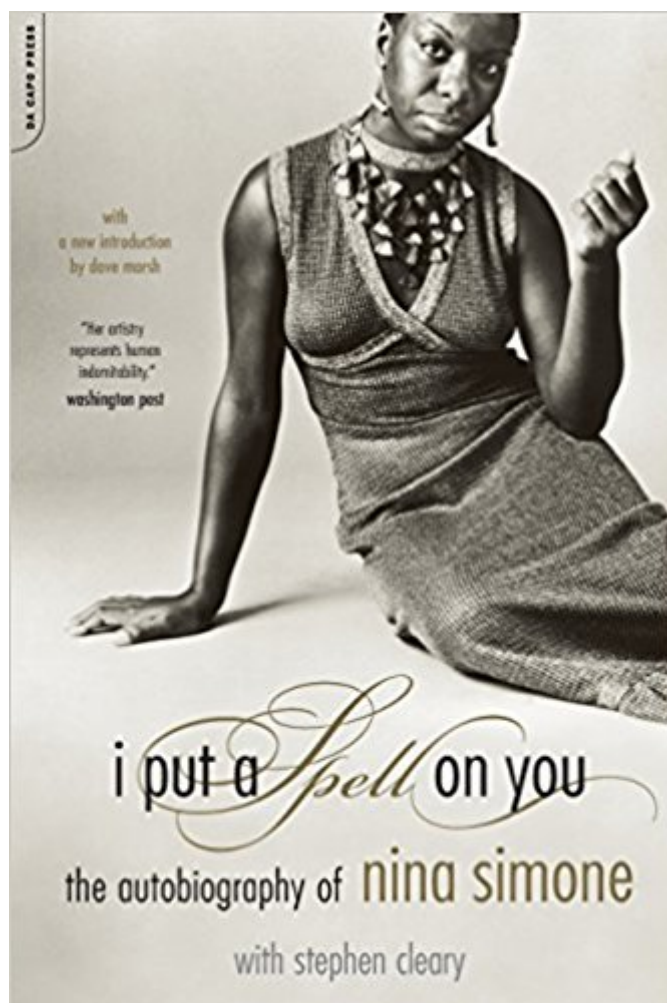


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I Put A Spell On You: The Autobiography Of Nina Simone



Synopsis

The inimitable, gorgeously talented Nina Simone (1933-2003)--the "high priestess of soul"--sets the story of her tumultuous, passionate life straight in *I Put a Spell on You*. Born Eunice Kathleen Waymon in small-town North Carolina, Nina Simone changed the face of both music and race relations in America. She struck a chord with bluesy jazz ballads like "Put a Little Sugar in My Bowl" and powerful protest songs such as "Mississippi Goddam" and "To Be Young, Gifted, and Black," the anthem of the American Civil Rights movement. Here are the many lives and loves of Nina Simone, recounted in her unshakable voice.

Book Information

Paperback: 192 pages

Publisher: Da Capo Press; Reprint edition (September 4, 2003)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0306813270

ISBN-13: 978-0306813276

Product Dimensions: 6 x 0.5 x 9 inches

Shipping Weight: 13.3 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.3 out of 5 stars 47 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #186,239 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #37 in Books > Arts &

Photography > Music > Musical Genres > Soul #41 in Books > Arts & Photography > Music >

Biographies > Rhythm & Blues #42 in Books > Arts & Photography > Music > Biographies > Jazz

Customer Reviews

Simone grew up during the Depression in a small North Carolina town where, thanks to a farsighted music teacher and caring neighbors who paid for her lessons, she was trained as a classical pianist. After attending Juilliard on a scholarship she was rejected by the Curtis Institute in Philadelphia (a setback she attributes to the fact that she is black), and she became a nightclub entertainer, singing and accompanying herself on the piano and, with her skillful improvisations of popular songs in classical style, quickly becoming a star. In the 1960s she joined the civil rights movement and became well known as a protest singer. Then, in the 1970s and '80s, disillusioned with the U.S., she went into self-imposed exile in Africa and Europe. Unfortunately, written with freelancer Cleary, her account of these later years, in which she concentrates on personal problems and a number of tiresome love affairs, lacks the interest of the early part of the book, which describes her unusual childhood and remarkable rise to fame. Photos not seen by PW. Copyright 1991 Reed Business

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Lincoln Center Institute Resource Center blog, 7/9/09"Compelling, honest, and powerful. It is meticulously packed with historical information on America during some of its ugliest times, coming from the voice of someone who lived through it everyday...a voice of a woman who devoted her adult life to changing the face of society.... From a musical standpoint alone, I Put a Spell On You is an extremely valuable read. However, this would also be a unique, relevant, and worthwhile addition to any high-school or collegiate history library, or anyone with an interest in the civil rights movement both politically and artistically."

This review is primarily a response to "Lemas Mitchell's" review entitled "A case study in mental illness, stupidity and pure insanity" :The point is not to ponder how Nina Simone could have, or should have lived her life, but to discover how she did live her life. I don't think Nina Simone had to prove anything or give us any more - she already gave so much of herself through her music. And had she not suffered, her music might not have had the depth and richness that it has. If anything, the rest of us should never forget that we get all the benefits of her suffering without the pain.

Nina Simone led a really interesting life, perhaps not what you would quite expect from a star. I went into this book expecting to read a lot more about her songs, so it was a little disappointing to not learn much about specific songs other than "Mississippi Goddamn", but this book leaves you with a lot to think about. It's sad that, with so many fans who adored the "star", the private Nina Simone spent her whole life looking for love. How different would Nina be if her mother had shown her the love she so desperately needed? If you are interested in the real Nina, Eunice Waymon, I recommend this book. I think it will leave you wondering, as it did me, and perhaps with an appreciation or understanding about other eras and other ways of life.

Fantastic read. If you are a fan of the great Nina Simone you need this book in your collection. You get a glimpse inside her chaotic world and learn more in depth of who this woman really was. This book is a spell bound.

I always wondered how she put so much passion and anger into her music. Now I know. She lived a very up and down life. She knew what she wanted and went after it no matter how much pain or joy it caused her. After reading this book, I can understand how she performed on stage like it was her

last night on earth. She was surrounded by tough situations and a tough life. I applaud her for her fire and passion. People are saying that it wasn't written well enough, keep in mind that she was a musician first and foremost. I was happy to read this book even though the onslaught of sad moments in her life kept coming right at you. I think she was way ahead of her time and I really respect her even more after having read this book.

Thank you:)

Entrancing. She weaves a hypnotic spell over her times and the music of her times. She is brutally honest. Taking no prisoners. It is all there: the rapacious music industry; the heady and revolutionary times of the sixties and the equally precipitous decline of the movement aided by multiple assassination: especially Dr. Martin Luther King. How she and her music became synonymous with the struggle and how the struggle sustained her. Joy, sadness and transformation. A must read.

Love this book. Such a great read.

It's Nina Simone telling her own story -- what more needs to be said!

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