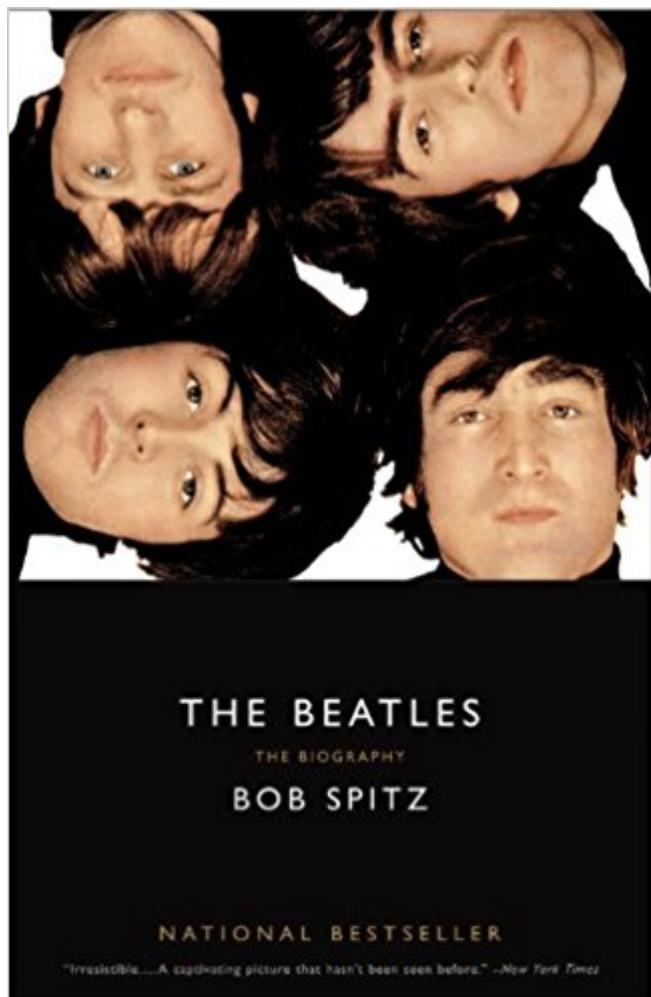


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The Beatles: The Biography



Synopsis

As soon as The Beatles became famous, the spin machine began to construct a myth--one that has continued to this day. But the truth is much more interesting, much more exciting, and much more moving. In this bestselling book, Bob Spitz has written the biography for which Beatles fans have long waited. 32 pages of b/w photos.

Book Information

Paperback: 992 pages

Publisher: Back Bay Books; Reprint edition (October 10, 2006)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0316013315

ISBN-13: 978-0316013314

Product Dimensions: 6 x 1.6 x 9.1 inches

Shipping Weight: 2.4 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.3 out of 5 stars 326 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #112,102 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #20 in Books > Humor & Entertainment > Pop Culture > Beatles #41 in Books > Arts & Photography > Music > Biographies > Pop #118 in Books > Arts & Photography > Music > Musical Genres > Popular

Customer Reviews

Starred Review. With this massive opus, veteran music journalist Spitz (Dylan: A Biography) tells the definitive story of the band that sparked a cultural revolution. Calling on books, articles, radio programs and primary interviews, Spitz follows the band from each member's family origins in working-class Liverpool to the band's agonizing final days. Spitz's unflinching biography reveals that not only did the Beatles pioneer a new era of rock but they also were on the cutting edge of rock star excess, from their 1961 amphetamine-fueled sets in the clubs of Hamburg to their eventual appetites for stronger drugs, including marijuana, LSD, cocaine and, eventually for John Lennon, heroin. Sex was also part of the equation; in 1962, when the band cut its first audition for Sir George Martin, all four members had a venereal disease, and both John's and Paul McCartney's girlfriends were pregnant. Spitz details the tangled web of bad business deals that flowed from novice manager Brian Epstein (though the heavily conflicted Epstein can be forgiven since he was in uncharted territory). Although this is a hefty volume steeped in research, Spitz writes economically, and with flair, letting the facts and characters speak for themselves. In doing so, he captures an ironic sadness that accompanied the Beatles' runaway success--how their dreams of

