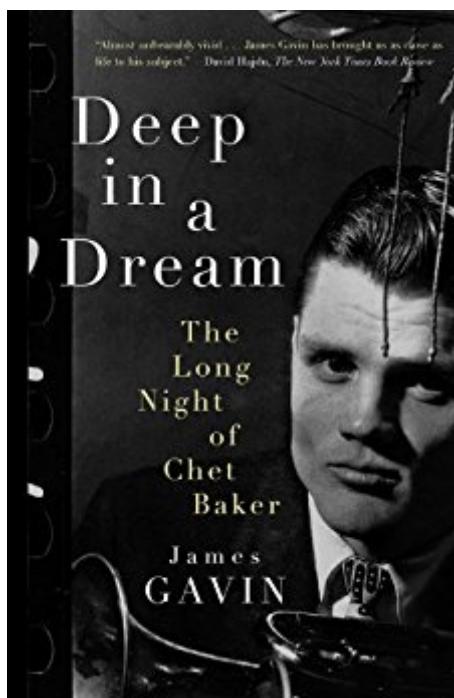


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Deep In A Dream: The Long Night Of Chet Baker



Synopsis

From his emergence in the 1950s as an uncannily beautiful young Oklahoman who became the prince of cool jazz seemingly overnight to his violent, drug-related death in Amsterdam in 1988, Chet Baker lived a life that has become an American myth. Drawing on hundreds of interviews and previously untapped sources, this first major biography of one of the most romanticized icons in jazz gives a thrilling account of the trumpeter's dark journey. Author James Gavin delves deeply into Baker's tormented childhood, the origins of his melancholic trumpet playing, and even reveals the long-unsolved riddle of Baker's demise. Baker's otherworldly personal aura struck a note of menace and mystery that catapulted him to fame in the staid 1950s but as time wore on, his romance with drugs became highly publicized. Gavin narrates the harrowing spiral of dependency down which Baker tumbled and illustrates how those who dared to get close were dragged down with him. This is the portrait of a musician whose singular artistry and mystique has never lost the power to enchant and seduce.

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Customer Reviews

This guy's life, according to this book, is depressing! Its a lot about the music but overflowing with the drugs and crazy behavior. I was curious because of the movie, but the movie is soft compared to the book. The man was a mess and I couldn't find many good things about him. I did, however, buy a cd of Mr. Baker singing. I love his voice on those songs.

A tortured soul, living a hell in a wasteland, howling and desolate, junked up, paranoid, insecure, with the one goal most if not every junky ascribes to...getting the next dose. Did you ever wonder what makes people like the Baker or the Charley Parker , Kurt Cobain or Bix Beiderbecke reach down to the bottom when they have so much to offer. Jaco Pastorius too and Jerry Garcia could have also been lumped into this terrible category. Yet, we as humans are fascinated by this lifestyle and glamorize the "stars" and talents. But do those same people find their life glamorous? Or, are a few of those stars and talents incomplete, seeking, never satisfied, bored, living on some sort of edge which leads them into a self destructive lifestyle. I've read a number of books about musicians who have self-destructed, perhaps I hold a perverse fascination with the phenomena and I can't explain why. As a musician for over 40 years I have always admired the musicianship of the greats like Beiderbeck or Getz or Baker or Pepper, Pastorius and many more, but could never understand the penchant for killing themselves through extreme substance abuse. What were they missing in life, which left them so unfulfilled?

i'm obsessively reading the book.

Having never known about the dirty nuts and bolts of Bakers life., I was lead for years to dwell in the cushy recline of his delicate vocals, and unhurried , shaman playing. This reading, I concur, as tragic as the seemingly well written book reveals., was worth every bit of the highs and bottomless lows it conveys. Well done.

This biography is very well done. Mr. Gavin never tries to sensationalize Chet Baker's life and, if anything, seems at times to not care much for the trumpeter. He praises what he feels are quality works by Baker, but never hesitates to be critical of poor or money-grabbing performances. He refers often to the ethereal, emotive, less-is-more style that so endeared Baker to his fans, but likewise gives voice to opinions that Chet's ascension to fame was due more to his good looks and skin color than his talent.Gavin also looks long and hard at Baker the son, the husband, the father, the lover, the person. He frames the man as having two obsessions: dope and music, both of which

depended heavily on the other. Everything else in life was secondary, with much of it merely a nuisance to Chet. Jazz and heroin were the only things that were easy for him, and he devoted every possible moment to both. Gavin does a superior job of bringing this life to focus.

Not having read other Chet bios I found this one to be well researched and straightforward. It provides a good background and career overview, while also revealing insights not only into the music, but also into the troubled nature of a brilliant musician who, once begun, was never able to overcome his debilitating drug use and dependance. The chapters pertaining to the west coast jazz scene in the 50s with asides about many of the key players, were also enlightening and engaging as pertaining to their influence on Baker and the seemingly inexorable sway he held over many of them. It also offers much regarding his personal relationships, particularly with women, and how more often than not, no matter how poorly he treated them, they were frequently compelled to remain in his orbit as long as he would allow, often to devastating consequence. Overall I found Deep In A Dream to be enjoyable, and one that sheds not only new light on the by now familiar tale of the tortured artist, but also as an artist who has stirred millions with his often profoundly beautiful sound and music over the years.

Good reading

interesting read

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