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Few artists have accomplished what Prince Rogers Nelson has: he has topped the R&B, pop and dance charts, he has overwhelmed musicians and critics with his seemingly endless wealth of talent, he has outraged, and he has inspired.

Possessed: The Rise and Fall of Prince Details

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From Reader Review Possessed: The Rise and Fall of Prince for online ebook

James Perkins says

Once a never-do-wrong pop icon of the 1980s, Prince has climbed to the heights of superstardom and dropped back to near insignificance again. He is an amazingly prolific and talented musician, accomplished on dozens of instruments, and for a decade or so, was an innovative wunderkind thrilling the music world with his creativity and bravado. Unfortunately an enormous ego coupled with a stifling insecurity and a very poor business acumen conspired together to destroy any continued success, as he removed the musicians with whom he collaborated best, his management team, and other key people from his life. He changed his name to a symbol and became a joke of the pop world. Prince is still producing new music, but barely anybody pays attention to him any more; it's his older back catalogue that has influenced new artists today.

This biography provides a rather stark, clinical view of Prince. It does not offer much in the way of author opinion, and is lacking any passion in the writing. Although the average jobbing writer probably doesn't have the time to interview every relevant person and keep to a deadline, the sad fact (admitted to at the beginning in the source notes) is that a lot of the interviews are second-hand, and so the author is not able to add his own colour to the eyewitness comments. Finally, like so many modern biographers, he has not managed to speak to his subject, so he never gets any of the direct thoughts and opinions that would have livened up his account of Prince's life and made it that much better.

julieta says

Why write a book about someone you seem to hate?

Michaela says

Prince is intriguing because he is such a complex, contradictory, damaged, yet wildly talented individual. There is definitely an emotional-stuntedness present, as he is unable to share credit with those who contributed to his success. It will be interesting to see if he is ever to evolve to a point where he is able to have a phoenix-like musical rebirth.

Bert says

While I wouldn't claim this is a great book (though it is plenty good), it is an important one since this is basically a warts'n'all biography that doesn't skate around sensitive areas. Which is a rarity in Prince biographies. Per Nilsen's *Dance Music Sex Romance: Prince: The First Decade* avoided this problem by sticking to Prince's glory years, other books simply ignore the "negative" stories or gloss over them. Though that is something that has changed in recent years: Touré's *I Would Die 4 U: Why Prince Became an Icon* for instance also contains less flattering stories.

Alex Hahn's work was controversial at the time among Prince fans, and still is often derided by "famz" as gossipy and "negative" (to them a cardinal sin -- unless Prince is the one dishing out insults). Utter nonsense. Sure, there are some questionable sections where a single source is relied upon, but none of these contain the kind of accusations that ring false; instead they often fit an established pattern.

Hahn had access to Nilsen's (and Uptown's) research and did some additional work, which results in a book brimming with facts that expand previous knowledge. It's unfortunate that he's forced to provide a full biography, often rehashing histories that should be well-known to fans, but this is inevitable. Few of its stories have been denied over the years, the biggest complaints have been that people felt Hahn had "reported too much".

It remains a great shame that in recent years a talented musician like Prince has squandered his time and effort on substandard output. His fans have often wondered why no in-depth study is done of his post-Warners career, but the answer is pretty straightforward: because it is by and large a bore, a non-event, an endless march towards irrelevance. Most of it is shrouded in mystery since Prince has surrounded himself with acolytes and yes men who at most leak pathetic rumors and occasionally seem to spread disinformation.

I doubt Prince's vault has seen the addition of any masterpieces in the past two decades, whereas leaks have proven that there's still plenty of unreleased gold from the 1980s. Any sensible artist would have initiated a program to curate his past, to offer expanded and remastered editions of his revered classics.

In a way it's a shame Hahn could write this book. Sure, most artists have their bad sides, and Prince's are nowhere as bad as plenty others. But it's disappointing to see so much potential disappear down the drain. Prince could have avoided all that; instead he seems to have almost always picked just about the worst option.

Back in the mid-2000s when Hahn's book was published, fans were already claiming the second part of its title, the "fall", was being disproven by Prince's surge in popularity. But that was a temporary phenomenon, boosted by a calculated campaign where Prince managed to not sabotage himself for once. It was also largely based on nostalgia. It was never going to last.

Rosemary Keller says

I owned this book. It was interesting to read.

Max Williamson says

Certainly not the most flattering of biographies, but certainly revealing, and feels accurate. Next best biog to Dave Hill's (so wish he would update that)

suzy says

This is the 3rd Prince book I've read! Good information for the fan.

Ed says

A good overview of the Purple One's [ongoing] career.

If you played your **1999** tape until it wore out you might like this book.

If you thought **Around the World in a Day** was a good album from Day 1, you might like this book.

If you think *fast food* means hitting a deer at 80 mph...you might be a redneck.

Forrest Jackson says

While Julieta's review gives this book only one star and I'm giving it three, her commentary rings true. The author almost admires Prince's early days, but hardly writes anything positive about his subject. I liked the grit & gossip and I was left with the impression that the bitchy author seemed put-out that Prince is most likely not gay. Even though I don't think I'd re-read this book, I am gonna play my copy of *_For You_* once again, right about now... FJ.

Alexander Adrock says

Incredibly detailed and thorough account of not only the "genius period" of 1978-1987 but the so called "wilderness period" of the mid 90's to the early 2000's. This is the third book on the man I have read and I learned a ton that I didn't know and a bunch that I kinda wish I didn't know about his personal life. My one criticism is the book has an agenda to show that once Sign 'O' The Times its is a clear cut path to mediocrity but it's never that black and white in reality. Definitely a must read if you're a fan and one of the most cited books in Toure's excellent *I Would Die 4 U*.

