Searching for Robert Johnson: The Life and Legend of the King of the Delta Blues Singers

By Peter Guralnick


Robert Johnson, while probably the most influential of all blues guitarists, is also one of the most obscure. Recognized as an influence on musicians like Eric Clapton and the Rolling Stones, Johnson was poisoned by a jealous husband in 1938—just the age of twenty-seven. This untimely death, his supposed bargain with the devil that enabled him to play guitar, and the ferocity and tormented originality of his work have given rise to a legend that has inspired a Hollywood movie and numerous stories. Peter Guralnick's extended essay about the life of the man and the myth, and of the place and time that produced both, illuminates much of the obscurity around Johnson without forfeiting any of the mystery. This item ships from multiple locations. Your book may arrive from Roseburg, OR, La Vergne, TN. Paperback.

Reviews

Good eBook and helpful one. It really is written in straightforward words and phrases and never confusing. I am just effortlessly could possibly get a enjoyment of looking at a published book.

-- Romaine Rippin

The book is great and fantastic. It absolutely was written very properly and beneficial. It is extremely difficult to leave it before concluding, once you begin to read the book.

-- Lyda Davis II
Robert Johnson – the root source for a whole generation of blues and rock and roll musicians. The most emotionally committed of all blues-singers. The greatest singer, the greatest writer. The greatest folk-blues guitar player that ever lived. The most accomplished and certainly the most influential of all bluesmen. He is a visionary artist. Little wonder then that the man’s life and work have become the stuff of legend. Even the facts of his life are confusing. He was born in Hazelhurst, Mississippi on or around 8 May 1911 and died 27 years later, on 16 August 1938, at Three Forks, near Greenwood, Mississippi; even at a time when life expectancy was shorter, Johnson’s was a short life. Guralnick succeeds in conveying the power of Johnson's music and delineating both its origins and, ultimately, singular genius. His debts to delta blues avatars Charley Patton and Tommy Johnson are solidified, yet, more crucially, Guralnick roots Johnson's artistic growth in the specific context of this rural corner of Mississippi, at this particular moment between the world wars. He also frankly addresses the potency of Johnson’s myth and an early death that only glorifies the brief, bright arc of his work. Concise, plenty of quotes from his contemporaries, some photos which add context and help to de-mystify the legend. I like the analysis of his playing style, the apparent inspirational genius yet hardworking musicianship he attributes to Johnson. Very readable and enjoyable book.
Guralnick succeeds in conveying the power of Johnson's music and delineating both its origins and, ultimately, singular genius. His debts to delta blues avatars Charley Patton and Tommy Johnson are solidified, yet, more crucially, Guralnick roots Johnson's artistic growth in the specific context of this rural corner of Mississippi, at this particular moment between the world wars. He also frankly addresses the potency of Johnson's myth and an early death that only glorifies the brief, bright arc of his work. Reviewed in the United States on January 12, 2015. Format: PaperbackVerified Purchase. Great book for serious blues scholars, though the author looks a Johnson through idolatrous eyes. Read more. Helpful. King of the Delta Blues Singers is a compilation album by American Delta blues musician Robert Johnson, released in 1961 on Columbia Records. It is considered one of the greatest and most influential blues releases. In 2003, the album was ranked number 27 on Rolling Stone magazine's list of the 500 greatest albums of all time. The album compiles sixteen mono recordings, nine of which were previously available as 78 rpm records on the Vocalion label, originally recorded during two sessions in 1936 and After the appearance of King of the Delta Blues Singers, Johnson's reputation steadily grew. His music was heard, and imitated, by a coterie of prominent young musicians. The most storied of the classic Delta bluesmen, his legend had its roots in a failed quest to find him. The search had begun in 1938. That such sentiments almost certainly travesty Robert Johnson's life and work does not change the lines of cultural descent connecting Johnson's Hellhound on My Trail with Van Halen's Runnin' With the Devil; or, for that matter, the parallel lines of cultural descent connecting the gangster folk music of Leadbelly with the gangsta rap of. 