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# Janis Joplin: Rise Up Singing



## Synopsis

Forty years after her death, Janis Joplin remains among the most compelling and influential figures in rock-and-roll history. Her story is told here with depth and sensitivity by author Ann Angel. She is one of a girl who struggled against rules and limitations, yet worked diligently to improve as a singer. It is the story of an outrageous rebel who wanted to be loved, and of a wild woman who wrote long, loving letters to her mom. And finally, it is the story of one of the most iconic female musicians in American history, who died at twenty-seven. Janis Joplin includes more than sixty photographs, and an assortment of anecdotes from Janis's friends and band mates. This thoroughly researched and well-illustrated biography is a must-have for all young artists, music lovers, and pop-culture enthusiasts.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Gr 9 Up It was 40 years ago this October that the rock singer died from an overdose of alcohol and drugs at the age of 27. From interviews with her friends and letters that Joplin wrote home, Angel pieces together her subject's short life, contrasting her conservative upbringing in a small Texas town with the wild 1960s, vividly portrayed both in descriptions and in excellent-quality, full-color and black-and-white photos on almost every page. Joplin's husky, passionate singing voice was appreciated by other musicians and by her audiences. She loved to sing the blues with the misery and pain that dominated the lyrics. Bessie Smith and Odetta were her heroines. The author points out that despite the fame and fortune that she achieved, Joplin was basically insecure and in need of acceptance. This book is well researched with more than 100 notes referring to

specific quotes from friends, family, and magazines. Teens will be intrigued by the life of this cult figure. Her memory has been kept alive by her recordings and an off-Broadway show, *Love, Janis*, based on letters she wrote to family and friends during her career, which continues to be staged throughout the country. Peggy Fleming, formerly at Churchville-Chili High School, Churchville, NY. © Copyright 2010. Library Journals LLC, a wholly owned subsidiary of Media Source, Inc. No redistribution permitted.

\*Starred Review\* In an introduction to this long-overdue portrait of "the first queen of rock," Sam Andrew, Janis Joplin's former bandmate and best friend, says, "There was electricity in the air when Janis was around. . . . She was vulnerable, powerful, super wide open, talented, and interesting in a kind of terrifying way." Building from Andrew's full-hearted and contradictory description, Angel presents a nuanced account of the groundbreaking musician's life, beginning with her challenging adolescence in Port Arthur, Texas. After giving up on fitting in, she sang along to the blues on long drives with equally rebellious teen friends and learned that she had a powerful voice. Tracking back to Joplin's childhood, Angel then moves on to the singer's early years of studying and music-making before she finally grabbed attention with Andrew's band Big Brother and the Holding Company. Angel writes with both a reporter's forthright, detached tone and a fan's full-hearted enthusiasm, and she includes numerous revealing quotes from friends and family members, all sourced in the appended notes and bibliography. Without sensationalizing, she also discusses Joplin's sex-drugs-and-rock-and-roll lifestyle, which ended with the singer's alcohol-and-heroin-induced death at the age of 27. A groovy page design, patterned in shades of purple and acid green; a lively annotated time line; and unforgettable archival images will pull even more attention to this captivating view of a musician rarely spotlighted in books for youth. Grades 9-12. --Gillian Engberg

I grew up listening and loving Janis Joplin. She was the poster child for all of us "southern gals" who didn't fit in. The first present a boy gave me was her album PEARL. I spent hours in front of the mirror lip-synching "Me and Bobby McGee." Yet what did I really know about her? She died from "drugs" (as they said back in the day) when I was a high school sophomore. I knew she was from somewhere in Texas. And that was it. One of my favorite singers and I knew almost nothing because there was so little written about her back then. I know in the intervening years there have been biographies, but I can't think of one that is as suitable for young adults as this one. To

understand Janis, you have to understand the 60's, and to most young adults the 1960's are as remote and unknown to them as the 1860's. Angel has done her homework well, helping the reader to understand both the conservative, restrictive Texas that Janis longed to escape, and the wild and wooly world of Haight Ashbury and the San Francisco music scene. Janis and her music were products of both environments. While Janis's drug and alcohol use are not soft pedaled, Angel also explains the difference in the laws and mores of the 60's. (I learned that LSD was a legal substance until 1966!) You are taken inside Janis's conflicted soul...wanting to be "the pretty girl" on the one hand, but acting aggressively uncouth to mask this desire. This is a terrific book, well documented.

Such an amazing talent that changed the face of blues/rock and roll. This book brought me closer to understanding the person she really was, or as close to that as is possible with Janis. I see her as a dynamic lady who was bigger than life but at the same time a scared little girl that just wanted to be loved and accepted. This book will bring you closer to her through so many amazing photos and so much information. I wonder what her response would be to hearing about the legend she has become?

Janis is one of my favorites so how could this be bad.

This book covers Janis's life starting from her days at Port Arthur High School, in Port Arthur, Texas, and covering her life and career up through her untimely death, and even beyond her death. It covers her 3 major San Francisco bands: The Big Brother & the Holding Company Band, The Kozmic Blues Band, and the Full Tilt Boogie Band. The book contains an excellent introduction by Sam Andrew, who probably knew her more than anyone else. He was with her in the Big Brother & the Holding Co. band and the Kozmic Blues band. This book is packed with details about Janis's life & career. The book contains an appendix that covers a time line of Janis's life, beginning with her birth on January 19, 1943, in Port Arthur, Texas, continuing through her life & career, her death, and ends with The American Music Masters Tribute to Janis, including Lucinda Williams singing a song about Janis on November 14, of 2009. This book includes many illustrations from Janis's High School Years, from her career, up to tribute performances, after her death. If you like Janis, you'll love this book. Thanks!!!P.S. I'd like to add a personal note. If you like Janis, then you'd probably like her exhibits at the Gulf Coast Music Museam, on the Texas Gulf Coast, near her home town of Port Arthur, Texas. Also, at the Hard Rock Cafe in San Antonio, there is a stained glass mural of Buddy Holly, Janis Joplin, & Stevie Ray Vaughan, all native Texans, on display there. Thanks

again!!!

This is a wonderful non-fiction young adult book. I am covering *Rise Up Singing* in a Book Talk for a college level young adult literature class. I intend on telling the class that this text would be a perfect tool to introduce young adult students to non-fiction literature. Beautiful page graphics and wonderful photo quality make this book even better. Simple language is used, and a quick read!

I followed Janis Joplin's music in her heyday and still enjoy books and plays about her music and her hard life. She was an exceptionally talented person done in by booze and drugs like so many musicians of the 60s and 70s. Nice pictures and the truth about her life and excesses. Yet, despite it all, her legacy lives on in her bluesy, gutsy music.

Nothing new here. I own every single biography ever written about Janis Joplin, so when I saw "Rise Up Singing," I jumped and immediately bought it. It's basically a bunch of pictures, and little stories, gleaned from other sources. I'm actually surprised the author was able to get it published, as its little more than a rehashing of other people's efforts.

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