Ebook Directory
the best source of ebook

The book was found

Bessie

PDF
Adobe
DOWNLOAD EBOOK

Synopsis

Imperative for all jazz aficionados. DS Publishers Weekly

Book Information

Paperback: 253 pages

Publisher: Stein & Day (January 1, 1972)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0812817001

ISBN-13: 978-0812817003

Product Dimensions: 6 x 1 x 9 inches

Shipping Weight: 10.4 ounces

Average Customer Review: 4.6 out of 5 stars 25 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #12,039,523 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #78 inÃ Â Books > Arts & Photography > Music > Musical Genres > Rhythm & Blues #1119 inÃ Â Books > Arts & Photography > Music > Musical Genres > Soul #1202 inÃ Â Books > Arts & Photography > Music > Biographies > Rhythm & Blues

Customer Reviews

"The most devastating, provocative, and enlightening work of its kind ever contributed to the annals of jazz literature." ---Los Angeles Times --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Chris Albertson is the acknowledged authority on Bessie Smith. A longtime contributor to Stereo Review, Down Beat, Saturday Review, and other publications, he has written extensive liner notes for jazz and blues albums and has produced a wide array of recordings, radio, and television programs.Robertson Dean has recorded hundreds of audiobooks in almost every genre. He’s been nominated for several Audie Awards, won nine Earphones Awards, and was named one of AudioFile magazine’s Best Voices of 2010. He lives in Los Angeles, where he records books and acts in film, TV, and (especially) on stage. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Bessie Smith is near the top of my lists of artists I’d love to go back in time to hear, if I had access to a time machine. No footage, save "St. Louis" Blues, of any of her performances exists. And while she left a treasure trove of recordings from nearly every phase of her career (except for the last),

very little of her story has every been told except for repeated myths.This book rights that egregious wrong is righted by Chris Albertson’s book. Meticulously researched, Albertson’s well written book is the most intimate look at Smith’s life we are likely to get. Much of what Albertson recounts, in fact, comes directly from people who were close to Bessie Smith, and who worked with her. Along the way, Albertson unflinchingly debunks some of the oldest legends about Smith, up to and including the truth about the circumstances of Smith’s death.Albertson expertly pulls back focus to give readers a picture of the times in which Smith lived and worked, during a 27-year-long career, just enough to give the reader a complete picture before zooming in on Smith again. The result is not just a record of the life of Bessie Smith, but a record of her life and times.Albertson uses Columbia Records archives to tell the story of Smith’s recording sessions throughout her career, offering brief reviews of Smith’s recorded performances, and note her collaborations with other legendary artists from Jellyroll Morton, to Louis Armstrong and Bennie Goodman. It was enough to send me to iTunes to download some of Smith’s catalog. Afterward, I took to reading the book while listening to Smith’s music as a soundtrack. If you’ve heard these songs before, you may listen with new perspective after reading Albertson’s account of the recording sessions.The author makes clear in the introduction and throughout the book the depth of his admiration for Smith and her artistry. It would have been easy for him have given us a hagiography. To his credit, he produces a "warts-and-all" biography that takes into account not only Smith’s talent, but her strengths and weaknesses as a human being in a style that reflects throughout his respect for his subject.The result is as full and human a picture of Smith as we’re likely to get, instead of the stereotype of a hard-drinking "blues mama." That Bessie Smith lived much of what she sang about is made clear in the telling of her story, but Albertson writes of her joys and triumphs too. Smith sang the blues, but her life consisted of both joys and sorrows.To tell the truth, I didn’t want this story to end. The last part of the book is perhaps the most compelling, because of Albertson’s portrayal of Smith’s determination to grow and adapt as an artist, and keep up with the changing times. He makes it clear that she was at the beginning of what looked like another upward climb. And even though I knew how it was going to end, I couldn’t help rooting for her. I also couldn’t help wishing that someone had thought to record and/or film her in this last phase, in the midst of evolving. If I had that time machine, this might be the period I’d go back to in order to hear Smith, and to catch a glimpse of what she was becoming.It was in the middle of this that the people knew Smith and were interviewed by Albertson started talking about "the last time I saw Bessie." Like them, I felt her story had ended far too soon. But I was glad I got a chance to read it, as they were glad to have been a part of it.

