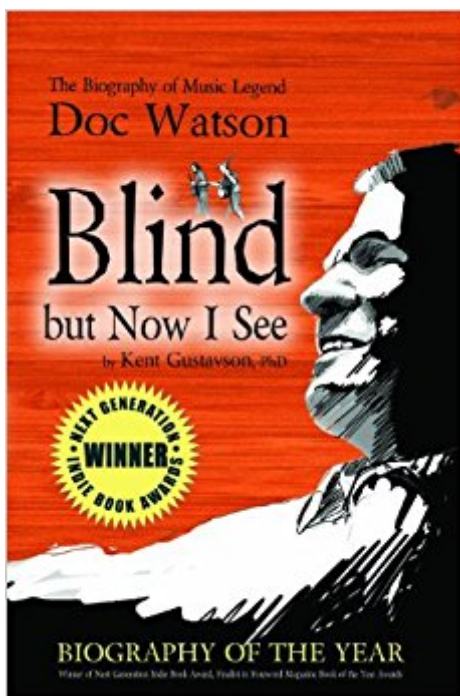


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Blind But Now I See: The Biography Of Music Legend Doc Watson



Synopsis

Blind But Now I See 2nd Ed From the day Doc Watson stepped off the bus in New York City, the North Carolina music legend changed the world forever. His influence has been recognized by presidents and by the heroes of modern music. This is the first comprehensive biography of Doc Watson, with never before released details about the American guitar icons life. Featuring new interviews with popular musicians: Ben Harper, Michelle Shocked, Warren Haynes, Sam Bush, Bela Fleck, Tom Paxton, Maria Muldaur, John Cohen, Mike Seeger, Peggy Seeger, Abigail Washburn, Ketch Secor, Marty Stuart, Tony Rice, Pat Donohue, Peter Rowan, Si Kahn, Tommy Emmanuel, Tony Trischka, Guy Clark, Don Rigsby, David Grisman, Alice Gerrard, Edgar Meyer, Guy Davis, Jack Lawrence, Tao Rodriguez-Seeger, Jean Ritchie, Jerry Douglas, Jonathan Byrd, Larry Long, and many more...

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

If you're a dedicated Doc Watson fan, I think you would find this book an interesting read. It does get into some darker areas of Doc's life, such as Merle's death, but it also is a celebration of the man through the eyes and ears of those who know him. --Steve Carr, docsguitars.com
Hard to believe it's been 50 years since Ralph Rinzler first introduced guitarist Doc Watson to the larger world. It's a fitting anniversary for the first book-length biography on Doc to appear. It was long overdue. This is a valuable, anecdotal work anyone interested in Doc's music and life will enjoy reading. --Bluegrass Unlimited
This is a highly informative, fascinating biography of the great Doc

Watson. What a life. It's a page-turner that will keep you up past your bedtime. Don't miss it. -- The Inland Northwest Bluegrass Association
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Dr. Kent Gustavson is a musician, professor, speaker, oft ghostwriter & ne'er-do-well. He is proficient in traditional instruments such as the banjo, mandolin, upright bass and guitar, but was trained as a classical composer in New York. He has interviewed hundreds of award-winning authors & musicians for his own radio show Sound Authors, and has been featured on National Public Radio's All Songs Considered.

In "Blind But Now I See," Kent Gustafson has written a landmark biography of Doc Watson, one of the most important figures in 20th century American folk music. Drawing from interviews of over fifty luminaries such as Mike Seeger, Jack Lawrence, and Maria Muldaur, the author paints a vivid portrait of Doc Watson, the man and his roots, his career, his virtuosic musicianship, his complex relationship with his son Merle, and his inestimable influence on generations of musicians. For me, as a lifelong fan and early student of Doc Watson's music, "Blind But Now I See" offers many revelations, but two stand out: The first is Ralph Rinzler's role in Doc's early career. I knew the stories about Rinzler "discovering" Doc and persuading him to put down his electric guitar, but I had no idea how instrumental he was in shaping Doc's image and repertoire. I now understand that Rinzler was the man who, in many ways, created the persona that I myself bought into when I was a kid in the 60s. Not that Doc wasn't all the things he presented, he was just a whole lot more which Rinzler insisted he keep under wraps. The other revelation for me was Doc's son Merle who accompanied him for nearly twenty years and died an untimely death. The Merle I knew sat silently on stage while his dad shined in the spotlight. However, the book shows us Merle as Doc's businessman; his driver, navigator, and guide; his liaison to the younger generation; Merle as Doc's eyes and best friend. Almost unanimously, those who knew him spoke of him as a sweet, gentle and generous soul. Merle was talented, intelligent, savvy, and in the end a tragic figure who possibly carried more of a burden than he could bear. Kent Gustafson has written a biography that is insightful and revealing. "Blind But Now I See," gives us Doc Watson the human being: a simple yet

