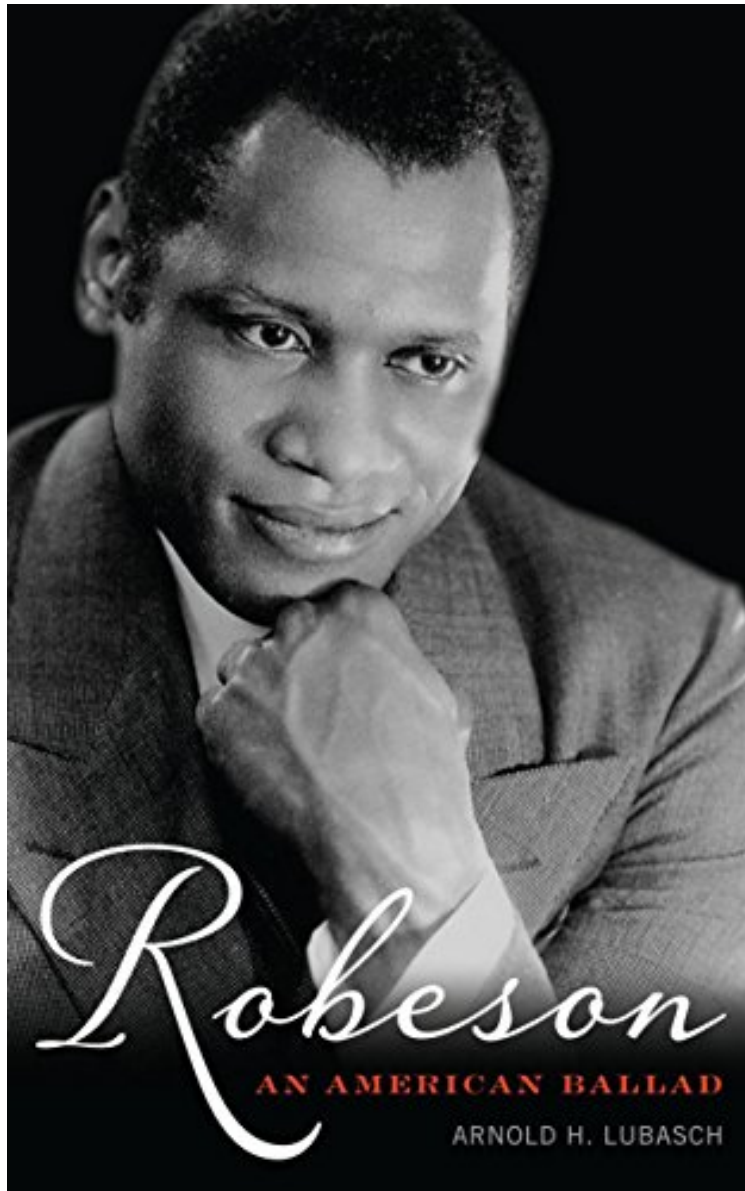


(Get free) Robeson: An American Ballad

Robeson: An American Ballad

Arnold H. Lubasch

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Arnold H. Lubasch : Robeson: An American Ballad before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Robeson: An American Ballad:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. 'Tallest tree in our forest'By FictionFanIt is clear from very early on that this biography is written by someone who admires Robeson wholeheartedly, both as an artist and as a person. And

