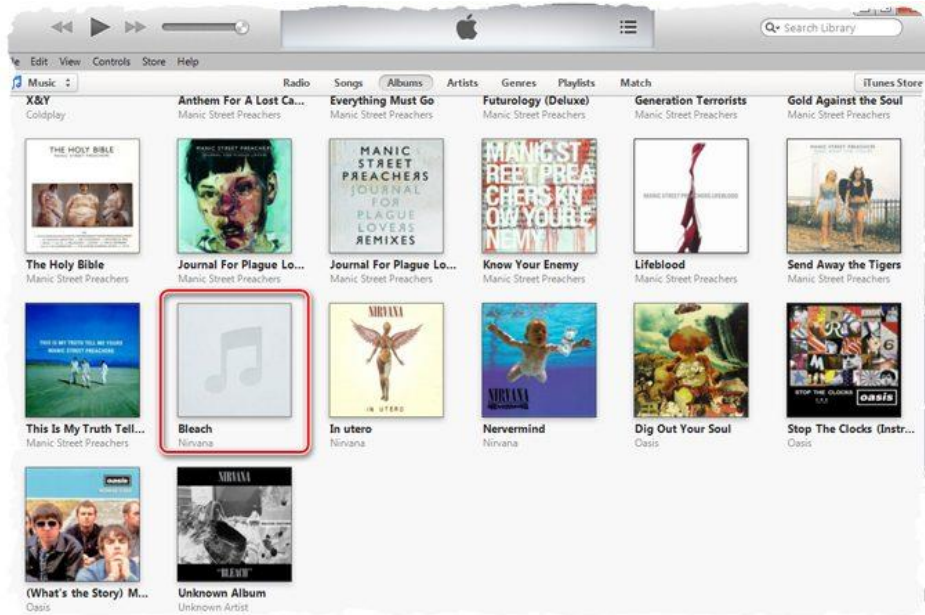
Class is over. So we can get the conclusion that to add or modify mp3's artwork image, we just need to modify its ID3 tag.
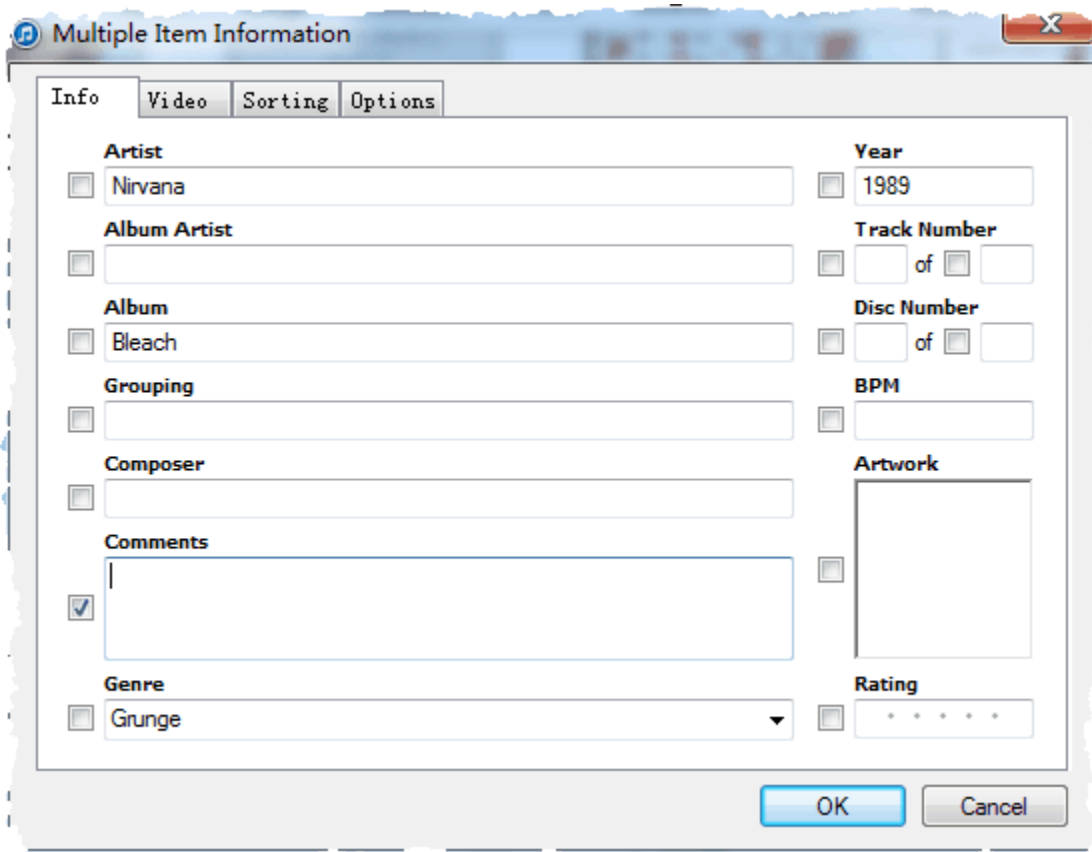
Add album artwork image to mp3 (manually and free)

There are many software which can edit mp3 file's ID3 tags, here is a detailed list.

