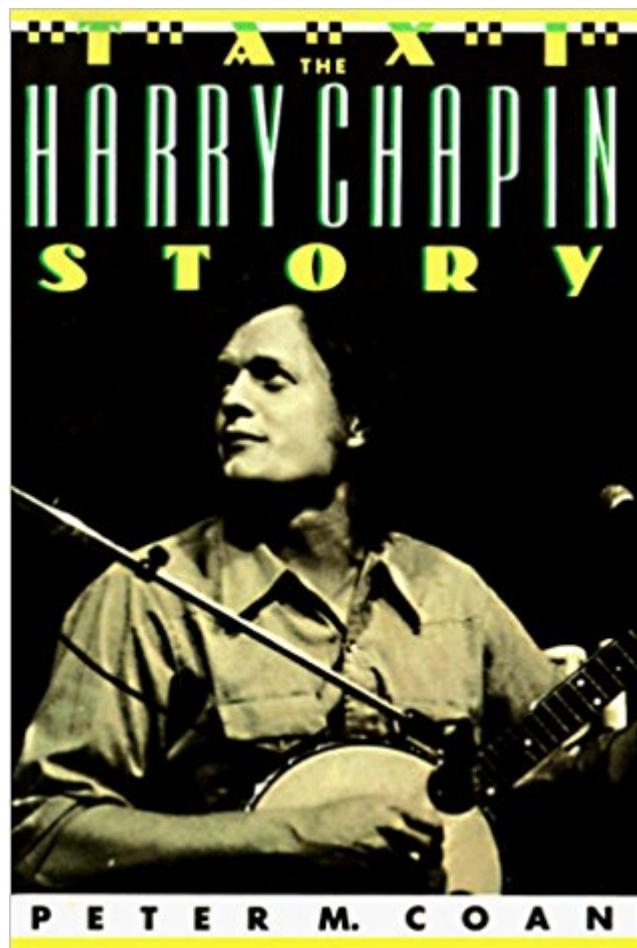


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# Taxi: The Harry Chapin Story



## Synopsis

He was one of the most beloved performers in music history, a spokesman of the people and poet laureate to cab drivers, housewives, and commonfolk alike. *Taxi* is the definitive biography of Harry Chapin, written by his long-time friend and confidant. Chapin was an unsung hero, a modern-day Woody Guthrie. The recognition due him was late in coming. Awards are being given to Chapin in his death that he should have received while he lived. His music, his beliefs, and his social activism are finally being appreciated. Most of the world will remember Chapin for the "Story Song; ' the musical genre he popularized in one of his most famous songs, "Taxi". His unique appeal could be felt in concerts, for it was there that the real and dynamic Chapin emerged. His penchant for audience participation was his trademark. His performances often ended with tumultuous standing ovations; when the audience quieted down Chapin would stand center stage and give a short speech about his commitments. Often people drove hundreds of miles to hear him, making him one of the highest paid performers in the world. Even so, due to his selfless humanity and indefatigable interest in social causes, Chapin did not leave much money behind when he died. His involvement with world hunger helped spur widespread interest. He lobbied in Congress to endorse a Presidential Commission on world hunger. It was no coincidence that after his death 30 congressmen and 10 senators rose on the floor of the House to offer eulogies. Ironically it was the automobile, the very thing that made him famous in the song "Taxi, " which took his life. He died on the Long Island Expressway when his car burst into flames after being hit by a truck. "The immediate response to Chapin's death in the media and among his fans was truly overwhelming, ' wrote David Marsh of Rolling Stone. "It was as if he reached out and touched lives in a permanent and irrevocable way", HIS albums sold out in record stores. Throughout the

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

I had no idea that this book existed, so being a die hard Chapin fan I snatched it off the shelf when I saw it. While an interesting read it could have used a bit more polishing. Learning more details of Harry's story songs was a positive, as was learning what really turned his personal life around. His music always moved me, but I was more touched to learn that the efforts to save his marriage was why he became such an effective activist. It did seem a bit overlong at times, however, and Coan's refusal to even mention 'the widows' name as he slammed her in the introduction seemed mean spirited. If he had told us a bit more as to why there was a fallout between them it would have been more constructive. Still, if you loved Chapin's music, as so many obviously did, and do, it's a worthwhile read.

There was a lot of controversy surrounding the release of *Taxi: The Harry Chapin Story*. For a variety of reasons, the book lost the support of Harry's family. Accordingly, the book was rushed to print and appears to have missed having a final round of editing done, as there are typos throughout. However, it remains an extremely valuable source on Harry's life -- providing insight into many of the stories beyond the songs, and telling tales about the events that shaped the life of the man able to write songs like "A Better Place To Be." There are factual errors in the book, and it is likely that some events have been embellished. (It's easy to see how this could happen given Harry's own proclivity to fib for the sake of telling a great yarn and given the fact that the book still hadn't been finally reviewed by Chapin before he died.) Nonetheless, the book is an extremely interesting read providing great insight into the life of Harry Chapin; just be sure you take everything with a grain of salt.

I bought the book because I knew my brother liked Harry Chapin. Before I gave it to him I casually thought I'd read it. I was amazed by the man. It is a great read if you know his music. I did not at first but have since bought all his CDs and read the book again. It is even better the second time around. Buy it if you can. At least ask for it. They may reprint it. Every Chapin fan should have it. Thanks

To anyone who remembers the music industry of the 70's (or anyone who has read Harry Chapin's

lyrics, for that matter), the fact that he wasn't always faithful to his wife will come as no great surprise. Those reviewers who feel the book treats Chapin's widow, Sandy, unfairly puzzle me, however. In fact, Coan portrays her as the main catalyst for the humanitarian efforts which would become Harry's focus. Sadly, immediately after Harry's death, Sandy Chapin abruptly ended her friendship with the author and attempted to legally block the release of this book and claim ownership of the author's extensive notes, recordings and other research. It is only here that Coan describes her in anything less than a fully objective light. (And who can fault him for that?) No, Chapin wasn't a saint. Few men have come closer to being deserving of that title, however. This is an exhaustively researched and fascinating book. It has the "ring of truth" throughout, and it is must-read for anyone interested in learning more about this fascinating musician and humanitarian who was taken from us far too soon.

This is an excellent writing, it traces the life of the world's greatest story teller. From birth in 1943, to his tragic death in 1981, no man ever did more for the society in which he lived, than Harry Chapin. Peter Coan tells the story well. From the good times to the bad times and back to the good times, its all there. It shows the man, as well as the myth, that is Harry Chapin.

Harry Chapin lived his music. From the heartbreaks of his life came such beautiful songs as TAXI and SHOOTING STAR. He gave of himself to any organization that needed a helping hand, and was an unparalleled troubadour. A must for fans who want to know the stories behind the music.

If you are a Harry Chapin fan this is a must read. Even if you aren't a Harry Chapin fan, you just might be after reading this account of his interesting and amazing life. This is not a puff piece. This shows Harry for what and who he really was. It was one of the few books that I have ever read that was hard for me to put down after I had read for awhile. His early life and tragic death are clarified. Some of the later chapters are a little dull when it goes on in too much detail about his charitable works. However, overall, I rate this as a 5 star book.

If you love the man and his music, you will undoubtly enjoy this book, blemishes and all, about one of the greatest humanitarians that ever lived. Read it, and keep the change!

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