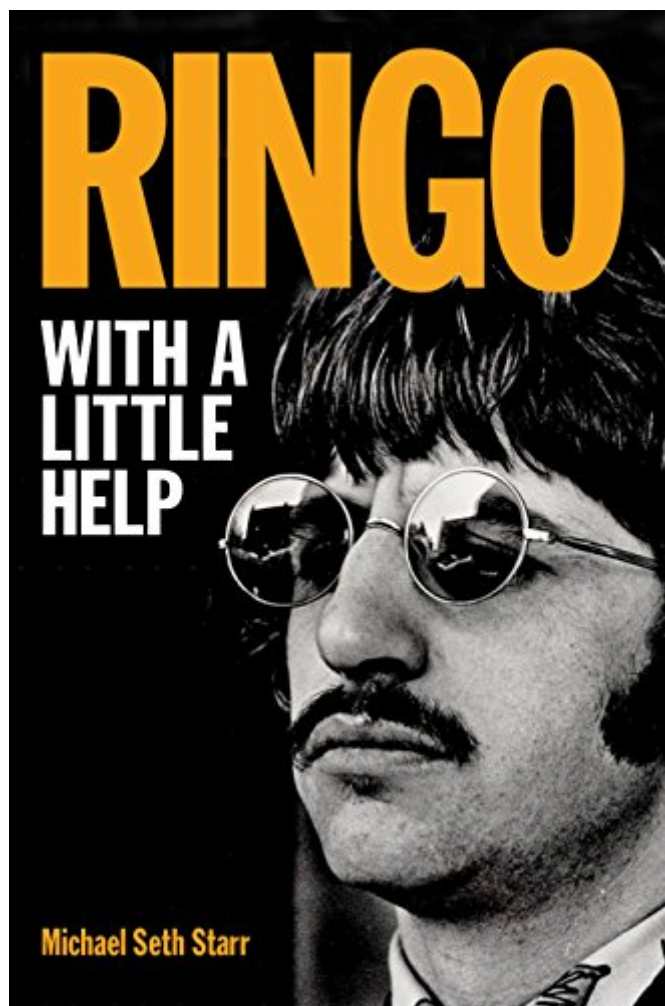


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Ringo: With A Little Help



Synopsis

(Book). *Ringo: With a Little Help* is the first in-depth biography of Beatles drummer Ringo Starr, who kept the beat for an entire generation and who remains a rock icon over fifty years since the Beatles took the world by storm. *With a Little Help* traces the entire arc of Ringo's remarkable life and career, from his sickly childhood to his life as The World's Most Famous drummer to his triumphs, addictions, and emotional battles following the breakup of the Beatles as he comes to terms with his legacy. Born in 1940 as Richard Starkey in the Dingle, one of Liverpool's most gritty, rough-and-tumble neighborhoods, he rose from a hardscrabble childhood marked by serious illnesses, long hospital stays, and little schooling to emerge, against all odds, as a locally renowned drummer. Taking the stage name Ringo Starr, his big break with the Beatles rocketed him to the pinnacle of worldwide acclaim in a remarkably short time. He was the last member of the Beatles to join the group but also the most vulnerable, and his post-Beatles career was marked by chart-topping successes, a jet-setting life of excess and alcohol abuse, and, ultimately, his rebirth as one of rock's revered elder statesman.

