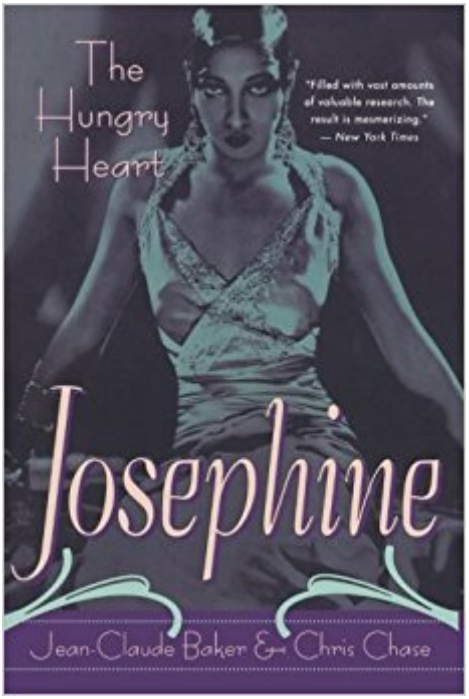
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Josephine: The Hungry Heart



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Synopsis

Based on twenty years of research and thousands of interviews, this authoritative biography of performer Josephine Baker (1906-1975) provides a candid look at her tempestuous life. Born into poverty in St. Louis, the uninhibited chorus girl became the sensation of Europe and the last century's first black sex symbol. A heroine of the French Resistance in World War II, she entranced figures as diverse as de Gaulle, Tito, Castro, Princess Grace, two popes, and Martin Luther King, Jr. Yet Josephine was also, as one critic put it, "a monster who made Joan Crawford look like the Virgin Mary." Jean-Claude Baker's book also reveals her outbursts that resulted in lasting feuds, her imperious treatment of family and entourage members, and her ambivalent attitudes concerning her ethnic background.Reconciling Josephine's many personasÃ¢â ¬â ¢Jazz-age icon, national hero of France, proponent of Civil Rights, mother of children from across the globeÃ¢â ¬â ¢Josephine: The Hungry Heart gives readers the inside story on a star unlike any other before or since.

Book Information

Paperback: 592 pages

Publisher: Cooper Square Press; 1st Cooper Square Press ed edition (July 30, 2001)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0815411723

ISBN-13: 978-0815411727

Product Dimensions: 6.1 x 1.3 x 9.1 inches

Shipping Weight: 2.2 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.4 out of 5 stars 37 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #491,365 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #69 inÃ Â Books > Biographies & Memoirs > Arts & Literature > Dancers #1224 inÃ Â Books > Biographies & Memoirs > Ethnic & National > African-American & Black #2259 inÃ Â Books > Arts & Photography > History & Criticism > Criticism

Customer Reviews

Nearly two decades after her death, the legend of Josephine Baker continues to flourish. Subject of a number of books and recent films, "the most successful music hall performer ever to take the stage" (according to Ebony magazine) was larger than life: She was the toast of Paris in the 1920s, star of stage and screen in the 1930s, Red Cross volunteer and undercover agent in World War II, participant in the 1963 Civil Rights Movement march on Washington, and star of several farewell (and comeback) tours. Baker adopted 12 children of different races and called them her "rainbow

tribe." Jean-Claude, "the 13th of her twelve adopted children," and Chase have crafted a biography rich in anecdotes and personal recollections of many of her fellow entertainers. This intriguing story is recommended for most public libraries. Previewed in Prepub Alert, LJ 4/15/93.- Carolyn M. Mulac, Chicago P.L.Copyright 1994 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

