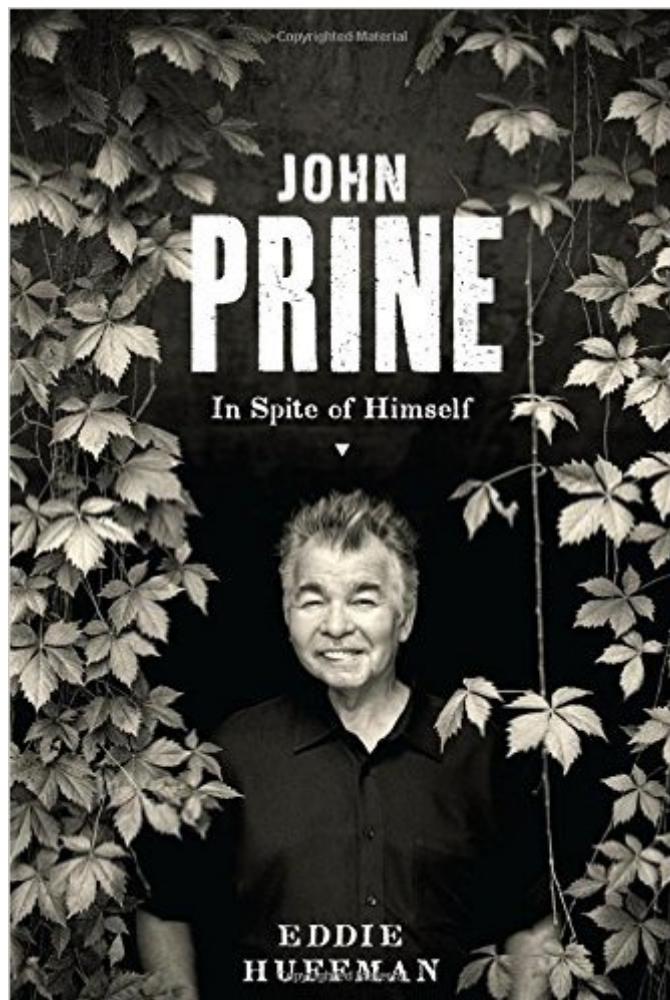


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John Prine: In Spite Of Himself (American Music)



Synopsis

With a range that spans the lyrical, heartfelt songs "Angel from Montgomery," "Sam Stone," and "Paradise" to the classic country music parody "You Never Even Called Me by My Name," John Prine is a songwriter's songwriter. Across five decades, Prine has created critically acclaimed albums "John Prine" (one of Rolling Stone's 500 Greatest Albums of All Time), "Bruised Orange," and "The Missing Years" and earned many honors, including two Grammy Awards, a Lifetime Achievement Award for Songwriting from the Americana Music Association, and induction into the Nashville Songwriters Hall of Fame. His songs have been covered by scores of artists, from Johnny Cash and Miranda Lambert to Bette Midler and 10,000 Maniacs, and have influenced everyone from Roger McGuinn to Kacey Musgraves. Hailed in his early years as the "new Dylan," Prine still counts Bob Dylan among his most enthusiastic fans. In *John Prine*, Eddie Huffman traces the long arc of Prine's musical career, beginning with his early, seemingly effortless successes, which led paradoxically not to stardom but to a rich and varied career writing songs that other people have made famous. He recounts the stories, many of them humorous, behind Prine's best-known songs and discusses all of Prine's albums as he explores the brilliant records and the ill-advised side trips, the underappreciated gems and the hard-earned comebacks that led Prine to found his own successful record label, Oh Boy Records. This thorough, entertaining treatment gives John Prine his due as one of the most influential songwriters of his generation.

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Customer Reviews

A very informative book that I learned a lot from. If you are a fan of John Prine, this is a must read. John Prine's longtime manager, Al Bunetta, passed away in March of this year (2015). He was a good man but protected Prine like a hovering guardian and would not participate in any venture regarding John Prine's work unless he had editorial final say. Al was a great friend of mine and we shared many good times. I did have the opportunity to drink a mason jar full of "apple pie" with John Prine a few years back and he is one of the most down to earth men I have ever met. A real gentleman and an extremely gifted song writer and entertainer. I honestly cannot understand any poor reviews of this book. They are unwarranted and mean spirited, in my opinion. If you like John Prine's songs, you will learn a lot about why and how he wrote them.