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Customer Reviews

This year, 2015, sees Richard Starkey's 75th birthday, and this book is being released to coincide with that event. It is certainly time that the drummer of the Beatles had his own, properly comprehensive, biography as there have only been a couple of weak efforts over the years and so I looked forward to reading this. However, this book begins almost apologetically and I had to wonder why this was? Ringo Starr was the drummer in the biggest band in the world, so what need is there to almost make excuses for writing his biography? I have to admit that this put me on my guard and, having finished reading it, I feel it is something of a missed opportunity. If any of the Beatles were a working class hero, then young Richy Starkey was a much more likely candidate than his future band mate John Lennon. Growing up in the rough Liverpool area of the Dingle, his father walked out when he was three and his mother, Elsie, worked several jobs to try to make ends meet. If their precarious financial situation was not enough, Richy faced long hospital stays due to various illnesses and an interrupted education, which left him very behind academically; a fact he was all too aware of. Much of this has been well detailed; indeed Mark Lewisohn's book, "Tune In," has covered not only each Beatle's childhood, but their family history, and much of this section of the book seems to have been cribbed from both Lewisohn's research and direct quotes from the Beatles' own, "Anthology." Although the author of this book is keen to state that this is not just about the Beatles, but about Ringo's entire life, and career, so far; more than half the book deals with his life up to 1970. Of course, this period will be of the greatest interest to most readers, but there is nothing in here about Ringo's life as a musician which I had not read before. There is his time in skiffle bands, Rory Storm and the Hurricanes, giving up his apprenticeship to go to Butlins, taking his stage name of, Ringo Starr, his time in Hamburg and becoming a Beatle. Much has been made over the years of Ringo replacing Pete Best and this book does not really cover this in great depth as if you are interested in finding out more, I would highly recommend, "Tune In," (anyone interested in the Beatles should really read this) or Spencer Leigh's, "Best of the Beatles." Indeed, I was also perturbed to notice odd errors in this book and, really, with a band as well documented as the Beatles there is no excuse for such mistakes. For instance, it is mentioned that after Pete Best was sacked, he remained under Brian Epstein's managerial thumb, as if he was still drumming for Lee Curtis and the All Stars. However, Lee Curtis was managed by his brother, Joe

Flannery (1998, p. 10) and not Brian Epstein. What has always been obvious is that, once Ringo joined the Beatles he had found the three brothers that this lonely, only child, had always craved. Once accepted into the band, he only ever needed the validation of his fellow band members and was a perfect fit. He was humorous and gentle natured. We go on the Beatles success, Beatlemania and touring, plus Ringo's marriage to Maureen Cox. I did hope that I would learn more about Maureen from this book, but, sadly, she remains a fairly unknown character in the Beatles story. While we have autobiographies from Pattie Boyd and Cynthia Lennon, and Jane Asher was a success in her own right, Maureen never told her story. Yet, this woman was the mother of Ringo's children Zac, Jason and Lee. From, "Thanks, Mom!" on the Apple rooftop to Paul's tribute, "Little Willow," after her death, she was involved in the Beatles story from their beginnings in Liverpool (indeed, Paul dated her before Ringo) and yet, although events in her life are described for example, when Ringo and Maureen and Paul and Jane went on holiday and the press criticised them for not being married, there is a quote from Maureen's father who says her feelings are rarely explored and neither does her personality come alive in this book. Likewise, although there are hints about Ringo's troubled relationship with his children, especially eldest son, Zac, there is little detail about this. The break-up of the Beatles saw Ringo being the first to leave the group and literally walking out of the studio after being fed up with the tension and, "freaked out by Yoko." When the others asked him to return, he was touched to find the studio decorated with hundreds of flowers. However, nothing could hide the hostility for long and there is the infamous incident when Ringo was sent to persuade Paul to delay the release of his first solo album, which resulted in Paul throwing him bodily out of his house. Again, the author makes an assumption, when he suggests that all was well between them by the time of Mick Jagger's wedding to Bianca; and he states that Paul and Ringo chartered a plane together to travel the wedding. Actually, there is footage of guests going to the airport to board a plane which was chartered by Jagger himself and, although Ringo and Maureen are there, as are Paul and Linda they are not together and no one who watches the film of Paul striding through the airport with a face like thunder, holding his new daughter Mary, could say that he looks anything other than tense. Apparently, Paul and Ringo did not sit together on the flight, nor did they speak. Although they would make up, this is an obvious error and was easy to check as Rolling Stone articles covering the events are available online.

