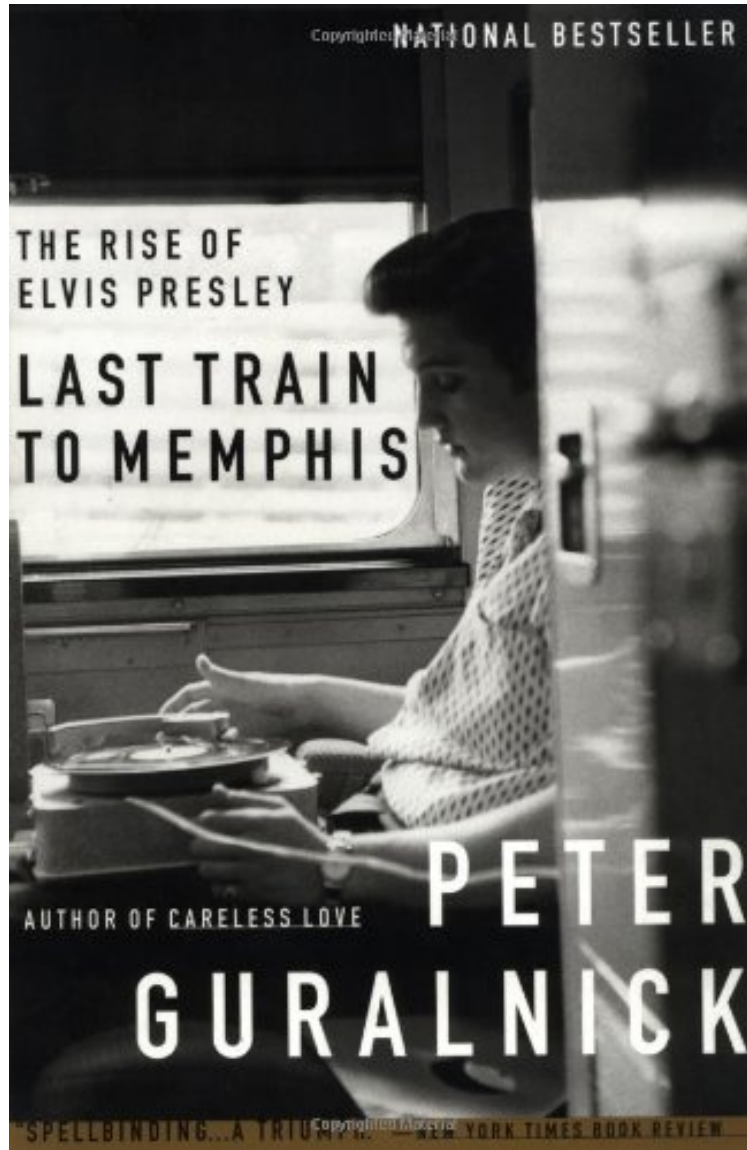


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Last Train to Memphis: The Rise of Elvis Presley

Peter Guralnick

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#23798 in Books Peter Guralnick 1995-09-01 Original language: English PDF # 1 9.25 x 1.38 x 6.13l, 1.45
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Peter Guralnick : Last Train to Memphis: The Rise of Elvis Presley before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Last Train to Memphis: The Rise of Elvis Presley:

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. And he blindly let Tom Parker steer him (fueled only by Parker's greed) through so many bad career decisions By Thomas Labe I've always been fascinated by Elvis. How he went from cutting lawns and truck driving to a teenage idol (all thanks to Colonel Tom Parker). He epitomized something very new in the 1950s - that a star is not born, a star is made through the media/publicity complex. And he blindly let Tom

Parker steer him (fueled only by Parker's greed) through so many bad career decisions, from all the B movies to the tacky Las Vegas shows. And like so many others (Michael Jackson, for example) Elvis died in a hailstorm of drugs prescribed by his own personal physician. Guralnick's book is the most thoroughly researched and even handed treatment of Elvis' life you will find. (And he he warns you in the preface to the companion sequel to this book that you will be reading a tragedy.)

