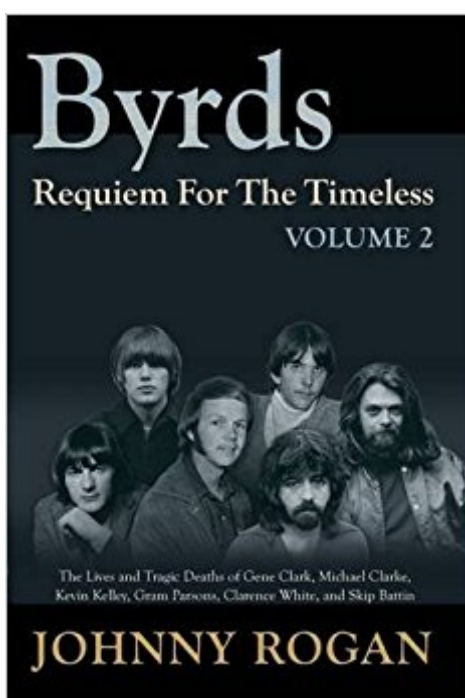


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Byrds: Requiem For The Timeless: Volume 2: The Lives Of Gene Clark, Michael Clarke, Kevin Kelley, Gram Parsons, Clarence White And Skip Battin



Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I received copies of this book early which allowed me to read and review this second volume before the publication/availability date."The Byrds have been part of my life since adolescence.

Symbolically, they represent something beyond my imagination." Johnny Rogan. While the first volume by Johnny Rogan basically focused on the Byrds as a band, this second volume delves into the lives of the six deceased band members in the title. When I reviewed Volume 1 I felt (and still do) that his book was the definitive look at the band. And as such this new volume compliments the first volume. But Volume 2 can also be read as a stand alone book if a deep look at the band, laid out in Volume 1, doesn't appeal to you. Rogan has worked on these volumes for many years with his usual penchant for detail. Taken together both volumes are the most in depth look at the band, the music, and the band members so far. It's difficult to think that there will be another book with even more information on the Byrds. And as Rogan has said--he will probably never have the time to write in depth books on the lives of the living members of the band--which is too bad. This latest volume, with a chapter devoted to each deceased musician, can be looked at as six separate "books", including extensive notes at the end of each chapter. Included are 16 pages of color and b&w photos. The text is written in English usage as opposed to American usage (color spelled as colour, etc.) which somehow enhances and seems authentic to Rogan's years long work on the Byrds. There's a very lengthy discography that takes in each band member's work (living or deceased) before and after the Byrds, plus a handy index. The overall size (and weight) is similar to Volume 1. Rogan has wisely (and rightly) avoided stories found in Volume 1 when writing about his

six subjects. Obviously some of these people are more well known than others, compared to Kevin Kelley, Skip Battin, and even Michael Clarke, all who've had very little written about them. But sometimes there's a disparity between these six people on how much information can be found. There's 333 pages on Gene Clark (not counting notes) and 69 pages on Kelley, or 66 pages on Battin. Rogan has interviewed Clark, Clarke, and Battin at various times in their lives, and has also talked with friends, family, and other musicians, and used secondary sources, to flesh out each of these people as much as possible. Delving into the lives of each band member does mean that some of this information will be familiar to fans who've read other books on certain band members. But the information on Kelley, Clarke, and Battin shines more light into their lives--even if the author (and the reader) comes up wanting more information--some lives--like Kelley's, are still partly a mystery. Rogan's penchant for gathering facts and laying them out in a straightforward context, and in an easy to read style makes this book the equal to Volume 1. Chances are if you're reading this you're a Byrds fan and you've read Volume 1. This second volume wraps up Rogan's decades long look into the Byrds and should be read by every deep Byrds fan. Both volumes, taken together, will be invaluable for anyone wanting to know more about one of the best bands to come out of America in the '60s. And this new volume lays out the fine albums (solo and otherwise) that people like Clark, Parsons, and White recorded before their deaths. With this second volume, both volumes are an invaluable look at the Byrds in its many configurations.

Johnny Rogan has written what might be his final Byrds book, a compendium of six biographies of members who have passed away. Gene Clark and Michael Clarke from the Original Five Byrds receive very personal treatments and their stories can only be described as "harrowing" and "heartbreaking". The Gene Clark chapter is particularly unnerving in the details of the lifestyle choices and circumstances that created a barrier to his professional accomplishment, his personal happiness, and his long-term recognition as a premier singer/songwriter. The notable and notorious Gram Parsons is examined for all his talents and flaws and comes off as an ambitious, dramatically free-wheeling talent, with family and personal demons but with an often endearing persona. Clarence White, famed string-bender guitarist and member of the longest-existing Byrds line-up gets a long overdue personal and professional overview, celebrating his unique, out-sized abilities and his ongoing but "controlled" personal issues, (partly brought on by continuous studio and road work). One Kevin Kelley, a member for about a year alongside his cousin (!) Chris Hillman and Gram Parsons, is revealed as a fine drummer who simply never got recognition or long-term benefits from his talent. Finally, we meet the human being behind Skip Battin, the longest-tenured

bassist. His story is pleasantly compelling: he was a short-term rock star in the early 60's, the oldest Byrd, and the co-writer of what are probably the most controversial songs in the Byrds' history. His professional life beyond the Byrds provides an insider's view of the workings of a rock n roll journeyman's career challenges. (Battin & White are the only two members here who did not die tragically due to life-style issues and choices). Rogan tells these tales compassionately, exhaustively, and intimately while not heaping judgement on the individuals for their personal and professional behavior. By applying objective yet often upsetting detail, Rogan makes these one time "near rock-stars" extremely human despite all their abilities and sometimes alarming foibles. As usual, Rogan uses a prodigious and highly varied quantity of revealing and never-obvious interviews (overwhelmingly done by him since the 1970's) to give the reader a cinematic view of these lives. Anyone interested in behind-the-scenes trials, tribulations, and unsung personalities of 60's and 70's talented "supporting-role" rock musicians will enjoy this honest, and passionate book. It is obviously another labor of love for Johnny Rogan!!.

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