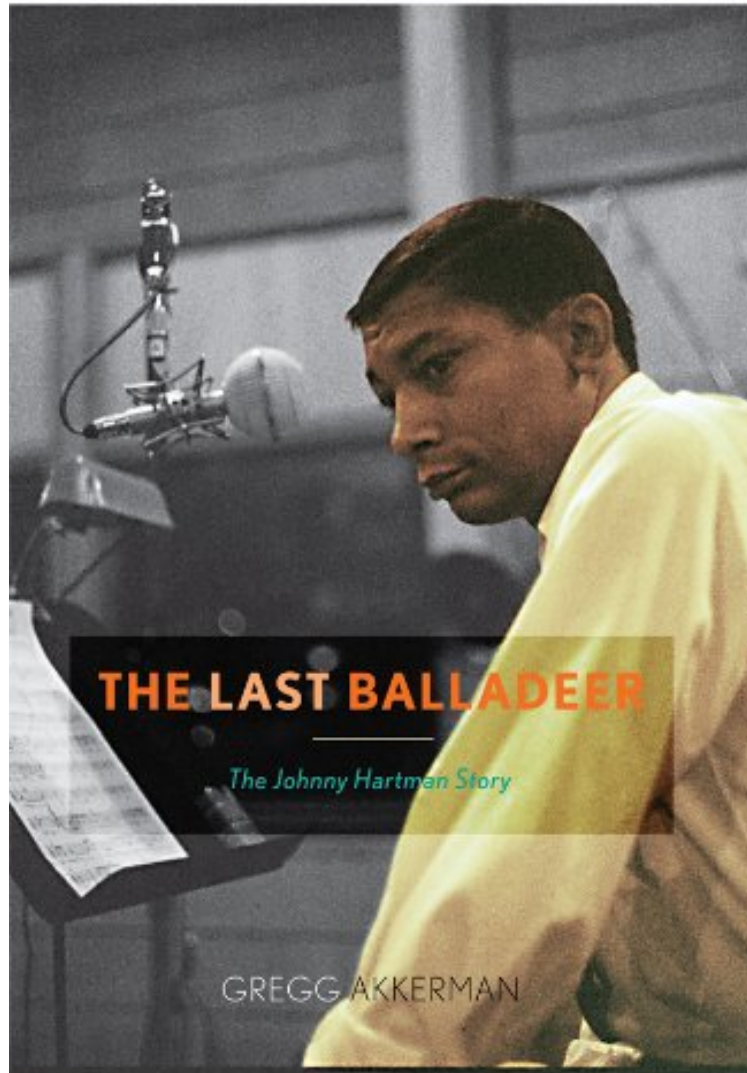


[Pdf free] The Last Balladeer: The Johnny Hartman Story (Studies in Jazz)

The Last Balladeer: The Johnny Hartman Story (Studies in Jazz)

Gregg Akkerman

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Gregg Akkerman : The Last Balladeer: The Johnny Hartman Story (Studies in Jazz) before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised *The Last Balladeer: The Johnny Hartman Story (Studies in Jazz)*:

9 of 9 people found the following review helpful. An Outstanding Look at Johnny Hartman the Music Business By Tom Pierce I've been a passionate lover for well over 50 years of Jazz, the Great American Songbook Johnny Hartman, who I greatly enjoyed seeing live several times in New York City in the 1960's to early 1980's in New York and have purchased over a dozen of his recordings. On a personal level, "The Last Balladeer" that I just completed reading, was