there is a great deal to admire. A man who stood up against and often overcame the overwhelming prejudice of his time, first in education, then in sport and finally going on to become a huge star both as a singer and an actor. It is perhaps hardly surprising that a man who had to struggle so hard to be accepted in his own country would use his fame to take a political stance. And no more surprising, perhaps, that that stance would eventually all but destroy him. There is a huge amount of detail in this book. Lubasch tells us about Robeson's early life and education, and his years as a college footballer when because of his great skill he was able to gradually push back the boundaries that prevented black men from full participation in the sport. His career as singer and actor is covered extensively with Lubasch telling us where he performed and usually which songs he sang and the size of the audience. This did become a bit repetitive but it was interesting to see how his choice of repertoire changed over the years as his political convictions grew. Lubasch also covers Robeson's marriage in some depth, as well as his important friendships and relationships. The second half of the book still tells us what he was doing as an artist at each stage but Lubasch gradually expands on Robeson's admiration for the Soviet regime and the conflicts that this caused with the US government. Lubasch explains convincingly that Robeson's support for the USSR arose out of the fact that it was the one place in the world where he felt that his colour was not used as a bar. He shows Robeson as one of the earliest of the equal rights campaigners, a forerunner of Martin Luther King Jr, demanding stronger laws against lynching and refusing to perform in any venue which segregated the audience, sometimes putting his personal safety at risk in order to speak or perform. However, Lubasch's warm admiration of Robeson leads him to step very gently around the less savoury aspects of his life - his serial adultery, his rather detached relationship with his son during his early life, his continued support for the USSR even when some of its excesses were becoming known. I felt this was a lack in the book - Lubasch's hesitation to robustly criticise made this account of him feel a bit lightweight and less convincing than it otherwise would. Occasionally, the tone of praise for Robeson is almost sycophantic, perhaps more so to my cynical British ears than it would be to American ones. Overall, though, I found the book very readable and informative; and greatly enhanced by the many photographs and lyrics that are liberally included. I was left with an inspiring picture of Robeson as a man of courage, dignity and integrity. Recommended. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Spellbinding story of a great American icon By Byravan Viswanathan Wonder how many Americans today know enough about the one and only Paul Robeson. Pitifully very few. This multi talented genius and humanitarian of the 20th. century should be known all over America; more than Columbus, Elizabeth Taylor or Kate Middleton. Author Lubasch has beautifully profiled Paul Robeson as no one has done to this date. There are astounding facts about his numerous performances on stage and screen and many hitherto unknown tidbits from his life that both inspire and sadden the reader. He was not just another African American success story but a true citizen of the world whose heart melted at the sight of the poor, the oppressed and exploited. In addition to his talent as a singer in opera and stage shows one is surprised to learn that he spoke several languages fluently and sang beautifully in Russian, Yiddish, French and Spanish. This book deserves 5 star rating. After I finished it I went right out and purchased two CDs of his favorite songs. I figured it is time for me not to just know about this truly great person but hear his great voice.

Paul Robeson was a towering figure in American culture, conquering many disparate venues—from football and film to law to Shakespeare. An extraordinary athlete-scholar-actor-singer, Robeson also became a crusader for human rights. And though he was admired by many, his controversial support of the Soviet Union during the Cold War and the era of McCarthyism led to ostracism and his declining health. In *Robeson: An American Ballad*, Arnold H. Lubasch chronicles the remarkable life of this twentieth-century original. In this concise and readable account, Lubasch—a New York Times veteran for almost 40 years—reports on Robeson's life story more accurately and clearly than any previous books. In addition to detailing the highs and lows of Robeson's life and career, Lubasch offers several personal anecdotes about this American icon, and includes commentary on the 100th-anniversary celebration of Robeson's birth. This engaging work will be of interest to virtually everyone, but especially to scholars and students of U.S. and African American history and culture.

Paul Robeson is well remembered for his inspiring, powerful voice that brought joy to concert audiences worldwide with renditions of spirituals, traditional songs, and his signature piece, "Ol' Man River." Now, former New York Times reporter Lubasch presents a new and comprehensive portrait of this American icon. Robeson's life as a touring concert singer, musical stage performer (*Show Boat*), as well as dramatic actor (*Othello*) are, of course, well detailed, but Lubasch goes beyond these facts to depict Robeson's personal life with honesty and a keen perspective, describing him as a committed humanitarian, generous friend, and complex individual. Robeson excelled in college and in athletics, rose above pointed racial prejudice, navigated a somewhat challenging marriage, devoted himself to continuous learning, and cultivated a wide network of associations on an international level. His staunch advocacy for equality and human rights on a larger scale, as well as his support of the Soviet Union during the McCarthy era drew negative attention that damaged his professional career and personal life and ultimately contributed to his failing health. VERDICT This thoughtful and well-researched work examines the core of Robeson's character and his often

delicate relationships with the social, cultural, and political issues of his era. It will have profound appeal for both academic and general audiences. (Library Journal)About the AuthorArnold H. Lubasch was a reporter for the New York Times, covering a wide range of stories from 1959 to 1993.