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Reckless Daughter: A Portrait Of Joni Mitchell



Synopsis

An intimate new biography of Joni Mitchell, one of the greatest musicians of the twentieth century. Joni Mitchell is a cultural touchstone for generations of Americans. In her heyday she released ten experimental, challenging, and revealing albums; her lyrics captivated people with the beauty of their language and the rawness of their emotions, both deeply personal to Mitchell and universally relatable to her audience. In this intimate biography, composed of dozens of in-person interviews with Mitchell, David Yaffe reveals the backstory behind the famous songs— from her youth on the Canadian prairie, her pre-vaccine bout with polio at age nine, and her early marriage and the child she gave up for adoption, up through the quintessential albums and love affairs, and all the way to the present— and shows us why Mitchell has so enthralled her listeners, her lovers, and her friends. Yaffe has had unprecedented access both to Mitchell and to those who know her, drawing on interviews with childhood friends and the cast of famous characters (Joan Baez, Judy Collins, Leonard Cohen, David Crosby, and more) with whom she has crossed paths and influenced, as well as insightful analyses of her famous lyrics, their imagery and style, and what they say about the woman herself. *Reckless Daughter* tells the story of Mitchell and also of the fertile, exciting musical time of which she was an integral part, one that had a profound effect that can still be felt today on American music and the industry.

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Customer Reviews

“*Reckless Daughter* is a bewitched, bothered, and bewildered portrayal of one of the most beautiful and enigmatic artists of a beautiful and enigmatic period of American life. It is touching,

mystifying, and revealing in equal parts. “Mary Gaitskill” “Joni Mitchell, an artist of innervating and daunting complexity, originality, and importance, could have no better biographer than David Yaffe. He knows the music like the serious musician he is, knows the poetry like the literary scholar he is, and is equally attuned to Mitchell’s tortured soul. On top of all that, he seems to have interviewed everyone important in Mitchell’s life, from her first husband to Leonard Cohen. Reckless Daughter is nothing less than the definitive statement on the life and work of an artist who defies definition.” David Hajdu, author of Love for Sale: Pop Music in America “David Yaffe is an artful and incisive critic who writes with such grace and clarity. With Reckless Daughter, he makes a figure as iconic as Joni Mitchell feel wholly new. This portrait is loaded with revelations, both spiritual and actual. I thought I understood something about Mitchell the way her tough and tender songs move, her sweetness and rebellion but Yaffe understands everything. What a book.” Amanda Petrusich, author of Do Not Sell at Any Price: The Wild, Obsessive Hunt for the World’s Rarest 78rpm Records

David Yaffe was born in Dallas, Texas, in 1973. He has written on numerous subjects (music, film, theater, dance, higher education) for The Nation, New York, Slate, The New York Times, The New Republic, Harper’s Magazine, and other publications. He is currently a professor of Humanities at Syracuse University, and is the author of Fascinating Rhythm: Reading Jazz in American Writing and Bob Dylan: Like a Complete Unknown.

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