enormously valuable meaningful. This well-annotated 320 page book (including comprehensive bibliography multiple appendices) effectively covers all significant aspects of Hartman's life from birth to death, with dozens of in-depth contributions from experienced artists (e.g. Billy Taylor, Tony Bennett, Kurt Elling, etc) who either performed with or were very familiar with him, as well as family close friends. The value of this extremely well-researched biography stems from its thoroughness balanced approach, despite the author (a professional pianist vocalist himself, in addition to being a music professor) clearly being an admirer of Hartman. Akkerman's telling of Hartman's story also has a broader meaning in that it logically clearly delves into a number of related cultural, musical commercial aspects that are important to understanding the context in which his career existed, with the high points, challenges frustrations he experienced. These considerations provide valuable background for those who raise the often voiced question of "why wasn't Hartman, with all his obvious talent, better known". But it should be emphasized that this biography, despite its seriousness, awesome documentation and lack of salacious incidents (as Hartman's very pleasant, laid-back, well-grounded personality and life-style was essentially scandal-free) is still done in a very interesting, well-written style. This is definitely not some boring, dry, academic exercise; but an engrossing, almost conversational rendering of Hartman's life and times. Besides being delivered in an easy to read style, it does not hesitate to be critical or questioning of Hartman in those situations the author feels is appropriate. And devotees of vocals by Jazz Great American Songbook artists will also appreciate the extremely knowledgeable details that Akkerman is able provide regarding phrasing, styling, arrangements, lyrics approaches to many songs. The author draws on his own considerable personal resources taste as a performer and experienced music educator, as well as that of those who contributed to this highly recommended book. Tom Pierce - Webmaster [...]4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Excellent read about an amazing man By C. Cravens I just finished reading this book, and I thought it was awesome. Great writing, interesting subject, thoroughly researched, and the sessionography at the end was a godsend to someone like me, who was trying to get all of the Hartman that he could find. The detailed sessionography alone was worth half of the price of the book. I should know; I've searched high and low for a good session or discography, and there is no good one to be found. Now there is, thanks to the author. Of special interest to many jazz fans is the chapter on the famous "John Coltrane-Johnny Hartman" recording. This recording often makes many people's "desert island" list for music, and for good reason. The author does a good job of giving us session details, and putting to bed some false rumours and notions about the session and what was recorded. It is SO refreshing, after reading so many biographies of musicians (Miles Davis, Bird, Townes Van Zandt, Bill Evans, Chet Baker, etc.) to read of an artist who was also genuinely a nice person, and not affected by addiction of some sort, or who put their "art" ahead of their families. JH is a guy you can truly root for, and the author does an excellent job of letting this come through. My hopes are that this book does for JH what the "Bridges of Madison County" movie did: revive interest in one of the greatest singers of his generation. A great read and a great experience. This book does the memory of JH proud, and since he was such a great guy, that's a good thing. Kudos! 3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. The Last Balladeer By Patricia J Ciancutti A marvelous insight into the life of an exquisite talent long overlooked by the recording community. Unfortunately, his timing was side by side with others who gained more notoriety, not necessarily because they were more talented but better managed. One of life's greatest tragedies. His talent was unmatched. Wish more people could know about him and grow to love his music. Hope his family is receiving some compensation from those of us who are purchasing and cherishing his music. Those notes in the lower register are unmatched by any of his contemporaries!

Just after recording with John Coltrane in 1963, baritone singer Johnny Hartman (1923–1983) told a family member that "something special" occurred in the studio that day. He was right; the album, containing definitive readings of "Lush Life" and "My One and Only Love," resides firmly in the realm of iconic; forever enveloping listeners in the sounds of romance. In *The Last Balladeer*, author Gregg Akkerman skillfully reveals not only the intimate details of that album but the life-long achievements and occasional missteps of Hartman as an African-American artist dedicated to his craft. This book carefully follows the journey of the Grammy-nominated vocalist from his big band origins with Earl Hines and Dizzy Gillespie to featured soloist in prestigious supper clubs throughout the world. Through exclusive interviews with Hartman's family and fellow musicians (including Tony Bennett, Billy Taylor, Kurt Elling, Jon Hendricks, and others), accounts from friends and associates, newly discovered recordings and studio outtakes, and in-depth research on his career and personal life, Akkerman expertly recollects the Hartman character as a gentleman, romantic, family man, and constant contributor to the jazz scene. From his international concerts in Japan, Australia, and England to his steady presence as an American nightclub singer that spanned five decades, Hartman personifies the "last balladeer" of his kind, singing with a sentiment that captured the attention of Clint Eastwood, who brought Hartman's songs to the masses in the film *The Bridges of Madison County*. In the first full-length biography and discography to chronicle the rhapsodic life and music of Johnny Hartman, the author completes a previously missing dimension of vocal-jazz history by documenting Hartman as the balladeer who crooned his way into so many hearts. Backed by impeccable research but conveyed in a conversational style, this book will interest not only musicians and scholars but any fan of the Great

American Songbook and the singers who brought it to life.

