



The Life And Legend Of Leadbelly

By Wolfe/lornell

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Huddie Ledbetter (1889–1949), known to millions of fans simply as Leadbelly, was arguably the most famous black singer in American history. His close musical associations included such towering figures as Blind Lemon Jefferson, Woody Guthrie, Pete Seeger, and John and Alan Lomax. He helped lay the foundations for blues, modern folk music, and rock 'n' roll. This definitive biography draws on a wealth of new archival material, interviews, and previously unknown recordings to detail Leadbelly's proud, tumultuous, and often violent life.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Well researched and thoughtful, this biography depicts the career of Huddie "Leadbelly" Ledbetter (1888-1949), among the most influential of American folksingers. Folk music enthusiasts will be familiar with the highlights of Leadbelly's life--how his music earned him a pardon from prison, how folk-music experts John and Alan Lomax discovered and promoted him, how songs he either wrote or embellished ("Goodnight Irene" and "Midnight Special," for example) have become an integral part of American musical tradition--but it is the level of detail that Wolfe and Lornell bring forward that makes this book a standout. Leadbelly's early years in Louisiana and Texas, his introduction to music and his life in prison are portrayed in a fast-paced style that lends immediacy to the book. The introduction to the Lomaxes, Leadbelly's foray into New York society, his eventual estrangement from John Lomax and his recording and performance career are equally well chronicled in this notable effort. Wolfe is an English professor at Middle Tennessee University; Lornell is a consultant for the Leadbelly Archives at the Smithsonian. Photos not seen by PW.

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From Library Journal

Memo to Spike Lee: For your next film, consider the story of a black man born on the edge of the frontier in the waning days of the wild West. He was strong, handsome, and a talented musician, but mixing wine, women, and song led him to a Texas penitentiary to do time for murder. After a few years, this resourceful fellow won a pardon by performing a specially written song for the governor. His freedom proved short-lived, however; his attack on a "splendid white citizen" led to a stretch in Louisiana's notorious Angola State Penitentiary. Here, he was discovered by folklorist John Lomax, who recorded him for the Library of Congress and then won his release. Leadbelly spent the last 15 years of his life cementing his reputation as the foremost curator of America's musical heritage. If this incredible story of sex, violence, redemption, and the history of American folk music sounds interesting, add it to your music collections.

- *Dan Bogey, Clearfield Cty. P.L. Federation, Curwensville, Pa.*

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About the Author

Three-time Grammy nominee and author of twelve books on American vernacular music, **Charles Wolfe** is a professor of english at Middle Tennessee State University. He lives near Nashville. **Kip Lornell** is an associate professorial lecturer at George Washington University, a research associate at the Smithsonian Institution, author of five other music-related books, and the recipient of a 1997 Grammy for his work on the *Anthology of American Folk Music*. He lives in Washington, D.C.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Wilma Hines:

Do you have favorite book? If you have, what is your favorite's book? Book is very important thing for us to find out everything in the world. Each publication has different aim or maybe goal; it means that book has different type. Some people really feel enjoy to spend their a chance to read a book. They can be reading whatever they have because their hobby is definitely reading a book. Why not the person who don't like studying a book? Sometime, man feel need book if they found difficult problem as well as exercise. Well,

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Dennis Sellers:

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