



My Way

Paul Anka , David Dalton

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teen idol of the 1950s who virtually invented the singer/songwriter/hearthrob combination that still tops pop music today, Paul Anka rocketed to fame with a slew of hits—from “Diana” to “Put Your Head on my Shoulder”—that earned him a place touring with the major stars of his era, including Chuck Berry, Jerry Lee Lewis, and Buddy Holly. He wrote Holly’s last hit, and just missed joining the rocker on his final, fatal plane flight. Anka also stepped in front of the camera in the teen beach-party movie era, scoring the movies and romancing their starlets, including Annette Funicello.

When the British invasion made his fans swoon for a new style of music—and musician--Anka made sure he wasn't conquered. A rapier-canny businessman and image-builder who took his career into his own hands—just as he had from the very beginning, swiping his mother's car at fourteen to drive himself, underage, to his first gigs in Quebec—Anka toured the world until he could return home in triumph. A charter member of the Rat Pack, he wrote the theme music for The Tonight Show as well as his friend Frank Sinatra's anthem “My Way”. By the 1970s, a multi-decade string of pop chart-toppers, including “Puppy Love” and “(You're) Having My Baby”, cemented his status as an icon.

My Way is bursting with rich, rollicking stories of the business and the people in Anka's life: Elizabeth Taylor, Dodi Fayed, Tom Jones, Michael Jackson, Adnan Khashoggi, Little Richard, Brooke Shields, Johnny Roselli, Sammy Davis, Jr., Brigitte Bardot, Barnum & Bailey Circus acrobats, and many more. Anka is forthcoming, funny and smart as a whip about the business he's been in for almost six decades. My Way moves from New York to Vegas, from the casino stage to backstages all over the world. It's the most entertaining autobiography of the year.

My Way Details

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From Reader Review My Way for online ebook

Christopher McDonald says

Paul Anka pulled off the impossible. He was a teen idol in the 50's and managed to survive the changing tide in music. Why? Because he also wrote his songs and reinvented himself when his breed started to die out. With this book, Paul gives you an inside look into what it was like to tour the country during the birth of rock n' roll. These are the type of stories that never bore me. Paul also writes a very telling story of 60's Vegas and the Rat Pack members, particularly Frank Sinatra. I'm actually only giving this book 3 stars, because Paul goes a little too deep into Sin City. The autobiography goes from an ode to music to a love-letter to Vegas right before your eyes. I'm sure people will enjoy that aspect, but I've never been much of a Las Vegas fan... going there or hearing stories of the heyday. Either way, the book is definitely worth the read!

Paul Wilner says

Too funny. Completely sleazy and self-serving, shamelessly namedropping about the little guy's "friendships" with the likes of Kirk Kerkorian and Donald Trump, and his various romances, it's nevertheless compulsive, popcorn reading. The section on the mob in Las Vegas (he suggests that Scorsese's "Casino" was a documentary, more or less) is especially revealing. Not exactly Nabokov (although I think they played the same dive once, back in Jersey), but here's a tell all that actually tells all. Or some. Or more than what the others have told. Buy it, read it, put it on the bookshelf alongside your dogeared copies of Carlyle and Ruskin. Frank would approve - or would he?

Dale Stonehouse says

Since this book has not been rated very highly, I was determined to keep an open mind and remember that great talent is not usually resident in average everyday people. But what a mess. Just when you think a narrative is developing, from the 50s to the 60s, then the 70s, oops, we are back in Vegas in the 60s again. About once every 2 pages. I can only surmise this wildly scattered memoir approximates a casual conversation with Mr. Anka. Hearing that he idolized Sinatra and the Rat Pack about 150 times followed by the disclaimer that Sinatra was a world-class prick makes pretty monotonous reading. I gave this book a second star because it is free of spell-checker produced errors and appears to have been fact-checked thoroughly.

Frances says

I never knew how important an editor was until I read this book which was badly in need of one. The book is repetitive, disorganized, and in parts boring. It sounds like he recorded his musings of his life in a tape recorded and then David Dalton the editor/ghost writer put it into paragraphs and hit spell check. I looked David up and he is a founding editor of Rolling Stone magazine. This book is not a credit to him. Paul is

Paul's biggest fan. He is wonderful and responsible for oh so many things. He went on for pages and pages about Vegas and the mob. I did not learn very much about his family. His first wife of 39 years had class and was a great wife and mother according to Paul. He dumped her because he had to be honest. Then married wife number 2 which turned out to be tabloid fodder and a colossal train wreck. Wife number 1 had the last laugh. The sad thing is that I love his music and wanted to really love him. Glad it was only \$5.99 when I bought it. He did do it his way.

Jose Ponce says

Not well written, but an interesting history of one of America's greatest songwriters. It was disappointing that he did not spend more time writing about his family, in particular, his wife and daughters. Lot's of war stories, some not particularly interesting.

Carol says

Paul Anka covered his early years in great detail. It was interesting to hear about his experiences with others in the music industry. Toward the end of the book, a lot of names seemed to be thrown in for a mention, but with little detail. Perhaps because these people are still alive? Quite a bit of information about the people he met who were connected to the mob.

It was very interesting to read his thoughts on Donald Trump (long before he became our President) who he had some dealings with while performing in the Atlantic City casinos.