Josephine Baker "adopted" 14-year-old Jean-Claude when he waited on her in a Paris hotel. Although they didn't meet again until the last years of Josephine Baker's crazy, improvised life, Jean-Claude sustained an intense fascination for this most original and flamboyant of women and, after her death, devoted himself to learning as much of the truth about her as he could. His is not a scholarly biography but rather an impassioned, bemused, frank, and fond portrait of a woman who reinvented herself as often as the moon changes shape. Josephine, the daughter of an unloving black mother and an unidentified, most likely white father, became stagestruck early on and quickly left her miserable childhood behind to begin her metamorphosis from a poor, gawky, clowning youngster into an international sex symbol. Jean-Claude does a fine job of chronicling Josephine's progress from chorus girl to the hottest commodity in Paris during the heady years between the world wars. Hard as she worked on perfecting her talents, Josephine remained a wild child, capricious, manipulative, mercurial, and sexually voracious. Jean-Claude reveals all about Josephine's many conquests of both sexes, her penchant for telling lies, and her extreme eccentricity, but he always makes sure we recognize her unfailing sense of humor and endless craving for admiration. As we watch Josephine grow from chanteuse to hero of the Resistance, from seductress to adoptive mother of 12 children of different racial backgrounds, we marvel at her resiliency, zest for life, and sheer chutzpah. Donna Seaman --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

Extremely breezy, in depth and well told story of Josephine Baker by her adopted son. Gets into the sordid details, which are always a crowd pleaser. But beyond that, the little known story of how she got to BE Josephine Baker, the folks who helped her and hindrred her along the way from the slums of St. Louis to her own nightclub in Paris during the golden era of the 20's and 30's and beyond. And certainly the rugged stuff from her bleak beginnings that ached her heart, clawed at her self esteem and identity - all of which both drove her and got in he way. What a tremendous human being. And again, extremely well written, almost conversationally, by Jean-Claude.

This was an excellent, very personal and intimate bio of one of the most fascinating women of our time. The author had an obvious bias in that he was one of the subject's adopted children, and worked with Ms. Baker later in her life. But he was totally transparent about his love for her as well as the way she used those who loved her, when necessary, to further her career or bail her out of her many life woes. Bottom line, a terrific read. Very entertaining and informative, especially in how different life was for African Americans in public living and working in France, where Ms. Baker was an iconic personality and a virtual national treasure, versus her trips "home" to the U.S., where she was treated with disdain at best and outright prejudice and persecution at worst. She was quite a character!

This was the second biography I read on her within a week. The experiences of Jean-Claude add a level of authentication to the life of this eclectic and complex person. The other book (the Josephine Baker Story) combined with "The Hungry Heart" gives the reader the full story. It's the poor girl getting the early knocks in life rising to stardom through her self determination and personality. Her talent seems to get better with age and she becomes an icon in France through her years on stage and amazing efforts during WWII. Her maturity brings more eccentric behavior while she was at the core of civil rights in the U.S. Truly an amazing woman. Read them both and maybe more.

Written by one of her (unofficial and not legally adopted) children this was a much more detailed and insightful story of the life of this unique, one of a kind entertainers. The book contains photographs that I have not seen in other biographies I have of Baker. Highly recommended for those who find Josephine Baker a fascinating figure.

This is a thorough, comprehensive biography that sweeps you through history with a very personal examination of this astonishing entertainer. It reads like a novel as it paints a picture of an extraoordinary rise of this woman from very humble beginnings.

I'm about 1/3 of my way through this, but so far I'm really enjoying it. Compared to other biographies I've read, this one appears to tell her story from a neutral perspective. Jean-Claude discusses both her best and her worst moments in her life which, to me, paints a full picture of what she's gone through. I'll probably be rereading this after I finish. :D

Very well written and researched. I came to this book knowing very little about Josephine Baker.

Now I feel as if I knew her intimately. The prose is very tight and flows well. Even though Jean-Claude has his own personal feelings regarding, Josephine, he doesn't allow it to influence the telling of her story. Although his personal memories of Josephine, really enhance the story. Very easy read. Josephine was quite a character and was very human. I highly recommend this book for anyone wanting to get to know the real Josephine Baker.

I have always been curious about the great Josephine Baker so I picked up this book and what a treat!. I absolutely loved this book, reading of her early days in America and her adversity. Her success in Paris and Europe as well as her constant strings of crash and burns, what an amazing life. I thoroughly enjoyed reading about JB's involvement with the civil rights movement which is something not widely known or discussed. She is a hidden pioneer in the civil rights movement but is hardly if ever mentioned, this book helps to remedy that.

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