In this guide article I take iTunes as example, as it is free and available on both Windows and Mac OS, in addition, it's much more universal than those free and open-source light software, which makes you more familiar.

First I randomly load in some albums into my iTunes, and some of them are lack of cover image.

Now right click on the album which lacks cover image, the Bleach from Nirvana, yes I love Nirvana. Then choose GetInfo, you will see a pop-up window like this.
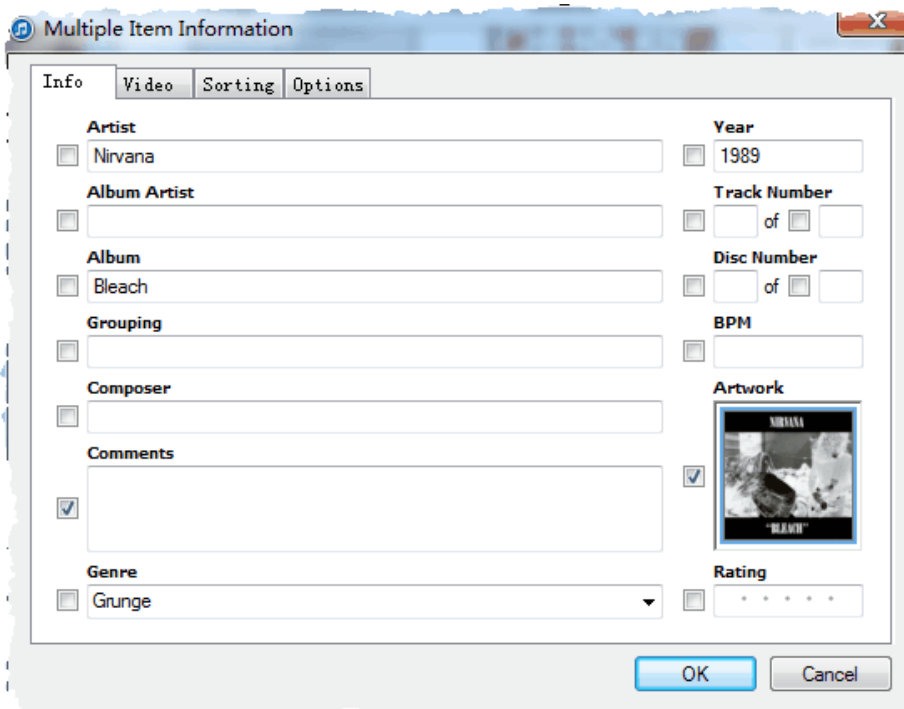
We can see that only "Artist", "Album", "Genre", "Year" contains informaton, all the other tags are missed. So we can manually modify all the information in this window, as this guide is introducing how to add album artwork to mp3, so we focus on this issue.
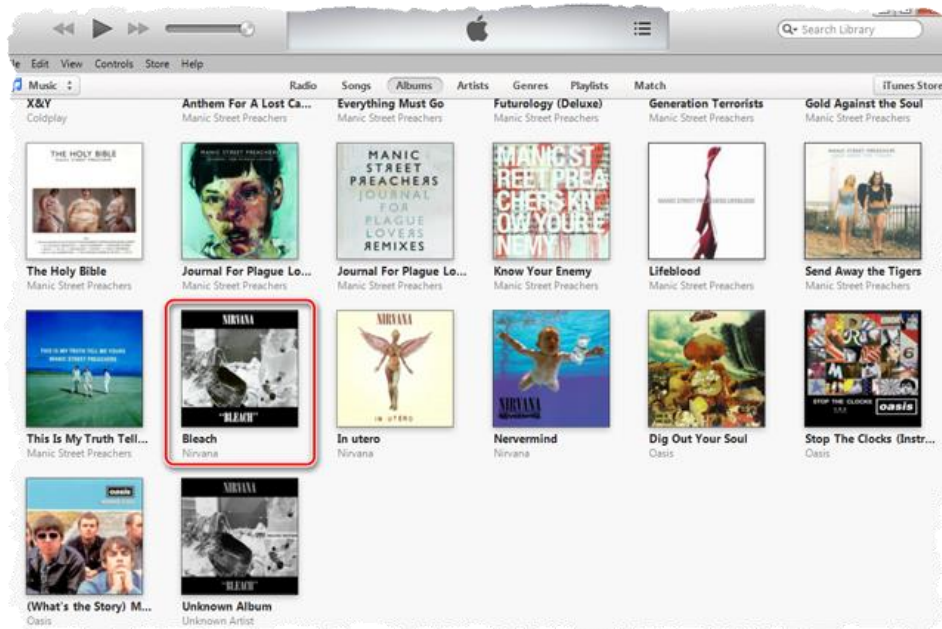

