



Captain Beefheart: The Biography

Mike Barnes

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The unclassifiable music of Don Van Vliet?alias Captain Beefheart?and his departure from performing in the 80s have mystified fans and followers for years, and kept the rumor mills busy. Mike Barnes' *Captain Beefheart: The Biography* puts those rumors to rest as it tells the strange but true tale of a musical genius and his otherworldly odyssey from the California desert to stages and studios across the world.

Captain Beefheart and his Magic Band arrived in the public consciousness in 1969 with the two-album set *Trout Mask Replica*, eventually praised by *Rolling Stone* as one of the best records of all time. Distilling a new audio experience from blues, psychedelic rock, and free jazz, the Captain and his band went on to confound journalists, intrigue reviewers, and amaze listeners with a decade and a half of albums and performances. Yet after recording his final album *Ice Cream for Crow* in 1982, Beefheart left music to begin a successful career as an internationally exhibited painter. His reluctance to give interviews has only enhanced the Captain Beefheart mystique.

For his thoroughly researched biography of Beefheart, journalist Mike Barnes interviewed friends, acolytes, and members of the Magic Band to get the full story of Beefheart's collaborations and conflicts with kindred spirit Frank Zappa, his 're-education' of the members of the Magic Band, and the legal battles that kept the album *Bat Chain Puller* from ever being released. Barnes' biography illuminates the enigmatic artist, and brings the reader to an understanding of his creative drive.

Previously published only in the U. K., the U. S. edition of *Captain Beefheart: The Biography* contains new material and new photographs.

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