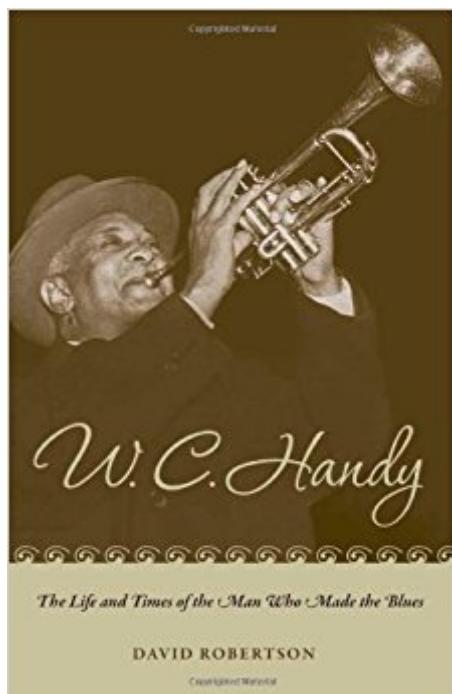


The book was found

W. C. Handy: The Life And Times Of The Man Who Made The Blues



Synopsis

David Robertson charts W. C. Handyâ™s rise from a rural-Alabama childhood in the last decades of the nineteenth century to his emergence as one of the most celebrated songwriters of the twentieth century. The child of former slaves, Handy was first inspired by spirituals and folk songs, and his passion for music pushed him to leave home as a teenager, despite opposition from his preacher father. Handy soon found his way to St. Louis, where he spent a winter sleeping on cobblestone docks before lucking into a job with an Indiana brass band. It was in a minstrel show, playing to racially mixed audiences across the country, that he got his first real exposure as a professional musician, but it was in Memphis, where he settled in 1905, that he hit his full stride as a composer. At once a testament to the power of song and a chronicle of race and black music in America, W. C. Handyâ™s life story is in many ways the story of the birth of our countryâ™s indigenous cultureâ"and a riveting must read for anyone interested in the history of American music.

Book Information

Paperback: 312 pages

Publisher: University Alabama Press; 1st Edition edition (September 8, 2011)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0817356967

ISBN-13: 978-0817356965

Product Dimensions: 5.8 x 0.9 x 9 inches

Shipping Weight: 15.5 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 3.4 out of 5 stars 2 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #707,938 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #194 in Books > Arts & Photography > Music > Biographies > Rhythm & Blues #287 in Books > Arts & Photography > Music > Musical Genres > Blues #4828 in Books > Biographies & Memoirs > Ethnic & National

Customer Reviews

âœRobertson . . . casts overdue light on Handyâ™s essential role in establishing the blues as a popular art.â•â"David Hadju, *New York Times Book Review*âœRobertsonâ™s work is a fascinating look at not only Handyâ™s life but the history and business of American music.â•â"Publishers WeeklyâœAn overdue and highly readable account of the man known as the Father of the Blues.â•â"Los Angeles Times

David Robertson is the author of three previous biographiesâ "of the slave rebel Denmark Vesey, the former U.S. secretary of state James F. Byrnes, and the bishop James A. Pikeâ "and of a historical novel about John Wilkes Booth. His poetry has appeared in the *Sewanee Review* and other journals, and he has provided political and literary commentary to ABC News and the *Washington Post*. He was educated in Alabama and lives in Ohio.Â