In pop-music parlance, a ballad is a moderate- to slow-tempo number about love. The bass-baritone Johnny Hartman (1923–83) may be the all-time best ballad singer. During his life, he was nowhere near as renowned as Billy Eckstine, whose range he shared, or Frank Sinatra, whose intimacy and clarity of diction he equaled. Probably, as other musicians told Akkerman, he was constitutionally too shy, gentle, and quiet for stardom. But with saxophonist John Coltrane's quintet, at its acme in 1963, he made one of the few universally appealing jazz albums. It made him an auditorium-packing headliner in Japan and, with a boost from Clint Eastwood via the *Bridges of Madison County* soundtrack, put him in the American jazz-singing pantheon. Although "Lush Life" was one of his signature pieces, Hartman lived neither lushly nor fast, so that Akkerman's first-ever biography has no scandals, crimes, or even misdemeanors to report. Instead, it's about the days and the achievements of a working musician and, despite some odd word choices, should thoroughly engross lovers of the Great American Songbook.

(Booklist) Editors' Pick! Gregg Akkerman, director of jazz studies at University of South Carolina Upstate in Spartanburg, has made a crucial contribution to keeping Hartman's memory alive with this biography. Akkerman draws on extensive interviews, archives and his own sharp musical analysis to trace Hartman's Chicago origins, his time serving in both Earl Hines' and Dizzy Gillespie's big bands and the creation of the classic 1963 album *John Coltrane and Johnny Hartman*. The author also looks at the longstanding comparisons between Hartman and Billy Eckstine and shows why their supposed rivalry was a canard. ... Now students and fans of jazz vocals can hope that this book will lead to a proper reissue of Hartman's triumphant 1980 *Bee Hive* album, *Once In Every Life*, which contained all four of the Hartman songs that were included on the 1995 CD soundtrack to *Madison County*. (DownBeat Magazine) Akkerman is a professional musician and educator, and his book offers superb verbal descriptions of Hartman's recordings and concert performances. These word-paintings are a valuable part of any musical biography, for they encourage the reader to explore the music. (Jazz History Online) The *Last Balladeer* not only reveals the gentle nature of the man, we learn of his steadfast devotion to his music and fierce determination to maintain his integrity in spite of misguided record producers and errors in judgment along the way. Johnny enjoyed moderate recognition in America, but his most loyal fans dwelt in the shadow of Mount Fuji. When we toured Japan together in 1977, he was greeted by crowds who displayed obvious devotion to his style of singing, and all concerts were at or near SRO in each city we visited. I think you will find Professor Akkerman's book entertaining and most enlightening. (Jazz Vocalist) I've read *The Last Balladeer* and can verify that anyone who loves the singer's work will consider this a 'must-have.' (San Diego Reader) While Akkerman makes no effort to plumb the singer's psychological depths (or to provide Balliettian descriptions of his vocal magic), with this lucid and meticulously researched new book Hartman's life and career were models of self-effacing professionalism; finally has the biography he deserves. (Jazz Journalist Association; S Jja News) In *The Last Balladeer* the author displays great empathy and affection for his subject, and if Johnny Hartman is in some way an underappreciated artist, Mr. Akkerman has done his part to set things right with a moving. (Jersey Jazz) A 2012 Holiday Gift Guide Choice! This book illuminates the life and career of the singer best known for his 1960 album with John Coltrane and the presence of his recordings in the Clint Eastwood 1995 movie *Bridges of Madison County*. Not surprisingly, Hartman's life encompassed a lot more, artistically, than those highlights. (Hothouse Jazz Magazine) Johnny Hartman is perhaps the most undeservedly neglected vocalist in the history of twentieth-century popular music. With this meticulously researched and beautifully written volume, Gregg Akkerman has corrected that omission once and for all. Rich in biographical detail about Hartman's life and four-decade career and complemented by the most comprehensive discography ever published, *The Last Balladeer* is a must-have for anyone interested in American popular music. (Leonard Mustazza, Author, *Ol' Blue Eyes: A Frank Sinatra Encyclopedia*) How can the most serene and pitch-perfect African-American baritone have had such an enigmatic career? In this eloquent, insightful account of Johnny Hartman's life and music, Gregg Akkerman situates the definitive ballad singer within the context of conflicting demands and longstanding tensions between jazz and popular music. (Barry Kernfeld, editor, *The New Grove Dictionary of Jazz*) Akkerman expertly captures the life and music of this vital, memorable jazz singer. (Tad Hershorn, author, *Norman Granz: The Man Who Used Jazz for Justice*) Hundreds of thousands of people have enjoyed Johnny Hartman's voice over the years. Whether through his epic collaboration with John Coltrane or his music being featured in major Hollywood films, his incredible voice is one of the most identifiable, gorgeous sounds of the previous century. But how many people know about the man behind the music? Gregg Akkerman has filled a huge hole in jazz and popular music literature with "The Last Balladeer," a truly definitive work. Akkerman's tremendous research makes Hartman the singer; and more importantly, Hartman the man; come alive like never before. (Ricky Riccardi, author, *What a Wonderful World: The Magic of Louis Armstrong's Later Years*) Through excellent research into Johnny Hartman's life and career, Akkerman's *The Last Balladeer* accomplishes that rare feat in biography of conveying to the reader the day-to-day rhythm of his subject's life. (Jeffrey S. McMillan, author of *Delightful: The Life and Music of Lee Morgan*) This work is not cast in the mold of a typical biography. Rather, Akkerman (Univ. of South Carolina Upstate) chronicles four decades in the history of a tenuous business that demands a precise balance

