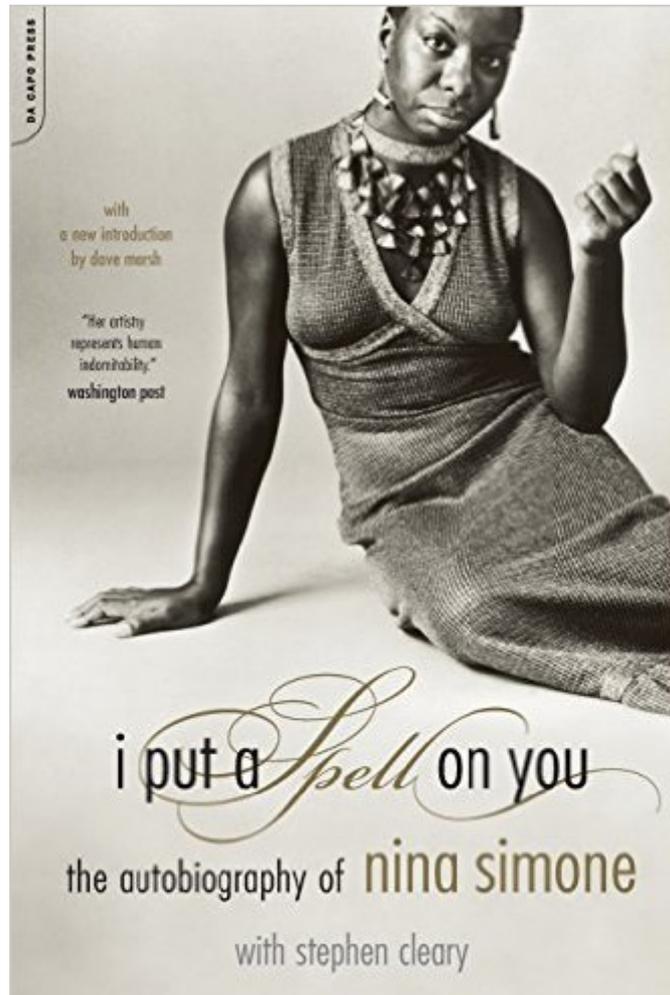


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I Put A Spell On You: The Autobiography Of Nina Simone



Synopsis

A gorgeous, inimitable singer and songwriter, Nina Simone (1933-2003) changed the face of both music and race relations in America. She struck a chord with bluesy jazz ballads like "Put a Little Sugar in My Bowl" and powerful protest songs such as "Mississippi Goddam" and "To Be Young, Gifted, and Black," the anthem of the American Civil Rights movement. Coinciding with the re-release of her famous Philips Recordings, here are the reflections of the "High Priestess of Soul" on her own life.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Nina Simone is one my All-time favorite artists and to read her story in her own words was quite a thrill. She has led a very interesting, unusual, and adventurous life. However, I found myself wishing that she would be a little bit more introspective in the telling of the story. She went from event to event without really giving a detailed picture of how she actually felt. When the book was over I didn't really feel any different than when I began reading the book, just more knowledgeable.

Nina Simone is a great artist with a compelling story to tell. Unfortunately, little of that story comes across in this book. Ms. Simone shares all sorts of details about her lovers, but very little about her music. There is almost nothing in the book about her recording sessions or why she sings particular songs the way she does. While Ms. Simone is very frank about her personal life, I would have liked to have learned more about her music. The book is also confusing because Ms. Simone will spend many pages on just a few days, and then entire years will be dismissed by a sentence or two. Ms.

Simone's collaborator should have edited the book better and drawn out more music-related stories from her.

It is true that this book is not well written and seems to have been put together on the quick without any professional editing. My guess is that it was written as a means to make a fast buck. That said, the autobiography is worth reading because it is the only real glimpse many of us will ever get into the psyche of Nina Simone. I read that she was diagnosed with bipolar disorder in the 1960s and this was kept secret until well after her death. I don't know for a fact if she actually had bipolar disorder. However, it is evident from reading her life story as told by her that she did have emotional and psychiatric problems. She made rash and erratic decisions for her and her daughter and her life seemed to be filled with self imposed chaos. She was an angry person, was always running from some thing, and blamed anyone and anything but herself for her unhappiness and problems. Most surprising to me was how she was always looking for someone, usually a man, to save her. I had no idea before reading this book that Nina Simone struggled so much with low self esteem, fear, hate, and erratic behavior. Her music is so powerful and she comes off as such a strong and solid person. That is why this book is worth reading. Compared with her music and stage persona, the autobiography shows a different side or Nina Simone. With the two combined, the reader realizes just how complex and even tragic, Nina Simone the woman was. I would recommend this book to anyone who wants to know a little more about Nina Simone. She is an imperfect human being and this is her account of her life

This review is primarily a response to "Lemas Mitchell's" review entitled "A case study in mental illness, stupidity and pure insanity" :The point is not to ponder how Nina Simone could have, or should have lived her life, but to discover how she did live her life. I don't think Nina Simone had to prove anything or give us any more - she already gave so much of herself through her music. And had she not suffered, her music might not have had the depth and richness that is has. If anything, the rest of us should never forget that we get all the benefits of her suffering without the pain.

Just about the only thing as rich, as continuously shocking, moving, funny, proud, lusty, painful, regal, beautiful and bizarre as Nina Simone's music is her life, told here with frankness that'll make you weep. Buy this book. Buy the Colpix years anthology 2 CD set. Send them to your friends.

Easy reading written not by a professional writer, but someone who spoke straight from the heart.

Nina unquestionably is a little nostalgic and very cocky ... but nonetheless, a phenomenon in her own right. One of this country's most brilliant musicians "I put a spell on you" gave me the opportunity to put a face on those Nina Simone records I play over and over again. I would recommend that those of you who love her music, take the time to understand this remarkable woman by reading her biography.

Nina Simone proves in this autobiography that she is indeed a survivor...as a black woman trying to make it in a white man's world, Nina Simone soared to fame with her unique style and graceful approach to music. This book traces Nina's history as a young ambitious child in North Carolina to a sophisticated, wise diva in Amsterdam. It is apparent upon reading this book, that it was Nina's destiny to become an International success as a performer. Reading about what was at the heart of her decisions both as a performer and as a civil rights activist in the 60s, enabled me to admire her all the more. This book is essential for Nina fans all over the world!

I always wondered how she put so much passion and anger into her music. Now I know. She lived a very up and down life. She knew what she wanted and went after it no matter how much pain or joy is caused her. After reading this book, I can understand how she performed on stage like it was her last night on earth. She was surrounded by tough situations and a tough life. I applaud her for her fire and passion. People are saying that it wasn't written well enough, keep in mind that she was a musician first and foremost. I was happy to read this book even though the onslaught of sad moments in her life kept coming right at you. I think she was way ahead of her time and I really respect her even more after having read this book.

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