I discovered Bessie Smith’s music in the late 80’s/early 90’swhen Sony/Legacy released a 4-box "Complete Recordings" seriesspanning her whole recording career from 1923, when shesigned to Columbia Records’ "Race Records" division and becamea huge star with the low-down rawkus blues songs that were popularwith both blacks and whites of the time, all through the 1920’s,to the depression era, where her popularity faded and the real-lifeblues of people on breadlines eclipsed the romantic & hard timesblues in her most popular recordings."Folks don’t wanna hear the blues no ’mo, times is hard!"Bessie was heard to exclaim to her closest freinds.Born in or around April 1894, in Chattanooga, TN intoabject poverty, suffocating Jim Crow racism, child abuse,desolation all around her, the young tall stringy black galnamed Bessie Smith learned to scrap for survival at very early age.Her and her brother Clarence took to the streets at a young ageas "buck dancers" and minstral-type skit performers,which over time, Bessie developed perfect comedic timing,slick dance moves, presence, and a voice that could stop peoplein their tracks and put them in a trance!People who heard Bessie in person said that her singing wasclear, powerful and went straight to your soul!It was like a religious experience some said, except in her daythe blues was seen as crude and profane by narrow-minded churchtypes who saw her as a tortured soul singing the devil’s musicwho would surely burn in hell for all eternity!The author of this book had at his disposal the invaluable,totally believable and colorful recantings of Bessie’s niecethrough marriage, Ruby Walker, who traveled & performed with Bessieand who cuts through alot of the folklore surrounding Bessie’slegend, as black artists of that time were not followed aroundby biographers who chronicled their every move.Bessie was a hell of a woman who lived high & low,sang with all her might, fought like a demon, could be thekindest person on earth and at the same time,the meanest nastiest crudest sow ever to draw breath!Black, White, Rich, Poor, Man or Woman...it didn’t matter!She was not the one to cross because BIG BESSIE would beatyou down with her fists, cut you with a straight razor,stab you with a butcher knife or blow you away withher 44. pistol if you pissed her off, disrepected her,or got in the way of her living her life to the fullest!She was strong as a man, could swill down her favoritecorn liquor, eat huge plates of down home soul food,party & screw till the early dawn light, out curse alongshoreman, and even ran 3 blocks with a butcher knifesticking in her gut, chasing a disgruntled man whoshe’d beat up for harrassing her & her chorinesat a back woods party! (A Tough Broad Indeed!!)She once knocked a white man’s teeth out who called hera black ni*#!* and tried to cheat her out of her money!She really dug her young attractive strapping male andfemale chorines and carried on torrid affairs with themwhich were all rife with passion & drama!She even took on the North Carolina Ku Klux Klan in 1928!The things this strong

no-nonsense black woman got away withat a time when blacks (male or female) were still being lynchedin the south is unbelievable! But that was Bessie!!She was a shrewd business woman who was once the highest paidwoman entertainer in the country at a time that was unheard offor a black performer. Her tent & theatre shows were huge bothin the south and in the big northern cities as well...people lined up for blocks to hear and see herweave her mystifying blues spell!But with all of her power, natural talent, the light & dark ofher nature, she was still a woman, a vulnerable little po'black gal from down home who was scarred by her times,and she had horrible choice in men!---Enter Frank Gee,who was her achilles heel, waterloo, love of her lifeand cheif exploiter all-in-one!Her man and her family could get away with using her tono end, and she forgave them things that she would've killedan outsider for! There were periods too, off the road,where Bessie could be downright domestic and dote on herhusband, adopted son, family & freinds.She could be like the sunshine or a hellacious monsoon!!This story has so many layers and textures..great humor,horror, debauchery, devil-may-care attitude, fights, loversof both sexes, great tragedy, etc.All the stuff of a great epic tale by Homer!But like I said, Bessie was a hell of a woman, a pioneer on somany levels, a force of nature and a singer of enormous giftswhose influence continues to reach over near nine decadesand still effects people who hear her or read her story!She truly lived what she sang about!Aretha Franklin, Dinah Washington, Big Maybelle,Big Mama Thornton, Ruth Brown, Janis Joplin, Mahalia Jackson,Tina Turner, even PINK...just a few of the mythic women artistswhose careers span many musical genres and who each became legendsin their own right by putting all of their heart, soul and passioninto their performances...just like MAMA BESSIE did!!She was even a huge influence on GAY DISCO ICON, SYLVESTER!!In fact, she and Ruby used to love to go to the drag pageantsand undercover hole-in-wall gay joints back in the 1920's!!This book is a must read and would make an excellent movie!Don't sleep on this one here!!Her untimely death and funeral has always been wrapped inas much folklore as her colorful life was, but this bookaddresses and explodes the myth from the facts. REST IN PEACE BESSIE SMITH(April 15th 1894 - September 26th 1937)

all me an old soul, but I have always loved Old-school jazz/blues. Although I was introduced to the likes of Ella Fitzgerald and Louis Armstrong, it was Bessie Smith that became my favorite. What a voice! What emotion! I had always been fascinated about her life and the circumstances around her untimely death (many of which I was relieved to find were exaggerated and/or untrue after reading). I always thought, "Why hasn't someone written a comprehensible biography on her?" One day I did a random search and found that someone actually HAD!I devoured the book. It was thoroughly

entertaining and a definite page turner. It goes into great detail and is never boring and is filled with plenty of humor. As I got closer to the the end, I began dreading Bessie's fate as much as the fact that eventually, the book would be over.Having a decent collection of her work, I found myself going to my iPod and listening to the songs as they were mentioned in the book which enriched the overall reading experience.The book even passed the acid test when I handed it off to my sister who, although never having heard a Bessie Smith song, loved it.Even if you are not familiar with the wonderful music of Bessie Smith, I highly recommend this book. You will enjoy it regardless. I only hope that someday, someone will bring the story of the Empress of the Blues to the silver screen because it sure would make one heck of a film!

She was not the Empress of the Blues for nothing. After reading this book, I would like to challenge Chattanooga, Tennessee to do more for her memory such as telling everyone more about her life and those places here that were associated with this great pioneer.

Download to continue reading...

Blues Legacies and Black Feminism: Gertrude "Ma" Rainey, Bessie Smith, and Billie Holiday Bessie: Revised and expanded edition Blues Empress in Black Chattanooga: Bessie Smith and the Emerging Urban South Sunk Without a Sound : The Tragic Colorado River Honeymoon of Glen and Bessie Hyde Bessie Bessie Smith (American Jazz) Henry and Bessie: What They Did in the Country Fly High!: The Story of Bessie Coleman The Life of Bessie Coleman (Legendary African Americans) Bessie Stringfield: Tales of the Talented Tenth, No. 2

Contact Us

DMCA

Privacy

FAQ & Help