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. I really enjoyed this bio

By Craig Stoughton

For some reason I started listening to Elvis when I was in my mid/late twenties, around 1995. With no provocation, I simply picked up a copy of the Complete Sun Recordings and tried to imagine what it must have been like back in the mid/late fifties to hear this coming across the radio. Tried to put myself in the place of a listener back then. Before the Beatles and the Stones and Zeppelin and all the rest. I then bought more albums, the early RCA albums, the two gospel records, the later records like From Memphis and Elvis Country, simply because I liked the music and his voice. I just read the two volume bio by Guralnick and I really enjoyed how Guralnick, in a non-pretentious way, made Elvis seem real to me. The first volume is a little easier to stomach just because of the subject matter. The invention of rock and how it grew organically from humble beginnings in Memphis and then grew into a national and then global phenomenon is exciting to behold-and Elvis seemed truly on fire. The second volume is sometimes tough to read as Elvis seems to become, well, sort of unlikable. Womanizer, boastful, manipulative, ego driven, self pitying, messianic, and then ultimately miserable. Its almost as if the two books are about two different people in a way. And for this, I credit the author. There is no reason to judge Elvis. Its hard to feel sorry for someone as successful as he was; yet, I found myself pitying him. It seems as if he started with all the best intentions, and then got put onto a train that he couldn't control, couldn't stop, until his body stopped it for him. Sad stuff. But, I think ultimately what Guralnick conveys is a very human Elvis, and a very talented Elvis, who really did try to bring beauty and light into the world and entertain people. Guralnick makes a very complicated person as legible as can be reasonably expected. I don't sense an "agenda" here, just a really well researched, straightforward telling of the man's life. I would say that ultimately, the best way to appreciate Elvis is to listen to the music that he made. His voice tells the whole story. But this was a great read and it has enhanced my knowledge of the man and his music.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Peter Guralnick's "Last train to Memphis" (Elvis's Life)

By Savta

This book is PACKED with not just Elvis but the entire music scene from The Late 40s until the book ends (in his later years .) Another book follows (same author I with details till the ened of his life, and can also be ordered here on . I have not yet finished it and tend to go over certain parts again and again because there is so much there that I need to remember and build on to get the picture of how things are as well as I do so enjoy reading about him as a young man and his climb to the top. I recommend it for those who want a detailed version of Elvis as he broke into the music scene as well as lots of details about his life: where he lived, how he grew up, ...and all of the people that he ran into along the way and especially Beale Street Blues rock and roll and everything music!

From the moment that he first shook up the world in the mid 1950s, Elvis Presley has been one of the most vivid and enduring myths of American culture.

Last Train to Memphis: The Rise of Elvis Presley is the first biography to go past that myth and present an Elvis beyond the legend. Based on hundreds of interviews and nearly a decade of research, it traces the evolution not just of the man but of the music and of the culture he left utterly transformed, creating a completely fresh portrait of Elvis and his world.

This volume tracks the first twenty-four years of Elvis' life, covering his childhood, the stunning first recordings at Sun Records ("That's All Right," "Mystery Train"), and the early RCA hits ("Heartbreak Hotel," "Hound Dog," "Don't Be Cruel"). These were the years of his improbable self-invention and unprecedented triumphs, when it seemed that everything that Elvis tried succeeded wildly. There was scarcely a cloud in sight through this period until, in 1958, he was drafted into the army and his mother died shortly thereafter. The book closes on that somber and poignant note.

Last Train to Memphis takes us deep inside Elvis' life, exploring his lifelong passion for music of every sort (from blues and gospel to Bing Crosby and Mario Lanza), his compelling affection for his family, and his intimate relationships with girlfriends, mentors, band members, professional associates, and friends. It shows us the loneliness, the trustfulness, the voracious appetite for experience, and above all the unshakable, almost mystical faith that Elvis had in himself and his music. Drawing frequently on Elvis' own words and on the recollections of those closest to him, the book offers an emotional, complex portrait of young Elvis Presley with a depth and dimension that for the first time allow his extraordinary accomplishments to ring true.

Peter Guralnick has given us a previously unseen world, a rich panoply of people and events that illuminate an achievement, a place, and a time as never revealed before. Written with grace, humor, and affection, Last Train to Memphis has been hailed as the definitive biography of Elvis Presley. It is the first to set aside the myths and focus on Elvis' humanity in a way that has yet to be duplicated.

.com There's no mention of sequins, drugs, or peanut butter in this understated biography of the teenaged Elvis, a serious and worthy attempt to answer the question, "Who was this guy before he was an icon, the voice of a generation, the King?" The essential clarity and honesty of Guralnick's prose clearly limns the eager, malleable boy whose immense talent changed the course of American music.

From Publishers Weekly

Vol. one of Guralnick's

exhaustive, two-volume biography details the King's first 24 years, leaving off when his rise is interrupted by his being drafted into the army. Copyright 1995 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Library Journal Another work on Presley? Since Guralnick is "one of the best, most respected popular music historians" in the business (Sweet Soul Blues Music, LJ 6/1/ 86), this could be good. Copyright 1994 Reed Business Information, Inc.