Double click the blank Artwork area you can activate the file browser, you need to choose an image as the cover. Therefore, you need to download the cover image to your computer at first.

Where to find album's cover image? Google Image Search can cover most of your albums, if you cannot find a satisfying image by Google, Discogs and AllMusic can be helpful.

Once the image is chosen, you can see the thumbnail displayed.

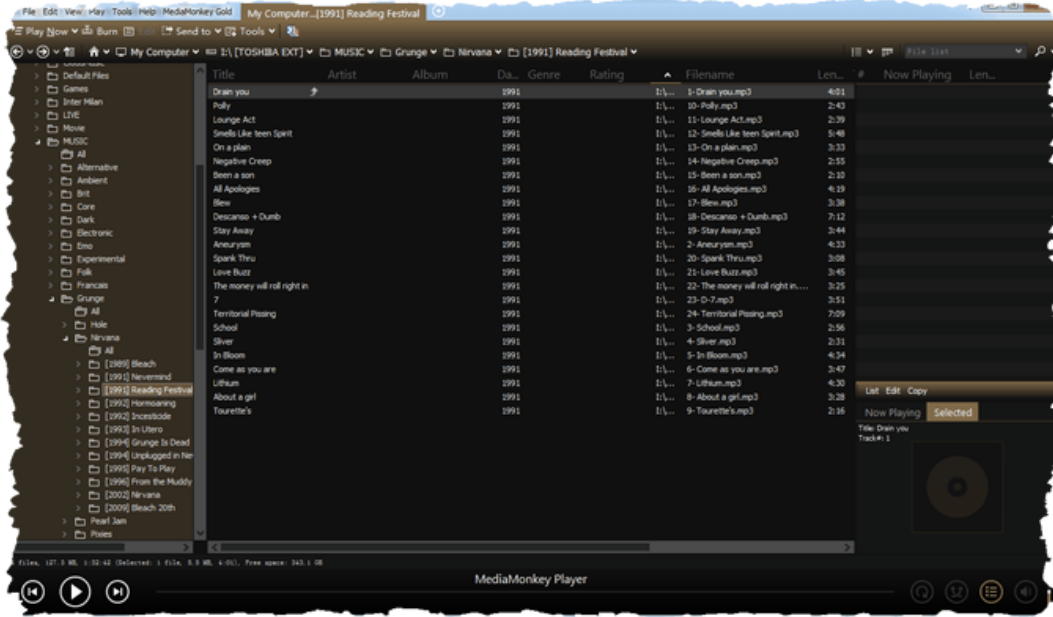Now click OK, the modification will be saved, and you can see the cover image in iTunes library interface.

This is the complete process of manually adding album network to mp3.

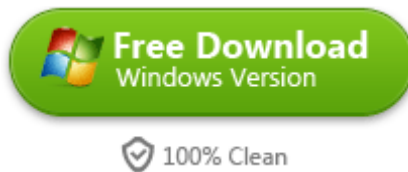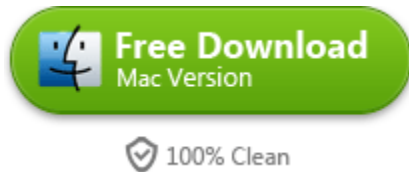# The batch and automatic method to add cover images to thousands of songs

To add cover image for tens of albums might be doable, but if you have hundreds even thousands of songs lacking of artwork image, it could be really a huge project to manually process them one by one.

