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Sinatra! The Song Is You: A Singer's Art



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Synopsis

Frank Sinatra remains the greatest entertainer of our age, invigorating American popular song with innovative phrasing and a mastery of range and emotion. Drawing upon recent interviews with hundreds of his collaborators as well as with "The Voice" himself, this book is the only full-length work to chronicle, critique, and celebrate his five-decade career. Friedwald examines and evaluates all the classic and less familiar songs with the same astute, often witty, perceptions that earned him acclaim for Jazz Singing. With an authoritative discography and rare photos of recording sessions and performances, Sinatra! is an invaluable resource for enthusiasts and an unparalleled guide through his vast musical legacy.

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Customer Reviews

Not surprisingly, most of Frank Sinatra’s biographers have raked through the muck of the singer’s marriages, divorces, mob connections, and outbursts of foul-mouthed misogyny. Will Friedwald takes a different tack. Oh, the biographical facts are there, but Friedwald is mostly interested in the Voice--that irresistible, inimitable instrument, the absence of which would punch a major hole in the soundtrack of life. This is certainly the best book ever written on Sinatra’s music, which means that it sheds a great deal of light on American pop music in general. And while Friedwald gets downright rhapsodic when it comes to the career highlights, he’s not afraid to tweak Ol’ Blue Eyes when he comes up with a dud. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

This admiring account of Frank Sinatra’s career provides only sporadic glimpses of the singer’s

personal life, focusing instead on the music. Friedwald (Jazz Singing) portrays Sinatra as an artistic rebel in the 1940s who campaigned for style and class against mediocrity and a bottom-line mentality. The crooner from blue-collar Hoboken, New Jersey, spent 20 years in an ultimately triumphant struggle to own and control what he produced, yet by the 1960s, market forces compelled him to work with material alien to his personal taste. Nevertheless, observes Friedwald, whose generally perceptive criticism is laden with superlatives, Sinatra expanded his musical palette while remaining true to his heritage. The colorful, prodigiously researched narrative focuses on Sinatra's collaborations with bandleaders Harry James and Tommy Dorsey, musical arrangers Axel Stordahl, Nelson Riddle and Billy May and songwriter/orchestrator Gordon Jenkins. Copyright 1995 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

I find myself consulting Friedwald's comprehensive treatment of Sinatra's entire recording career practically on a weekly basis. If this opinionated, non-musician's aesthetic judgements are not always on target, the documentation, historical contexts, and wealth of information are simply invaluable. He's also an entertaining, lively stylist, especially when expressing his distaste for some of the low points in Sinatra's recording career, most notably the "Duets" sessions. But the ultimate book about the century's ultimate vocal artist will be one that manages to account for the apparent paradoxes: the brazen and controversial lifestyle alongside the sheer beauty and fragile emotional depth of the art ; the relation between the screen actor and the introspective "saloon singer

What better testimonial can you give to a book than saying it makes you so fired about about its subject that you want to discover more of his/her work? Will Friedwald's Sinatra! The Song is You will delight Sinatra fans and "turn on" anyone even REMOTELY interested in finding out why Sinatra was named the 20th century's Best Singer. It is without question the best book EVER written on Sinatra's music due to its style, details and because Friedwald does not pull any punches: he praises Sinatra for good work and criticizes him for work that falls short. All this is done without pretension, cutesy-ness or padding. The usual personal and professional biographical info is there, but mostly for historical context. Friedwald's interest is in Sinatra the singer -- and in Sinatra's VOICE as an instrument that developed, matured and eventually (and sadly) deteriorated. Going through each performing and recording stage of Sinatra's long career, Friedwald analyzes particular songs, explains Sinatra's trailblazing role in creating thematic "concept" albums, and gives fascinating details on how and why certain classic arrangements and songs were cut in the studio. He praises and blasts Sinatra's various arrangers. What's unquestionable is that Sinatra took this

kind of music to an entirely new level. This book successfully conveys the ARTISTRY of Sinatra's music so you WANT to hear MORE. Reading this book took me from a mild to fanatical Sinatra fan as I started listening to the albums, remembering what I had read and appreciating what Sinatra was doing with his voice. Sinatra! The Song is You heightens an appreciation of a musical genre that is either on it's way out as we move into the 21st century --or waiting for a new innovative artist to come along to revive its popularity and take it to the next level.

Will Friedwald has given us the definitive text on the music of Frank Sinatra. This book deals hardly at all with Frank Sinatra as a person and concentrates instead on Sinatra the consummate musician, analyzing each period in his musical development, and weaving into this the influences of those around him, in particular Axel Stordahl, Nelson Riddle and Gordon Jenkins. Each song is carefully analyzed. And while this would appear to be somewhat tedious, it is a fascinating page-turner. With the comprehensive index in the back, a listener can read up on a song and then listen with a heightened appreciation for what went into creating it.Frank Sinatra is the greatest male vocalist of the Twentieth Century, in my opinion, and this book is the best handbook to understanding his music that exists anywhere.

Perfect all the way around - thank you so much!

Excellent seller and a very good book on the subject.

I'm a huge Sinatra fan. Greatest singer ever. This book disects all the songs, not just what the author thinks, but many,many quotes from people he worked with.

To learn about Sinatra the person, buy Kitty Kelley's well researched, balanced study (...An Unauthorized Biography). For Sinatra the loving, over-indulgent if absent father, get Nancy's book. If you love the Sinatra sound, approach to each song and changing emphasis over his career, this book is a must. Make sure you set some money aside as, for each chapter read you'll find yourself on ordering more Sinatra CD's.

This was a Christmas gift and the recipient was very pleased with it. I guess I'll post more when I hear a review of the book!

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