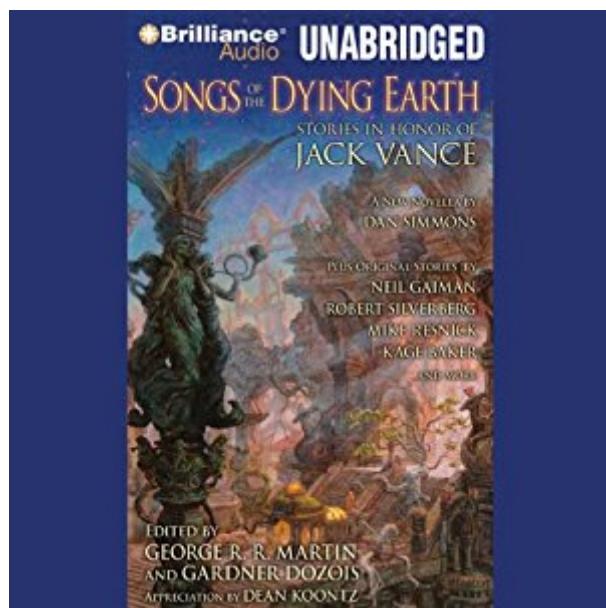


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Songs Of The Dying Earth: Stories In Honor Of Jack Vance



Synopsis

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Customer Reviews

I want to say first of all that I bought this book for its cover and the fact that Gardner Dozois's name was associated with it, as editor, or co-editor. As a lifelong science fiction reader I had a vague knowledge of Jack Vance as being a writer of stories with dragons, and not Tolkien dragons either. Where I got this impression, I don't know, but I never purchased a Vance novel until I read this excellent collection of all original Material. There's not a bad story here. Some of the better ones are Paula Volksky's "The Traditions of Karzh," George R. R. Martin's "A Night at the Tarn House," Tad Williams' "The Lamentably Sad Tragedy..." and Tanith Lee's "Evillo the Uncunning," which is maybe my favorite in this superlative collection. As I said I had never purchased a Vance novel at the time I downloaded "Songs of the Dying Earth"- There are now six of them sitting in my Kindle, and I'm halfway through "Mazirian the Magician," (The Dying Earth) which is great by the way. I'll finish up by saying I rarely reread a book. I'll reread this one. I can only hope there's a sequel in the works.

Whenever I see the name "Vance" on the cover of a book, I have to stop and make sure that I don't already have it. Or, in the old days, to replace a DAW paperback that had fallen apart after repeated readings. Now, I'm in the kindle age and continue to search for Vance's name. In my opinion, not enough of his old Ace, DAW, Dell, etc. PB's have made it to kindle. Wonder why that is. Anyway when I saw that many of today's best and best-paid writers of fantasy (call it sci-fi, if you will) had assembled to create a nearly 700 page tribute to Jack's "Dying Earth" books, I had to have it. Maybe I'm spoiled by low kindle prices, so I thought ten bucks was kinda high. Then I just ordered it. A foreword by Vance, an intro by Koontz, stories by Gaiman, Moon, Martin, Lee... You get the idea. These are writers trying to make a living. And the book is well worth the price.

If you love Jack Vance's stories of Dying Earth, you might try this book. The stories are by good authors, using their interpretation of JV's universe. The product, as one might imagine, is wildly variable. I would rate about a third of the content worthy of Mr. Vance, another third fairly interesting, and the remainder mere dross.

I'm a latecomer to the works of Jack Vance, although I've known about him (or at least his

characters and magic) since I was a child. Now that I have read his Dying Earth stories, I kick myself for not having picked them up sooner. This book may not be Vance, but the writers of these short stories clearly share a love of the man and his setting, and they make an excellent companion to Vance's own pieces.

A fun read, though some stories are better than others. They stay well within the type of Fantasy that Jack Vance used to write the originals. A couple of authors seem a little too eager to bring in Cugel the Clever as a character and suffer for it as creating a new character would be better than trying to force Cugel's personality into situations that make him act out of his normal behavior.

Top team, all authors! Very faithful to the whimsical ways of the master. I read "The Eyes of the Overworld" at an extremely contented juncture in my lifespan (1981, with my first infant son the centre of my attention, hopes and dreams) and immediately set about writing a story er, 'influenced' by Ol' Jack. I've still got the rough handwritten pages (boxfuls of them) and one day it's my hope to improve on them ...or give up. These authors have done a brilliant job and are full of surprises. Fuel the fantasy!

A collection of stories written in Vance's "Dying Earth" by other authors. A bit of a mixed bag. Some strive to achieve Vance's style, others use their own version of that in a more overt way. Some stories build on ideas Vance used, others don't. This isn't pastiche, so don't expect people "channeling" Vance - though one story came so close I chortled with glee the whole way through. I thought the effort worthwhile, with plots that would likely have been used by Vance and characters that may have walked out of his notes. Others do not concur, and I am willing to stipulate that this is probably due to my lack of aesthetic sensibility than anything else. I didn't buy the book looking for "Vance from beyond the grave" though. Where the authors thought they should try for Vance Verisimilitude they succeeded for me. Where they didn't I gloried in some new ideas for an old, old world. Only one story could, I feel, have been omitted. It is a "tie up" story, and though okay from where I sat I don't feel the need for "resolutions" as much as some do, because they so very often fall short of the mark compared to the earlier material the author is straining to pull together. I'm not going to say which stories are my subjects. If you don't feel you can spare the money to experiment, borrow the book from your local lending library.* I enjoyed it, and thought it a worthwhile addition to my Dying Earth books.

I found many of these stories to be worthy of the original master. Original, epic, funny (some of them), unforgettable tales, a treasure trove of high fantasy. Highly recommended!

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