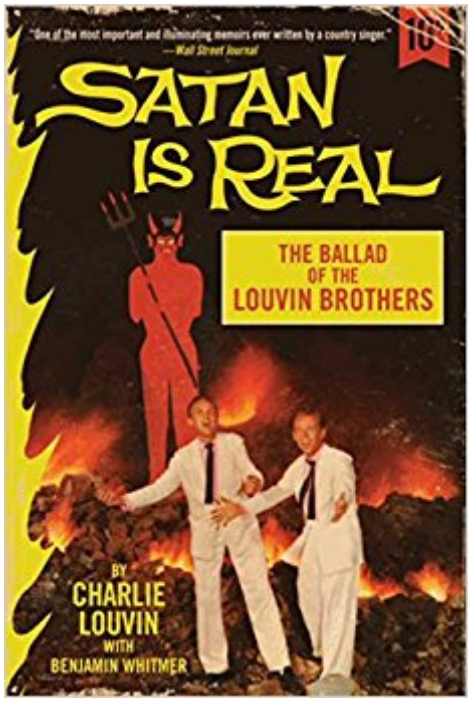
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Satan Is Real: The Ballad Of The Louvin Brothers



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Synopsis

Get ready for one of AmericaÃ¢â ¬â„¢s great untold stories: the true saga of the Louvin Brothers, a mid-century Southern gothic Cain and Abel and one of the greatest country duos of all time. The Los Angeles Times called them Ã¢â ¬Å“the most influential harmony team in the history of country music,Ã¢â ¬Â• but Emmylou Harris may have hit closer to the heart of the matter, saying Ã¢â ¬Å“there was something scary and washed in the blood about the sound of the Louvin Brothers.Ã¢â ¬Â• For readers of Johnny CashÃ¢â ¬â„¢s irresistible autobiography and Merle HaggardÃ¢â ¬â„¢s My House of Memories, no country music library will be complete without this raw and powerful story of the duo that everyone from Dolly Parton to Gram Parsons described as their favorites: the Louvin Brothers.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Starred Review Born the same year as Ralph Stanley and growing up very similarly on a hardscrabble Appalachian farm, Charlie Louvin gained fame in a brother act, too. Like the Stanleys, Charlie (1927Ã¢â ¬â œ2011) and Ira (1924Ã¢â ¬â œ65) Louvin made songs their mother taught them cornerstones of their repertoire. The songwriting elder brother in each pair drove it to eventual success, until IraÃ¢â ¬â„¢s alcoholism broke up their act, leaving the sober sibling to carry on, to greater fortune. It would be false, however, to say that Charlie achieved greater repute on his own, for he and Ira had set the gold standard for harmony singing in country music. They did it by ear and intuition, Charlie reveals, freely exchanging melodic and harmonic lines in the same song, though

Ira invariably sang the highest notes. Louvin concentrates on his and IraÃ¢â ¬â„¢s relationship in this book, completed just two months before his death. Collaborator Whitmer wisely lets it seem entirely an as-told-to effort, like StanleyÃ¢â ¬â„¢s beautifully vernacular Man of Constant Sorrow (2009). Though probably as religious, Louvin is an earthier speaker than Stanley, more personally revealing, too, so that his is a case study vis-Ãƒ Â -vis the social history Stanley affords. ItÃ¢â ¬â„¢s no less marvelous, thoughÃ¢â ¬â •a real classic of Americana. --Ray Olson --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

Ã¢â ¬Å“One of the most important and illuminating memoirs ever written by a country singer.Ã¢â ¬Â• (Terry Teachout, Wall Street Journal)Ã¢â ¬Å“I think IÃ¢â ¬â„¢ve already found my favorite book of 2012.Ã¢â ¬Â• (Chris Talbott, Associated Press)Ã¢â ¬Å“Satan Is Real has the best-designed book cover of 2012 .Ã¢â ¬Â• (Paper Magazine)Ã¢â ¬Å“The anecdotes alone offer significance to any person interested in the anthropology of Americana music. Magnanimous without feigning and brusque without malice, Charlie LouvinÃ¢â ¬â„¢s clear-eyed commentary is straightforward and unapologetic.Ã¢â ¬Â• (Oxford American)Ã¢â ¬Å“Masterful [and] graceful.Ã¢â ¬Â• (Alec Solomita, Wall Street Journal)Ã¢â ¬Å“Raw honesty, genuine grit, common sense, and smokinÃ¢â ¬â„¢ down-home flavor.Ã¢â ¬Â• (Publishers Weekly)Ã¢â ¬Å“A real classic of Americana.Ã¢â ¬Â• (Booklist)Ã¢â ¬Å“The mix of light and darkness that filled their music was mirrored in their lives.Ã¢â ¬Â• (Ian Crouch, The New Yorker)Ã¢â ¬Å“[A] chilling portrait of a brilliant musician intent on self-annihilation.Ã¢â ¬Â• (Kirkus)Ã¢â ¬Å“Grand themes of life, death, religion, salvation, damnation, human choices and, sometimes, joy.Ã¢â ¬Â• (Randy Lewis, Los Angeles Times)Ã¢â ¬Å“Simple and plain-spoken, yet powerful and resonant.Ã¢â ¬Â• (Daily Journal)Ã¢â ¬Å“There was something scary and washed in the blood about the sound of the Louvin Brothers.Ã¢â ¬Â• (Emmylou Harris)Ã¢â ¬Å“CharlieÃ¢â ¬Â|was a true punk, in the best sense of the word.Ã¢â ¬Â• (Lucinda Williams)Ã¢â ¬Å“You canÃ¢â ¬â„¢t find anybody, I donÃ¢â ¬â„¢t think, that was not inspired by them.Ã¢â ¬Â• (Vince Gill)Ã¢â ¬Å“They influenced everybody.Ã¢â ¬Â• (Phil Everly)Ã¢â ¬Å“The BurritosÃ¢â ¬â„¢ favorite artists.Ã¢â ¬Â• (Gram Parsons)Ã¢â ¬Å“The Louvin Brothers were my favorite when I was young and growing up in the business.Ã¢â ¬Â• (Dolly Parton)Ã¢â ¬Å“Probably the greatest traditional country duo in history.Ã¢â ¬Â• (Grove Dictionary of American Music)Ã¢â ¬Å“The most influential harmony team in the history of country music.Ã¢â ¬Â• (Los Angeles Times)Ã¢â ¬Å“One of the pre-eminent brother acts in country music and an inspiration to several generations of rock musicians.Ã¢â ¬Â• (New York Times)