complex man who has lived a life of tragedy and triumph.

Doc Watson untimely death, and the reading of this book was really strange, I downloaded it about a week and a half before Doc got ill, and then passed on. As a old folkie, and as a New Yorker, I was not raised on Docs music. But in the 60's, in Greenwich Village I was exposed to folk and ole time music. And feel in love with acoustic music. Reading Docs story was for me, a chance to see how people lived in the southern mountain region , how hard , but wonderful there lives where. As a city boy, I never knew of the type of poverty which so many people live in, yet they , unlike city folks did not go hungry! This was something I knew about, but never understand till reading about Docs early life. Being blind, learning to get on with life, earning a good living with his natural skills was truly inspirational . Reading about how he got exposed to the world of music lovers, me being one, was great. Seeing, learning how the artist gets from unknown to fame was a great read. I was at so many of his early shows, and later ones too, so it was like the wall between artist and fan was taken down! Docs live was never easy, but it was a full life....he played his music, no matter if the record companies wanted him to fit into one stereotype, his song list crossed from the lonesome mountains to jazz and pop, all the while staying in the style that he was the master of. The book shows / tells of his roots, his family, his love for the music. Even after the death of his son, Doc stayed the course, stayed in the public eye....the sorrow he felt, I never really knew , but the book lays it all out to me seen by the reader. To be felt by the reader. Merle, his son , was a man that I knew of, but did not know of, he was before reading the book, just a great back up for his dad. Now, I knew so much more, this book is not just about Doc, not just about the music, not just about a time in America, but it's a read about a life! If Doc wasn't real I would say that John Steinbeck made him up! It's worth the price and the time invested in reading, to be part of this man, this family, this time in America.

Doc Watson was one of the most influential musicians of the 20th Century. Even though his style was an easy-going, country blues, his technique and some of his style can be heard in the music of Bob Dylan and other musicians. So often the people who have formed the core of music through its development have gone unsung and unnoticed, but Kent Gustavson has written a well-organized biography that will bring Doc Watson into the public light where he deserves to be. The illustrations, photos, and editorial style actually work even in the Kindle format. This book should be in every public library as well as the personal libraries of everyone who loves the history of music.

Oh, it's not that Doc Watson's life doesn't make an interesting story, or that anything here is

inaccurate... it's just that the phrasing so so syrupy and melodramatic. I sometimes found the chore of wading through the flowery attempts at poetic prose enough to make me put the book down for days at a time. If you are a fan of Doc Watson and his music, by all means read this account of his fascinating life. If you don't know who Doc Watson was, then this book is probably not one that will grab your attention for more than a few minutes.

To start, once I was about halfway through this book, I bought two more copies to give as gifts to family and a friend, it is truly such a well written book that it needs to be shared. As a longtime fan of Doc Watson, I've been disappointed to find such little information about his life. That changed with this book. Dr. Gustavson goes into great detail about Doc's parents, his childhood, and eventually his career, and does so in such a way that you feel as if though you are watching it all happen. While a very great deal of Mr Watson's life is revealed in this book, it's never done in a "tabloid" fashion, it is clear that this author has the highest level of respect for the subject, but doesn't try to hide anything either. I never thought that I could ever be a bigger Arthel "Doc" Watson fan, but knowing of the many trials and tribulations that this legendary man faced has increased my level of respect for him 100 fold, both as a singer/guitarist, and as a human being. This book belongs on every bookshelf and in every guitar case in America.

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