Cherryls Books says

Very informative rather than insightful and entertaining - very much about Prince's career - rather than just Prince.

David Rullo says

A prescient book, given the cause of Prince's death in 2016.

This is my second reading of the book, so I obviously find value in it. The reader should be aware of a few details, however, such as the author's bias.

After chronicling the rise of the artist and his early hits, the author's point of view takes a dramatic turn and begins to focus on what caused the music to slip from the top of the charts, becoming a cult figure whose albums eventually sold only to this base.

What most readers will find interesting is one of the final paragraphs that speak of Prince's suspected drug use. Along the way, the writer touches on Prince's egotism, sexism, anti-Semitism, Jehovah's Witness conversion, and more.

Be forewarned, the author is a lawyer that represented a website sued by Prince for unauthorized use of his image.

Victor A. says

A meticulously engaging biography of Prince, "Possessed" pulls the reader in and won't let go. This is the portrait of a genius who, through his own machinations, became something of a monster. The book tells the story of a Prince who is self-destructive, narcissistic, insecure and cloistered; a prodigy who changed music while managing to alienate virtually everyone in his life.

By 1982-83, Prince had forced the world to sit up and take notice. Having skillfully blended elements of numerous musical genres to create a uniquely eclectic signature, he was determined to avoid being pigeonholed by a limited artistic identity. This determination, combined with his rising popularity and enigmatic, iconoclastic image began to raze traditional barriers. All of this culminated in and peaked with "Purple Rain"- a body of work that enjoyed universal appeal and propelled him to the top of the pop/rock world. But, ironically, he rebelled (in a sense) against his own success, deciding to follow "Purple Rain" with "Around The World In A Day", a work designed to remind everyone that commercial success could and would be subordinate to the importance of innovative artistry. These reinventions continued, accompanied by critical praise and declining sales, and in the midst of a musical landscape that was ever-changing. In this sense, at least from a commercial perspective, Prince became the victim of a new music world he'd been instrumental in creating.

Published in 2003, this bio ends in 2002. The story of Prince between 1989 and that year is not a pretty one, giving chilling accounts of his treatment others, from subordinates and band members to the Warner Brothers executives who'd helped make him a star. One consistent and recurring theme is his inability to treat those around him with empathy- sometimes common courtesy. By the mid 90's, he'd alienated most everyone and, as he became ever more insular, his creativity suffered along with his image.

But it seems that none of this mattered much to Prince. From the beginning, it seems that total control was his ultimate aim and, in the end, that's exactly what he got. The genius and success of his first ten years as a recording artist provided a lifelong security blanket, one that apparently made him bulletproof regardless of his actions.

Though "Scathing" (as one critic described this book) "Possessed" is written with no obvious agenda. One would be a fool to call it complimentary to Prince on balance, but it does cover his charitable deeds and contributions, his struggles to open up, and flashes of a guy who could be nice. If you don't find Prince Rogers Nelson an interesting character, this biography is certain to change your mind. If you do, then this work should be on your must-read list, because you ain't seen nothing yet.

LuvGirl says

Prince made a fool of this title by proving his durability time and time again. A brilliant song writer, a magnetic performer, and a multi talented instrumentalists. He was a genius, an icon, a legend... There never was a fall. Prince was always there making music on his terms. He wasn't driven by commercial success, but by the sheer enjoyment of his craft. There were always albums for his fans to look forward to, and when it

was realeased, there were always gems to be found. I mean, which other musician can boast that most of his fans have a 300 favorite song playlist? That's doesn't even include all the songs we haven't heard yet that's in The Vault. Prince has always been there lounging in the backgrounds of the hearts of casual and hard core fans alike, awaiting his brilliance. No one forgot about him. It was impossible to, he WAS music...

For the life of me, I don't understand why this book is held in such high regards by some fans. I admit It has some Interesting information, but that doesn't mean that the information is correct. A lot of it is pure speculation, and some of it outright false. While Hahn does a good job at sensationalizing some of Prince's alleged controversial infamy, and he adds an engaging chronological order of Prince's vast catalog of music, It's also full of the author's bias opinions. I have no problem with facts from record sales and charts, but when the author presumes to rip apart songs that are fan favorites, calling them fillers, the reader quickly realizes that the author doesn't understand the music of Prince and is clearly not a fan.

As for the other aspects in this book, I am not confident in the way the information was acquired. Now that it's 2016 and not 2002 some of it has been proven false. I am not saying Prince was perfect. He had his faults like everyone else and was a little more eccentric than the average person, but to judge him fully from one sided comments and disgruntled band mates with bias hearsay would be unfair. Never forget that this is an unauthorized book which is littered with speculation. Remember too that Collaboration on albums and songs goes much deeper than this surface observation. I admit this book is not a chore to read, but it should be taken lightly. Get your facts from a more updated research on Prince. Don't believe the hype. 2.5 stars

Christopher says

I'm the biggest Prince obsessive that I know of. I've been reading Prince biographies since I was a teenager with a dyed black, wavy permed, swept back on one side and over the eye haircut. Possessed: The Rise and Fall of Prince is the absolute BEST, the absolute least ass kissing and the smartest Prince biography that has ever been written. Much of the missing story and alot of the unpublished dirt is here. This with Pers Nilson's Dancemusicsexromance and perhaps John Bream's Prince's Purple Reign, are the best biographies of Prince that we have.

Don't let genius go undocumented, however troubled.