for anyone to read. The Seventies were a difficult time for Ringo, as he spiralled into drug and alcohol abuse. With George and Pattie having marital problems and Pattie's affair with Eric Clapton, the situation was made worse by George's affair with Maureen. Oddly, although Eric and George would be friends again, as would George and Ringo, but both George and Ringo's marriages ended in divorce. The mid Seventies saw Ringo in LA, keeping company with John Lennon (separated from Yoko), Harry Nilsson and Keith Moon. It was a jet-setting lifestyle and a time which saw various film projects and album releases, non-stop travelling, a stalling career, various relationships and rumours of financial problems. If the Seventies were bad, the Eighties started even more terribly, with the assassination of John Lennon. However, Ringo had already met and fallen in love with actress Barbara Bach, on the set of "Caveman". At first, it seemed that this marriage too might end in divorce, with fights and self destructive behaviour. However, both Ringo and Barbara finally stopped drinking and have a new, healthy lifestyle and a strong and successful union. As he heads towards his mid-seventies, Ringo is a respected and celebrated musician recently inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, by his old friend Paul, and touring with his All-Starr Band. This book gives a good overview of his life if you have not read it before, but it contains nothing that fans will not already know and is marred by far too many quotes from other sources, rather than original research, and inaccuracies. I feel it is something of a missed opportunity, which is a shame. Lastly, I received a copy of this book from the publisher, via NetGalley, for review.

This is a very good book with a lot of detail. The only "drawback" might be that it is not an authorized version of Ringo's life, but one has no reason to think it is fictional in any sense of the word. It appears to have been extremely well researched. It is well written and easy to read. I imagine every person who becomes famous for any reason, must deal with the life dictated by certain aspects of being well known. Every person has differing aspects in their lives with which they must cope, but the most common denominator being that "Fame is a full-time job," as I once heard Tony Curtis remark to an interviewer. Many people don't know that fact until they're up to their eyes in adoring fans. Many people cannot cope with the life that fame brings; almost everyone has their own way of dealing with it. This is Ringo's story, and is very straightforward in showing his up's and down's throughout the years with The Beatles and afterwards. A good read which will give you some insight into the life of one famous person you may not know that much about. I certainly had no idea about many details of his life, especially after the Beatles. Interesting book for Ringo fans.

RINGO is an intelligent and well written biography of the world's most famous drummer. There was really nothing new on the whole Beatles thing, but it was interesting to view it all from Ringo's perspective. The author also made a glaring mistake here, attributing "Across the Universe" to Paul McCartney. But it was Ringo's post-Beatles life that was most interesting, for this is the lesser known part of his tale. It is amazing that he abused alcohol for as long as he did and is still around today. He seems to have found peace in his old age. Beatles fans should find this an enjoyable ride.

A long and winding story. This story is slow at the beginning since it consists of the same stories about the beginning of the Beatles from prior books. It gets better post Beatles years. It discusses his life with Barbara, his divorce from Maureen who cheated on him. I especially enjoyed the part about his friendship with Keith Moon known as uncle Keith to Ringo's kids. He was their godfather. I would have liked photos of Ringo with the Beatles and Keith, Harry Nilsson, his close friend.

What a perfect biography! It was illuminating, well-researched, interesting and left this reader with such a good feeling about the subject. This lovingly-written book gives lots of information and great anecdotes. It especially gives Ringo his due. I believe it is easy for people to forget that prior to joining The Beatles, Ringo was THE drummer in the area, not just some spare guy that fate dropped in just prior to The Beatles rocket to stardom. I loved the stories about his family, his early girlfriends, his relationship with Maureen and his relationships with his Beatle brothers. John, George and Paul are just supporting players in this biography, which I especially appreciated because after all, this is Ringo's story and he had a story before and most certainly after The Beatles. However, the author has the courage to portray Paul as somewhat of a self-absorbed/self-important jerk (traits I have long suspected). For me, the most illuminating parts described Ringo's years after The Beatles. I knew he, Keith Moon and Harry Nilsson had hung out together, but I had not realized what close friends they really were. I also loved reading about other important people in Ringo's life, including Barbara. Ultimately, it's a great book about a very talented and truly engaging human being, who impacted and continues to impact so many people. He is someone much-beloved by most people in his life and someone who still brings much joy to his fans. We love you, Ringo, and this book is a wonderful tribute to a great artist and even better human!

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