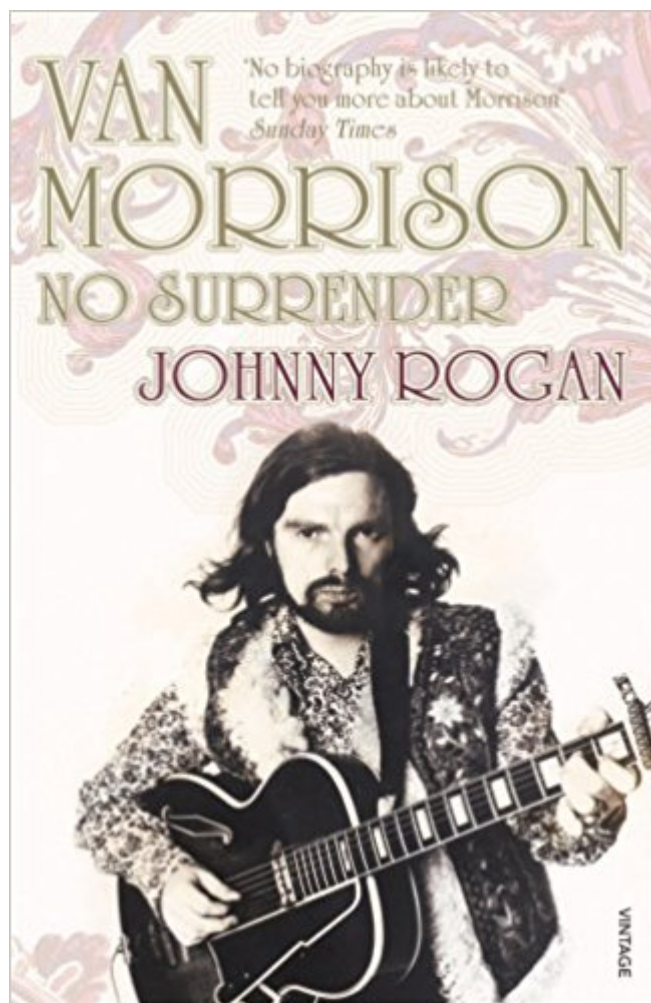


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Van Morrison: No Surrender



Synopsis

In *Van Morrison: No Surrender*, Johnny Rogan has produced a provocative and revelatory biography of the musician, analysing the sense of place in his work and the tortuous journey that took him from local fame in Belfast to international success. Set against the cultural and political backdrop of Belfast, before, during and after the Troubles, *No Surrender* offers a unique and penetrating perspective on Morrison's long career and the times that made him.

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Customer Reviews

"No biography is likely to tell you more about Van Morrison." • The Times

Johnny Rogan has been called "Pop's most eccentric biographer, a fanatical searcher after truth." He is the author of books on the Byrds, Roxy Music, the Kinks, the Smiths, Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young, and John Lennon. His work has been acclaimed endlessly in print and on radio and television.

this is not the first biography of van Morrison I have read, and I now realize a significant fact. actually three. van Morrison is a moody son of a bitch. he does not like to talk about his music. and he will fall for any good looking women who pays any attention to him. being a short, stout and not particularly attractive man myself I understand the last fact best. though well researched rogan's book is unsatisfying in that it is basically a report about what the man has done with his life, but nothing as to why. as with the other books about "van the man" you basically get the sketchiest background about

his early family and upbringing and then a laundry list of his albums, musicians worked with and admired and the litany of his constant woes and tribulations and perceived betrayals by every manager and business representative the man has ever had. it is a long list and apparently he knows how to carry a grudge. but none the less the basic fact remains this, you either love his music or else you think him nothing but an over rated alcoholic derivative irish asshole. i love his music, so in light of his awesome creative output, i could care less about the rest. as it should be with everything in life, think for yourself, enjoy what you like, and who really gives a damn what it matters if anyone else disagrees with you. i guess after reading rogan's book, maybe i do understand the man a wee bit after all. put on an album and get mystified.

Interesting read, although Mr. Rogan includes so much information about the Troubles in Northern Ireland that the book is almost a history of the Catholic/Protestant conflict, as well as a Van Morrison's biography. Half way through, I just started to skip the sections about Northern Ireland. That stuff is too complicated anyway. I mean, I'm wanting to learn about Van Morrison. If I want to learn about the Northern Ireland conflict, I'll read a book solely dedicated to that subject. It's like trying to read a biography of Abraham Lincoln that has a bunch of information regarding the growing of corn in Illinois interspersed through it. Yes, Van Morrison grew up in Northern Ireland and had friends and family there, but early on his music career took him to England and then the States before the Troubles began. Maybe Mr. Rogan was getting paid by the page.

This book has only 62 pages in it. I wish now I had purchased an ex library book for less money and same shipping cost from UK and it is not a hardback book.

Seriously. If you are a fan of Van Morrison's music, if it transports you and takes you away, I recommend that you skip this book. Not that the book is lacking in any way. It is a very thorough exploration of the artist and even his art. The author has gone to the trouble of abundant research about all areas of Van's career and, contrary to what others here have said, I don't think he has an agenda or any hatred for Morrison. I believe that this is an actual portrayal of the man. And that is the problem. Van the man (pun intended) is seriously lacking in the attributes that most of us cultivate to fit in with other humans. The book documents decades of antisocial and often abusive behaviour. It sometimes gets tedious to read about episode after episode of boorishness and selfishness. But the biggest reason why I regret reading the book is that it has made me a bit skeptical of Morrison's work, specifically his lyrics. One area that the author has excelled in is

documenting Van's spiritual quest and hunger for spiritual knowledge. Unfortunately it only shows how Van's philosophy (and lyrics) are simply a cobbled together mishmash of various religions and spiritual viewpoints. What seemed profound to me before seems somewhat foolish now that I know Van is basically full of it. Of course I expect this feeling to lessen somewhat over time; I have been listening to Van's music for decades and he has been one of my favorite artists. But that doesn't change the fact that I have peaked behind the curtain and now wish that I didn't.

A great artist doesn't have to be a nice guy: i.e., Picasso, Frank Sinatra, Bob Dylan etc. The intensively researched biography chronicles how a relatively little-known Belfast blues shouter transformed himself after the break up of the Them and, despite his fractious personality, developed into one of the world's great songwriters and perhaps the most soulful white singer of the modern era. He brought the spirit of transcendence to rock and roll: "the most spiritually transcendent body of work in the rock & roll canon. " For more in-depth analysis of his music, see Greil Marcus's *When That Rough God Goes* writing: <http://www..com/When-That-Rough-Goes-Riding/dp/B00411JQLQ> His importance is well summarized at allmusic.com/rovi:Equal parts blue-eyed soul shouter and wild-eyed poet-sorcerer, Van Morrison is among popular music's true innovators, a restless seeker whose incantatory vocals and alchemical fusion of R&B, jazz, blues, and Celtic folk produced perhaps the most spiritually transcendent body of work in the rock & roll canon. Subject only to the whims of his own muse, his recordings cover extraordinary stylistic ground yet retain a consistency and purity virtually unmatched among his contemporaries, connected by the mythic power of his singular musical vision and his incendiary vocal delivery: spiraling repetitions of wails and whispers that bypass the confines of language to articulate emotional truths far beyond the scope of literal meaning.

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