The book is somewhat disjointed and jumps around a bit, but would be interesting to a fan or someone with an interest in the music business.

Michael says

I really did enjoy this book although it seemed to be just as much about Frank Sinatra and the Rat pack as much as it did Anka. Never get tired of reading about 'old' Vegas during the 60's.

Penny Peck says

Anka had an interesting life, but unfortunately this narrative is so repetitive that it is boring. Plus, he comes off as quite sexist and patronizing. It is also hard to believe some of his stories - his take on Bobby Darin is full of factual errors - and he brags so much it comes off as defensive. Also, why no mention of son in law Jason Bateman? Still, fans may like this - you can skim through the parts where he retells a story he told 50 pages earlier.

Stansherman says

Totally self-serving with a few bits of gossip, however nothing to make you sit up and take notice .

According to Anka he never met a woman who didn't want to bed him.
Quite an ego

Jan says

Poorly written and it bounced around the decades on a regular basis. The only negatives traits were awarded to people who are deceased, other people were all "very good friend, warm and giving human being", etc. His personal life was particularly incomplete, with a marriage of 38 years ending somewhat abruptly. Not worth the money.

Vanessa Fox says

Wow, I don't know whether to give this one star or five. It's a total train wreck and is really badly written. He repeats himself in the same paragraph, loves run on sentences, and rambles on with stories that have no point ("This guy is a good friend. Last year we went out to his private island for vacation. It was fun". The end.) He also has a tendency to reference stories he doesn't tell ("That was quite a night. What a story." The end.)

He mentions people that he doesn't introduce until chapters later, alludes to events that he assumes the reader should know ("and of course, we all know what happened to random stranger once the feds caught up with him." The end.) and jumps around so much that it's impossible to keep track of a chronology. Which I guess is awesome as a literary device, because the whole thing is a mystery the entire time, but I don't think it's on purpose.

As a memoir, it totally fails -- it's like someone read a draft and said, hey, you need to include things about your own life, and so he went back and added random details: and this one time, we had dinner; this other time, we went on vacation. He never says how he feels about anything or why he did anything. He was married for like 40 years, then got divorced and instantly remarried to his personal trainer and got divorced almost as instantly. But does he have any feelings about that? Any motivation? Not as far as you can tell from this book.

But as a train wreck, it is awesome. He is pretty confident that he is responsible for nearly everything that's ever happened: the success of the Beatles, the longevity of the rat pack, Vegas itself. The book is a chaotic mess of name dropping and an exposé of how everyone in the world but him (an innocent bystander the whole time) was mixed up with the mob, drugs, orgies, and watching women have sex with sheep.

JoAnne Pulcino says

MY WAY

Paul Anka

Paul Anka is credited as being the composer of the theme for the Tonight Show, and is also credited with composing MY WAY which is not quite true. Mr. Anka bought a French song called Comm d'habitude and wrote new lyrics for his idol, Frank Sinatra.

Having read many biographies this particular one was a great disappointment as there is very little about Mr. Anka's life in it other than his wonderful accomplishments. His personal life is passed over so thoroughly that it must have been perfect despite divorce and other challenges. The rest of the book is a mean spirited name dropping about all the people who LOVED HIM.

He claims to be a charter member of the Rat Pack and idolized them. Despite this he proceeds to demean them and tell every gossipy or juicy detail about them that he can come up with. Too bad they're not able to defend themselves.

Mr. Anka knew everyone, everyone loved him and yet he managed to tell stories about Mafia men, business men, other performers and just about anyone you can name.

Maybe you can tell I didn't care for this autobiography.

Karen says

Thoroughly Enjoyed This Book

Paul Anka is nearly six and a half years older than I am, but I remember him on the radio singing his early hits. He is a consummate professional and his early family life is demonstrated in the way he behaves. He is a multimillionaire, but you'll need to read how that happened.

Rick Elias says

Uhhh...

I don't even know where to start. First, this book needed an editor in the worst way. It jumps around chronologically too much, and it is redundant in too many places. Like the park bench ramblings of an a retiree. Second, for someone who has spent as much time with mobsters, the Rat Pack, corporate robber barons, low level thieves and billionaire crooks - what happened to "omertá"? Geez, this guy spills the beans on everybody who ever crossed his path. If Frank was still alive, his legs would be broken. Finally, he's had an admirable career as a songwriter, casino performer, and suck-up to the powerful, rich, and famous...but the guy isn't making any truly great artist or songwriter lose any sleep. He's an accomplished hack at best. Hell of a life though.

Carol says

I am of Paul Anka's generation and a Canadian too. Wanted to like this book since I have always liked the man and his music. However, it really isn't very good. I expected him to tell me a lot more about the Rat Pack, especially about Frank Sinatra. Mr. Anka doesn't "dish" at all in this book. I guess that is admirable, but makes the book a bit boring. Most of his anecdotes and stories are about people only industry insiders

would recognize, and the story always starts with so-and-so is his "very good, very close, lifelong friend." Maybe everyone Anka meets becomes a close friend, but it does seem somewhat over the top and unbelievable. I did learn that he wrote "She's a Woman" for Tom Jones, and that is something I didn't know.