Of course the stories Charlie Louvin tells are fantastic. The time he and his brother sneaked a listen to Roy Acuff, and later the time Johnny Cash sneaked a listen to them. The shiny hucksters. The small-time radio gigs. Crammed inside a tool shed to try out for the Opry, over and over. Roy Acuff's people calling him a liar. Hank Williams passed out drunk in a Shreveport gutter. Korean War. Walgreen's lunch counter. All of the "success" of his later years.In addition to the telling great stories and showcasing his devotion for his brother, Charlie Louvin got it right in the way the stories are presented. Louvin and Ben Whitmer have put together a phenomenal book in terms of structure, for one thing. Each story is presented in a few pages -- sometimes three, sometimes five or six. Each one can stand all alone, like a short story, but each story informs the entire narrative, like chapters in a book.This book is kinda like the quilt your grandmother and her friends had hanging from that frame in the ceiling, the one they worked on every afternoon while you watched tv and drank iced tea and listened to them out of the corner of your ear. Each little square they worked into the quilt had its own narrative, its own reason. And they worked, piecing them together in a tapestry, the whole being so much more than the sum of its parts. Each square a work of art, and the whole quilt a piece of each of them, a memory of warmth, passed down for generations.Charlie Louvin told great stories, and Benjamin WhitmerÃ Â Pike (Switchblade)Ã Â has worked them together into an amazing collection.Whether you're interested in country living or country music, in American history or personal history, SATAN IS REAL is a remarkable achievement and, more importantly, an amazing and rewarding read.

This book has been reviewed by a number of people already, but I thought I'd pass on a tip about this book, if you somehow missed it-it's that good.Even if you don't like country music (even the original kind-not just the glossy, pop music in a cowboy hat stuff that often passes for country music today-though some of that is good too), you'll find this book worthwhile. Admittedly I'm a fan of the Louvin Brothers early stuff, but this book is so much more than about music. It's about a lifestyle all but gone in America. In the short (2-4 pages or so) chapters you'll begin to see a way of life none of us (thankfully) will ever know. But Charlie Louvin lived it, and he's laid it out in an easy to read format. There's also a number of b&w photographs throughout the body of the book that helps form a better picture of that entire era.Charlie Louvin was the "good" brother, Ira was the one who always got in trouble-throughout his entire life. The book is, by turns, funny, scary, sad, informative, and revealing. From the brother's early days on the farm picking cotton, to the early days of their singing career, to eventual widespread (and well earned) popularity, to Ira's death, this book is hard to put

down. Yes, there’s some foul language included in Charlie telling these tales, but sometimes the choice of words just seems to fit and makes the story somehow more compelling. But this isn’t a book for young impressionable readers-maybe later.As I said, I’m writing this, in my own small way, to alert more people to check this great book out. It’s a slice of life that’s the real deal. And oftentimes you don’t always get the real story, but here you have Charlie Louvin’s look back at his brother, his family, the brother’s career, and their music. It’s all laid out and seems to have the ring of truth about it. But even if only half of the stories Charlie tells are even partially true-what a life! Another cool thing is that the hardcover is made up to resemble a cheap (dime) mass paperback book, using a portion of the brother’s album cover art and title. Check this out, I don’t think you’ll be disappointed.

The word ’legendary’ has been tossed around and diluted so much over the years, that I hesitate to use it here...but, the fact is, the Louvin Brothers (Ira and Charlie) ARE true legends of country music, and their songs have touched and influenced countless performers who are (rather sadly) more widely known in the field.But, one need not be a country music fan to become completely engrossed in this book. In SATAN IS REAL: THE BALLAD OF THE LOUVIN BROTHERS, Charlie Louvin and Benjamin Whitmer have weaved a wonderful collection of anecdotes into a immensely readable biography of the two distinctly different brothers. There is a good amount of comedy in these pages, and a good amount of tragedy. But, through all the triumphs and tribulations, the abiding love between Charlie and Ira really shines through...even when Charlie had to kick Ira’s ass!More than just the story of the two talented brothers, SATAN IS REAL: THE BALLAD OF THE LOUVIN BROTHERS also works as a snapshot of the music and recording industry "back in the day", and includes a number of photographs of the Louvins, their family, and some of their familiar friends.I really enjoyed the story of the Louvin Brothers, and one listen to their music will let readers know why they truly ARE legendary.

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