between musical artistry and public taste, in process addressing the question of why jazz singer Johnny Hartman (1923-83) failed to achieve stardom. The text reads easily and is rich in quotes from key personalities. (CHOICE) This book fills a notable hole in jazz biography. Gregg Akkerman, a musician, scholar, and educator, has provided another example of the high quality of work published in jazz musicology and biography over the past 10 to 15 years. Meticulously and methodically, he traces Hartman's life and career from beginning to end, enlisting the assistance of his widow and children and the surviving musicians who knew, worked with, and admired him. Akkerman also provides what is undoubtedly the last word on Hartman's discography, making this the authoritative source for all things Hartman. (ARSC Journal) The Last Balladeer tells the story of the life of a musician who moved between jazz and popular music and was successful at both, but never achieved the status of some of his colleagues—like Tony Bennett—who in turn did call him their favorite singer. Gregg Akkerman's style is easy and focused mainly on the facts of biography and the background stories of various recordings. He is less concerned with the musical and aesthetic particulars of ballad bel canto that few cultivated as well as Hartman. But the book does reveal careful research, and Akkerman's perceptive style of writing is a welcome addition to jazz literature. (Jazzinstitut Darmstadt) The Last Balladeer is a wonderfully written and well-researched book about the master of the jazz ballad written by educator and jazz pianist/singer Gregg Akkerman and published by Scarecrow Press. (Icon Magazine) Gregg Akkerman...has produced a definitive work, not only about Hartman but about the music business and world that existed during Hartman's career. Akkerman has researched well, reaching out to Hartman's immediate family as well as musical colleagues such as the late Dr. Billy Taylor, Jon Hendricks, Tony Bennett, Ralph Sharon, and Tony Monte, among others. (New York City Jazz Record) From the Author To me, Hartman has grown to represent the very voice of romance in our times. The unadorned, molasses-sweet, sanguine tone of his baritone voice transcends the years to share stories of love and hope in a century he never saw and yet perfectly understood. He knew love would still fill our dreams, and hope would still keep us searching for that very love we crave. Hartman died all too young at the age of sixty, but the secrets to life were already his, and we can hear about it anytime one of his ballad recordings reaches our ears. And now you can read about it too. About the Author Gregg Akkerman is a performer, educator, and writer. Since 2004, Dr. Akkerman has held the position as Director of Jazz Studies and Commercial Music at the University of South Carolina Upstate in Spartanburg.