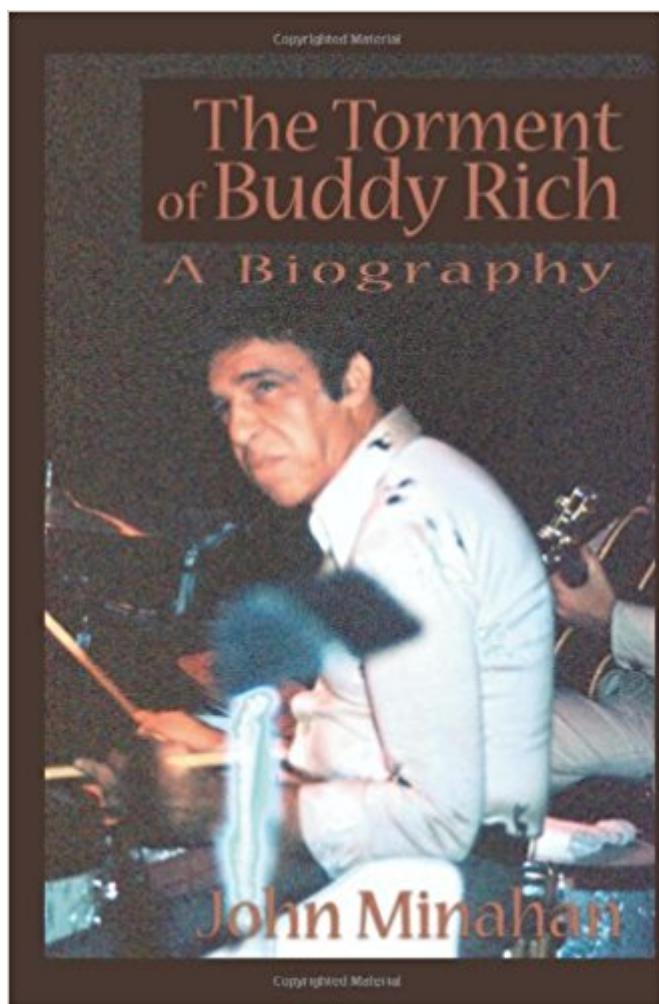


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The Torment Of Buddy Rich: A Biography



Synopsis

Few of us will ever know the satisfaction of becoming number one in our professions; in music, the odds are astronomical. Musicologists tell us that in the ideal--or abstract--situation, an individual is genetically predisposed with a special gift, works at it from infancy, isolated from distractions, and denied any choice in the matter, until the discipline develops into an almost monomaniacal drive for perfection. Buddy Rich achieved that perfection. The cost was very high. This book was written in the form of a diary, researched by the author as he traveled with Buddy Rich to various cities in the US, Canada, England, and Scotland. It was not intended to be an authoritative analysis of an eminent contemporary musician or a detailed biographical treatment. It is a selective account of representative events in the life of a musical genius, an attempt to reflect aspects of his complex personality and the role played by his family, friends, and enemies--real and imagined.

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Customer Reviews

John Minahan is the author of 20 books, including the Doubleday Award-winning novel, *A Sudden Silence*, the million-copy best seller, *Jeremy*, produced as a major motion picture by United Artists, and *The Great Diamond Robbery*, produced as a two-hour television special on CBS. An alumnus of Cornell, Harvard, and Columbia, he is a former writing instructor on the Faculty of Arts and Sciences at Harvard. Mr. Minahan and his wife Verity now live in Palm Springs, California, where he is writing his autobiography, *The Music of Time*.

If you're a Buddy fan, you will, of course, read this book. Minahan traveled and hung with Buddy during the 70's and 80's, taking notes and recording conversations with Buddy and those who were close to him during this time. It seems like a book never materialized--even after Buddy's death in the late 80's--but Minahan finally decided in 2000 to take what he had and publish it anyway. The book is uneven. It occasionally strays into areas that really have little to do with the subject--like the description of a day at Hugh Hefner's Chicago mansion (Buddy behaved with civility). Nevertheless, the intense conversations with Buddy and the highly personal interviews with Marie Rich, Stanley Kay, and others who were close to him are intriguing and emotionally moving. Minahan also avoids the gushing effusiveness toward his subject that marred Mel Torme's otherwise excellent Rich biography. The book has been criticized for its focus on Buddy's "torment," but Minahan gives more-than-adequate support for his thesis. Buddy Rich was an incredibly complex person--a tortured genius who could exhibit the crudest vitriol and then turn around and be the most sensitive, loving person imaginable. This book, in spite of its shortcomings, made me love Buddy even more. I really miss him.

John Minahan has written a beautiful accounting of his experiences with the world's greatest drummer. In *The Torment of Buddy Rich: A Biography*, the reader is treated to a conversation of anecdotes as the author recounts his visits with Buddy. Mr. Minahan's stories are often personal in nature and revelatory! Imagine having a friend who got to spend time with BR and you're sitting across from said friend at a coffee shop while he tells you the intimate (sorry folks - non-sexual in nature) details about his time with Buddy. It is a very easy and interesting read. We get to observe Buddy back stage just before a performance, in those final moments before he explodes upon the audience with all of that energy. We are privy to some "out of the public eye" moments between BR and JC (no not the saviour dude....Johnny Carson!). It's kind of cool to hear (read) how they are with each other when they aren't in front of the cameras. We get to meet Buddy's dad and hear his stories from the vaudeville days. Buddy's sisters and brother even show up for a while and give us some stories of growing up with BR before he came to be TWGD! The book is written in such a way as to put the reader right at the breakfast table at the Playboy mansion or poolside as he and Buddy Rich sun on the hotel rooftop before an evening's performance. But don't let all this breezy light talk mislead you. It is in these relaxed settings that some of the most surprising revelations about the man get unearthed. Admiration and affection for Buddy shine through in Mr. Minahan's writing. Although the author does not allow his feelings to excuse him from asking the more difficult questions as in his conversation with Buddy's father about Buddy's childhood educational

shortchange, they may have affected the extent to which such uncomfortable topics would be pursued. I suppose that such subjects were touched upon at all should be commended. The only real beef I have with this book is the title. I did not get that Buddy Rich lived a tormented life by reading this book. There is no question that being who he was carried its' own burdens in as much that being the world's best at anything has its' inherent pressures. As far as I can surmise from reading this book, Buddy Rich handled those pressures with style and grace. He seemed to understand the blessings that were bestowed upon him and his family, and enjoyed the people in his life (especially his fellow musicians) with verve. I just don't agree with the use of such words as "tormented" and "tragic" to sell more copies. Still, you will enjoy going along with the author as he meets and spends time with Buddy and his friends and family. By the time I had closed the back cover of the book, I felt I had grown in my appreciation of the man and his talents and the character those talents had fostered!

I love Buddy Rich. I still believe he was the greatest drummer ever. I was lucky enough to see him in my youth. He was quite an interesting person as well. This book gave me the background on Buddy that I never really knew. It did explain a lot. If you like Buddy like I like Buddy then buy this and you will not be disappointed. He was a one of a kind. RIP Buddy.

This not a biography or even an interesting or relevant book about Rich at all and using the words "A Biography" in the title is meant to deceive and I consider myself ripped off for buying it.

great book

Bought as a gift and he says he loves it. Tells a lot about Ruch as a drummer

Up Close and Personnal. Thue author was able to interview members of the Rich family to be able to get a better understanding of Buddy of where he came from. I doubt if we will see another Buddy Rich for sometime to come!

I haven't read this myself, but the guy I got it for was really excited to read it. So, not sure how the book itself is yet, but I've got high hopes.

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