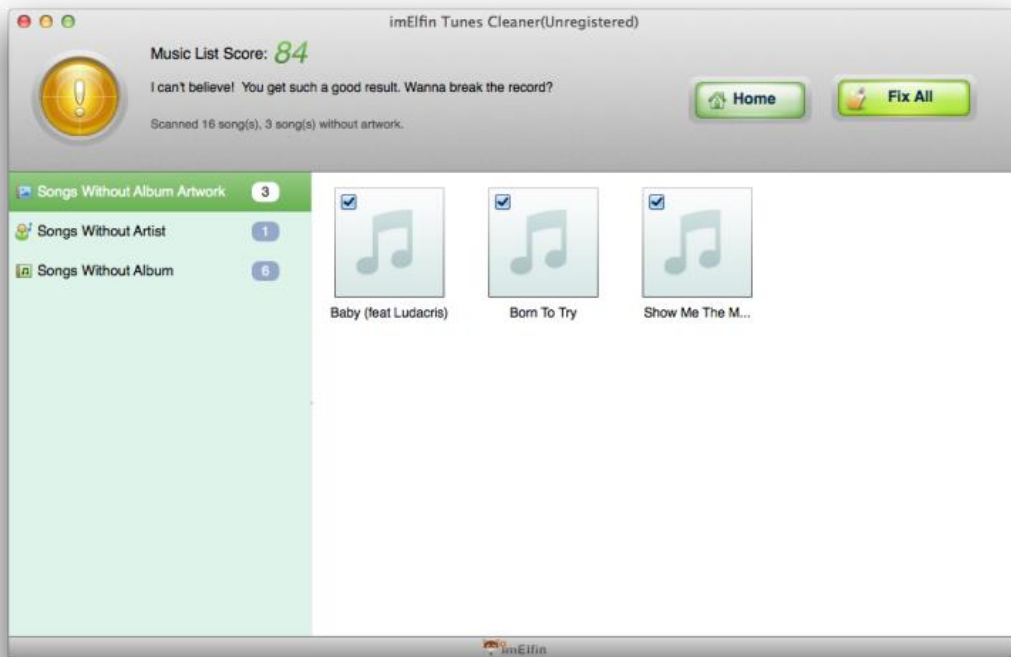Don't panic, there is solid solution for both PC and Mac users.

On Windows platform, you can use a software called MediaMonkey to do this, this program is sort of "alternative of iTunes" and it's only available on Windows. And to batch add artwork, we need an extra plugin called "Batch Art Finder", this is a plugin specially work with MediaMonkey.
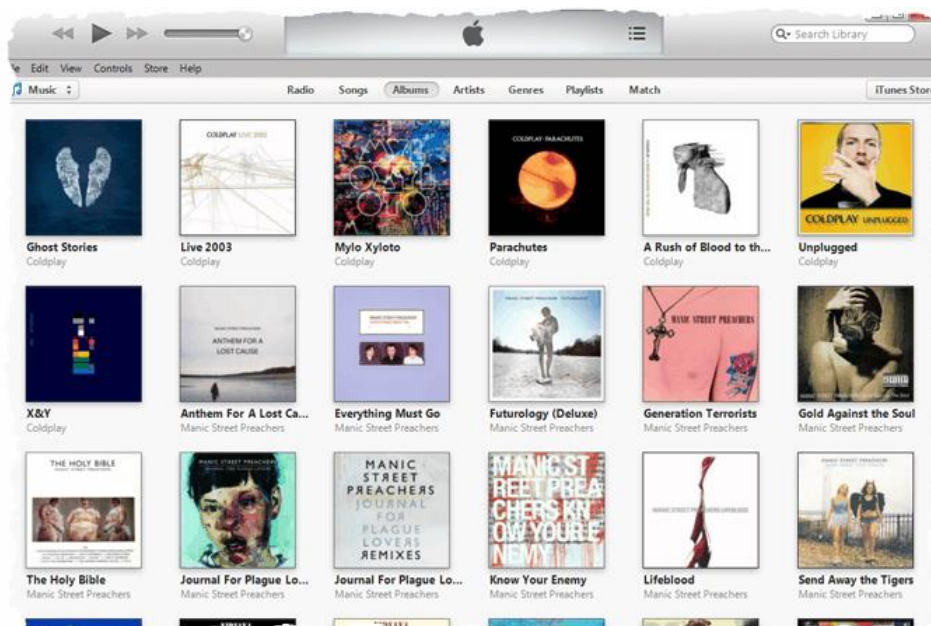
On Mac platform, the solution is better and easier. There is a program called **TunesCleaner**, which focus on adding missing ID3 tags for mp3 files, while it is much easier to use than MediaMonkey.

Using this program to automatically add cover images for iTunes mp3 albums in bulk is pretty easy. Load the albums into iTunes library, then run TunesCleaner and let it scan your iTunes library. Wait for minutes, the program will show you all the problem, all you need to do is click "Fix All".

What a complete iTunes library looks like

Looks pretty good, huh?

Related Readings

- Five Plugins Making iTunes More Fun
- How to Merge iTunes Libraries without Duplicates?
- 3 Tips to Organise iTunes Music

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