stardom, once realized, became a prison, forcing the band to spend large parts of their youth in hotel rooms to avoid mobs and to stage elaborate escapes from literally life-threatening situations after appearances. As with all great history writing, Spitz both captures a moment in time and humanizes his subjects. While some will blanch at the unsettling dark sides of the Beatles, most will come to appreciate the band even more for knowing the incredible personal odysseys they endured. 32 pages of b&w photos. Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Edited down from a staggering 2,700 pages, The Beatles took eight years of research and writing. But with some 500 books chronicling their lives, loves, and legacy, one would think The Beatles' story had been adequately told. Adequate isn't authoritative, however, and most critics believe that Spitz, a former manager for Bruce Springsteen and author of Dylan: The Biography, has synthesized his subject masterfully. Though some would prefer hagiography (Charles Taylor of Newsday seems particularly aggrieved the biography doesn't live up to the Beatles' artistic standard; but what has?), the general consensus is that if it's pop-culture history you desire, The Beatles tops the charts. Copyright © 2004 Phillips & Nelson Media, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

You really get your money's worth on this one. Nearly 1000 pages, and pretty much something I never knew before about The Beatles on every one. Spitz really makes you feel like you are right there, with The Beatles during the wild tours, with them in the studio, and with them for all the bickering and for the good times. I don't want to give too much away, but just to say that this is probably the best biography I ever read. Spitz really took his time in developing the characters so you felt like you knew them by the end. I would like to read more by this author, but it doesn't seem like he has written much else recently.

This may sound a little wacky, but I'm reading this book for the fourth time! I've never enjoyed a book as much. It's extremely well written and grabs my attention with every reading. There is a lot of Beatles history in this book which I find to be extremely interesting as well as informative. Also, surprise! I'm in my 80s and sorry that I didn't pay real attention to what my young sons found so compelling in those days. I find it a super read!

I have never read a book this long. However the stories about my all time favorite musical artists

were so compelling, interesting, and amazing that I plowed through this book in about 3 and a half weeks. Each day I couldn't wait to find some time to get back to the boys and see what was going to happen next. I have read books about the Beatles before but this one had so many stories and tales that I had never read anywhere else. I heard Bob Spitz interviewed on late night radio and he told of how each of the Beatles (except John, of course) had given permission to their friends and associates who were close to them through the years to go ahead and tell the truth about what really went on. It's starts off a bit slowly with in depth accounts of their parents and even grandparents for gosh sakes, but then launches into their early years when they met each other -- before they were even the Beatles. Great stories. So many behind the scenes views of their inner lives and inner circles of friends, associates, and the people who came into their lives who made them what they were. Lots of explanations of their failures and shortcomings too. I really felt like I was there., day by day. Great photos too.

Spitz gives us a very, very, very deeply researched book that moves along at a nice clip. Needs a wee bit of editing (the Beatles fan club's trip in Hamburg, for example, is a bit much) as the author is obviously an extreme fan - as any reader of this book needs to be. Luckily for his sales there's plenty of super-fans out there, including myself. The best part of the book was revealing how much a part of the process George Martin and his team of tech heads were to making the Beatles even better. The band used the studio as an instrument, and Martin & Pals were there to show them how to do so. Not a homily to the Fab Four as people - this book shows them as they were, warts and all. You did NOT want to meet Paul or John, not the most decent of people by a long stretch. Bottom line highly recommended...for a Beatles fan who wants to know everything (and I mean everything) about the Fab Four and their music.

This is a long and detailed look at the rise of the Beatles. It is longer than I would have liked, actually, but Spitz is a great writer and it wasn't hard to follow it to the end. The book is especially strong in showing the developing relationship between Lennon and McCarthy, and how the dynamics of that relationship were both incredibly creative but ultimately corrosive. I appreciated the way the Spitz did not feel the need to censor himself when it came to including the negatives of the Beatle's behavior. Like all good biographers, he simply describes what happened without giving his own value judgments upon it. I had only two concerns. First, Spitz spends a LOT of ink on Brian Epstein, the manager. More ink by far than he spends on Ringo, and I think more than he spends on George. Perhaps he had richer source material for Epstein. But for whatever reason, I found it

unbalanced. The other (slight) disappointment was that the narrative focuses much more attention on the rise of the Beatles than of their break-up and the aftermath of that breakup. I realize that Spitz, in giving the story of the group, perhaps rightly felt that his work ends when the band splits up. But I had grown rather attached to the boys by 800 or so pages, and would have loved at least a full chapter or two devoted to an epilogue and evaluation. But I still give the book five stars on its strength or research and writing ability.

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