Popular music has hundreds if not thousands of genres, i.e. jazz, blues, rock, soul, hip hop, etc. to name just a few of the biggest musical headings. But just about every kind of pop music today can trace its style back to the music of W. C. Handy, the subject of this excellent biography. Handy's life is a fascinating story of an African-American entertainer struggling to make a living as a professional musician and composer in segregated America at the turn of the 20th century. Music was no longer something only produced in grand opera houses and concert halls. Increasingly in the 1890s and 1900s, vaudeville revues and Broadway shows were adding tunes to America's popular music. But possibly the strongest influence came from the traveling minstrel show. Though the idea of white entertainers pretending to be black is seen now as a symbol of oppression, some minstrel shows employed black musicians and promoted them as the "genuine" negro minstrels. W.C. Handy was a solo cornet player and then a band leader in one of these minstrel bands, and David Robertson has written a sensitive and detailed history of a gifted musician working during this difficult period of American culture. It was very strange to read description of black musicians putting on blackface makeup to pretend to be white musicians pretending to be black. Handy is commonly credited with "inventing" the blues, but Robertson correctly portrays Handy as developing his "blues" from the influence of other black musicians and creating a melodic style that became very popular with the general public, which of course was white. This new blues music had a different purpose than the music composed by other African-American musicians like the blues guitar songs of Robert Johnson or the ragtime piano dances of Scott Joplin. Handy's music was about showbiz and has as much a connection to the marches of John Philip Sousa and the salon music of Louis Moreau Gottschalk as it does to the street musicians of Memphis. The book also goes into detail on Handy's struggle to establish publishing rights over his music in an era when music piracy had a different meaning. Robertson has assembled a wealth of resources and memories on Handy's personal as well as professional life, and the book gives a very complete picture of W.C. Handy as an original composer and accomplished artist who deserves recognition as one of America's great musicians.

Unfortunately Robertson is an unreliable source of information. For instance he creatively claims in

the main text that Handy heard the folk song sometimes known as "Hesitation Blues" in 1885. If for some reason you turn to the notes at the back you'll find him admitting that he claimed he heard it in 1885 in the main text because it's "likely" he did, which is a shell game already, but also, it's not likely he did: If you read a good book about the blues such as Peter Muir's *Long Lost Blues* you'll find it suggested that that song dates to more than 20 years after 1885. Handy was inconsistent enough in his memory about which folk song he first heard where in his travels (travels back when he was still rather a self-admitted snob regarding folk music) that we don't need someone adding historical fiction on top of that. This book largely rehashes *Father Of The Blues*, with a resulting main text about 70 pages shorter, leaving out some very good stories. *Father of The Blues*, which Laverne Barber and Arna Bontemps helped Handy assemble, has problems of its own (it's not possible to end up in St. Louis in "92" because you left Bessemer because of the Panic of '93) but it's much better than this book.

[Download to continue reading...](#)

W. C. Handy: The Life and Times of the Man Who Made the Blues How to Play the Harmonica (Diatonic or Chromatic): Combines Step-by-Step Instruction with Practice Songs and Reference Information on Blues & Rock ... (Handy Guide) (Alfred Handy Guides (Alfred)) The Caged System and 100 Licks for Blues Guitar: Complete With 1 hour of Audio Examples: Master Blues Guitar (Play Blues Guitar Book 5) 48 Razor-Sharp 12-Bar Blues Riffs for Swing Bands and Blues Bands: B Flat Instruments Edition (Red Dog Music Books Razor-Sharp Blues Series) 48 Razor-Sharp 12-Bar Blues Riffs for Swing Bands and Blues Bands: Guitar Edition (Red Dog Music Books Razor-Sharp Blues Series) Blues Harmonica Method, Level 2 Book/CD Set An Essential Study of Blues for the Intermediate Player in the Tongue Block Style (School of the Blues) Blues Harmonica, Level 1: An Essential Study of Blues for the Beginning Player in the Tongue (School of Blues) Uptempo Blues: Blues Play-Along Volume 10 (Hal Leonard Blues Play-Along) Christmas Blues - Blues Play-Along Volume 11 (Book/Cd) (Hal Leonard Blues Play-Along) Texas Blues: Blues Play-Along Volume 2 (Hal Leonard Blues Play-Along) The Handy Guide to Difficult and Irregular Greek Verbs: Aids for Readers of the Greek New Testament (The Handy Guide Series) Random House Webster's Handy Grammar, Usage, and Punctuation, Second Edition (Handy Reference Series) Ukulele Chord Dictionary: Handy Guide (Alfred Handy Guide) Mandolin Chord Dictionary: Handy Guide (Alfred Handy Guide) Handy Pocket Guide to Tropical Herbs & Spices (Handy Pocket Guides) Handy Pocket Guide to Tropical Coral Reef Fishes (Handy Pocket Guides) Handy Map of Ireland (Collins Handy Road Map) Handy Guide Johannesburg (Agfa Handy Guides) Roosevelt's Blues: African-American Blues and Gospel Songs on FDR (American Made Music (Paperback)) John A:

The Man Who Made Us (Life and Times of)

Contact Us

DMCA

Privacy

FAQ & Help