Basically interviews by other people. Disappointed that Philip Donnelly wasn't mentioned. I toured with John over 13 yrs (78-92) and not once did alcohol factor into ANY performance. As a matter of fact, we postponed 1 show in DC because he wasn't feeling well.

This is a wonderful overview of the life and work of John Prine, one of America's most prolific songwriters. It is an extremely well-documented look at the singer-songwriter whose songs tell stories of real people. Eddie Huffman's chronology of performances, recordings, albums and relationships with fellow musicians give a complete profile of one of the real treasures in American music.

I'd never heard of John Prine until I picked up this book because a friend told me he'd written some of my favorite songs. My first impression was that Eddie Huffman is one heck of a good writer—smooth, easy, and descriptive. A comparison to Rick Bragg, one of my favorite authors, jumped to mind. My second awareness was that this man has a passion for music and a particular love for John Prine's music. Why else would he devote years of research and travel following Prine's career? I'm always interested in what inspires people to tackle the difficult task of writing a book and what leads them to certain subjects. Any musician would be fortunate to have a devotee, such as Huffman, who collects the details of their career and presents them in such an unbiased perspective. For those who have followed Prine's music in similar fashion, I understand why they might not find anything new or earthshaking in this book. But for someone like myself, who just enjoys listening to music but doesn't know much about what it takes to put it together, this book provides an education. This is not a tell-all, filled with

rumors of failed marriages, stormy relationships and alcohol. You won't find shock waves of hushed-up secrets and forbidden loves. It is, instead, an even-handed documentation of the rise of one man's music career and how he evolved as a writer, musician and singer. Some might point to good luck and the power of net-working—being in the right place at the right time. Others will recognize raw talent that matures. Indeed, the two are not exclusive of one another. I enjoyed the book thoroughly. I gained a perspective of John Prine, and what makes him tick. I learned who wrote some of my long-time favorite songs and a few of the stories behind them. Regretfully, there weren't some pictures to go along with the biography, as I think they would have enhanced the book, but I understand the author received no cooperation from John Prine or his manager in this respect. What a shame. They missed out on the opportunity for a wonderful collaboration and for a man who has collaborated with other writers and singers all of his life, I'm surprised he passed on this one.

At long last and at a fitting time, there is a competent and engaging biography of folk/country performer John Prine, perhaps the greatest songwriter of the last half-century never to become as famous as a number of peers who covered his songs (including Johnny Cash, Bette Midler, and George Strait). Eddie Huffman, a staff writer for the Greensboro (NC) News & Record who's also gotten ink in Rolling Stone and The New York Times, provides an almost encyclopaedic review of Prine's career, which will be of special interest to musicians and contemporary music historians curious about who co-wrote together, and who played with whom in what studios. This is not exactly a hard-luck tale; Prine was discovered fairly early by no less than Kris Kristofferson and Paul Anka, who helped usher him into his first record deal (and it was Kristofferson who memorably reviewed Prine as "so good we may have to break his thumbs"). Huffman also details how Prine's career got an early boost from Chicago Sun-Times writer Roger Ebert, a music lover known much more for his film reviews. But because Prine was so doggedly independent and perhaps a bit too intelligent to be a Top 40 habitue, he would have to settle for respect from his musical compatriots and reverence from a loyal if not massive fan base. The man who could write the lines "For I knew that topless lady / had something up her sleeve" was never going to be an overnight sensation. As befitting a university press author, Huffman doesn't dish much. There are glancing mentions of Prine's drinking, divorces, and bouts with cancer, but this is neither a psychobiography nor a tell-all. Instead it's a journalist's respectful, affectionate, and deeply researched tribute to one of the greatest "Americana" songwriters ever to come down the pike.

Good biography of one of my favorite singer-songwriters. Definitely factual and well written, but it doesn't make this man come as alive as he is. The book seems to get bogged down from the middle with the author's description of John Prine's albums. Its otherwise well researched and a usually good read. If you really want to know about John Prine, listen to his music, and listen closely--its superb. He is a national treasure and one of our best songwriters and commentators on human nature and culture.

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