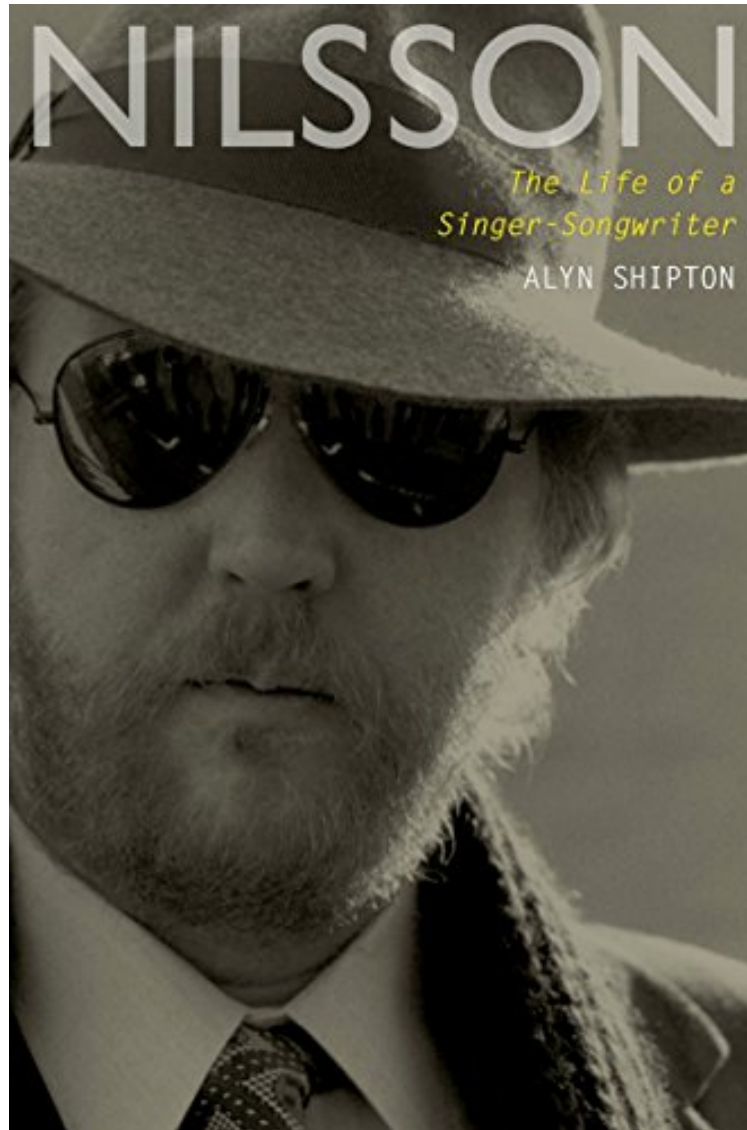


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Nilsson: The Life of a Singer-Songwriter

Alyn Shipton

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Alyn Shipton : Nilsson: The Life of a Singer-Songwriter before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Nilsson: The Life of a Singer-Songwriter:

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. An incomplete story
By K. Pelletier
I watched the movie about him, and I really wanted to know what happened to his family after he died. I hoped this book would tell me. The last section of the book said nothing about them after his death, and moved far too quickly through this portion on his life and career. I also wanted to know more about his interaction with the Beatles, but the book only focused on the infamous "lost weekend" with John Lennon.
2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. A pleasant surprise
By Pablo
The best test of a good biography is how it holds your interest....it's even better when you have no

preconceptions of what you're getting into. I think we've all read biographies where we hurry through the last 50 pages so the person can die already.....I picked up this book with only a passing interest in Harry Nilsson (when I was eleven years old, I laughed at "You're breaking my heart"....it had the f word in it.... and I remember necking in the basement of my parent's house to "Without You"...not much else). 300 plus pages later, I went to another side of and bought the 17 disk retrospective on his RCA career. Mr. Shipton presents a very well researched, entertaining look at a complex individual. From his beginnings as a child of a broken home, his early days as a song plugger (and computer programmer), some pretty funny stories of his rowdy behavior, and the somewhat unhappy end to his life, you will be hooked. Highly entertaining, and very much recommended...whether you like Harry or not. 2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. God bless Harry! By crimson dynamo Between the recent RCA albums box set (17 discs) and this book, I have been in an all-Nilsson fugue state/vortex for the past 7 weeks. Alyn Shipton is a great writer who handles his subject without affection and presents the balance of Nilsson's lust for good times with the self-abuse that ended his life (not to mention his career) prematurely. He really delves into some of the parts of his childhood that drove his compulsions later in life without being overly melodramatic or prosaic and all the while providing the reader with a glimpse of just how charming a character Nilsson was. Nilsson was one of our great all-time loons and such a wonderful creative force when he was on his game. Plus, that half court shot, you gotta give it up for that.

Paul McCartney and John Lennon described him as the Beatles' "favorite group," he won Grammy awards, wrote and recorded hit songs, and yet no figure in popular music is as much of a paradox, or as underrated, as Harry Nilsson. In this first ever full-length biography, Alyn Shipton traces Nilsson's life from his Brooklyn childhood to his Los Angeles adolescence and his gradual emergence as a uniquely talented singer-songwriter. With interviews from friends, family, and associates, and material drawn from an unfinished autobiography, Shipton probes beneath the enigma to discover the real Harry Nilsson. A major celebrity at a time when huge concerts and festivals were becoming the norm, Nilsson shunned live performance. His venue was the studio, his stage the dubbing booth, his greatest triumphs masterful examples of studio craft. He was a gifted composer of songs for a wide variety of performers, including the Ronettes, the Yardbirds, and the Monkees, yet Nilsson's own biggest hits were almost all written by other songwriters. He won two Grammy awards, in 1969 for "Everybody's Talkin'" (the theme song for *Midnight Cowboy*), and in 1972 for "Without You," had two top ten singles, numerous album successes, and wrote a number of songs--"Coconut" and "Jump into the Fire," to name just two--that still sound remarkably fresh and original today. He was once described by his producer Richard Perry as "the finest white male singer on the planet," but near the end of his life, Nilsson's career was marked by voice-damaging substance abuse and the infamous deaths of both Keith Moon and Mama Cass in his London flat. Drawing on exclusive access to Nilsson's papers, Alyn Shipton's biography offers readers an intimate portrait of a man who has seemed both famous and unknowable--until now.