



Go Slow: The Life of Julie London

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The contrast between image and reality, the public and the private, is at the heart of Julie London's story. Through years of research; extensive interviews with family, friends, and musical associates; and access to rarely seen or heard archival material, author Michael Owen reveals the impact of her image on the direction of her career and how it influenced the choices she made, including the ultimate decision to walk away from performing.

Go Slow follows Julie London's life and career through its many stages: her transformation from 1940s movie starlet to coolly defiant singer of the classic torch ballad "Cry Me a River" of the '50s, and her journey from Las Vegas hotel entertainer during the rock 'n' roll revolution of the '60s to the no-nonsense nurse of the '70s hit television series *Emergency!*

Go Slow: The Life of Julie London Details

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Author : Michael Owen

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From Reader Review Go Slow: The Life of Julie London for online ebook

Diana says

A solid, even-handed biography of a singer I hadn't known much about, other than her hits and appearance in THE GIRL CAN'T HELP IT.

Hope says

I recieved this book from winning a goodreads giveaway. I honestly had never heard of Julie London so was curious to read it and learn about her. I found that Michael Owen did well writing the book and really put it so I was able to see and relate to her. I was sad to hear how her life ended but enjoyed the book learning about her life/ legacy.

Kris - My Novelesque Life says

RATING: 3 STARS

(I received an ARC from the EDELWEISS)

(Review Not on Blog)

I had not heard of Julie London when I requested this book, but I liked the synopsis. London was popular in the 1950s and 1960s as an actress and singer. She would then tackle television as an actress. London admired Billie Holiday and those were the sultry songs she sang herself. Side note, she was also married to Jack Webb, best known for Dragnet (one of my favourite old time radio programs). A decent biography, but if you like scandalous like I do, not much here.

Online Eccentric Librarian says

More reviews (and no fluff) on the blog <http://surrealtalvi.wordpress.com/>

As a biography, Go Slow is an easy read that rarely gets bogged down or goes off on tangents. The author sticks to the chronological history with a focus on the recordings/films/tv roles rather than Julie London's personal life. But the author is clearly a fan and as often happens, perhaps loses a bit of subjectivity in the process. There isn't really anything negative to be found in the book about the singer/star and it feels like we are left on the outside looking in - never really getting any understanding of the singer/actress. The read was very disaffecting and felt more like an extensive Wikipedia entry than an in depth examination of someone who must have been more interesting than as presented here.

The text flows smoothly and the author is very personable. From the sources, it appears Owen mostly talked with London's confidants, relatives, and good friends. As such, nary an unkind word was to be found. I did find too many instances of hero worship: anything she touched he felt she turned to gold or it was a magnum opus (if that is possible). After while, anything she did was full of superlatives whether it succeeded or not (and if it didn't, the failure was due to things outside of London's control). There are hints only at the end of the book that drinking was a problem, she gambled excessively, and had a problematic relationship with her children - but that's it. Maybe 1-2 sentences in the entire book hint at anything less than pleasant going on. Especially missing is her relationships with her two husbands, both of whom appeared to have a very complicated and very different relationship with London. The focus is clearly on London's accolades and not London herself.

I do wish the author had taken the biography to a more in depth place. Julie was a private person and it is almost as if he is respecting that; but at the same time, why would I want to read a biography that reads more like a catalog of achievements? By the end of the book, I didn't really feel like I knew her any better and so much of it was very forgettable because it was a bit bland. Nothing really scandalous or revealing, none of the problems with husbands or children, none of the reasons why she drank so much or why she felt the need to protect herself so much. There's a lot of tell but little show -e.g., we're told a lot that she was strong willed and stood up for herself, but never given any actual situations that demonstrated that trait. We have to take the author's word for it.

Especially missing were details. A good example is the brief pages about the Emergency! years - there are no anecdotes from episodes, funny outtake examples, or anything about those 5 years other than that the paycheck was great and the cast liked to come over to her house. There's no real insight by the biographer and that leaves the book feeling very flat. Most of the book is about her recordings and describing the songs on the many albums she recorded. We learn absolutely nothing about her children and her relationship with them.

So, although the book was clearly well researched, it has no flavor or personality. Somehow, Julie London comes off as being as boring as the book itself - and there's nothing to remember her by other than the author's glowing descriptions of her achievements. Reviewed from an advance reader copy provided by the publisher.

Carol Havlik says

Ended up skimming through most of the book. It was okay but had many reviews on her music which is good. Skipped up to the chapter on Emergency which I know her most from so it was interesting to read about her life before the show

Al says

"I sing low and sexy because I can't sing any higher." Never one to have a high opinion of her singing or acting, Julie London seemed far too modest, in retrospect. London's impressive career resulted in over 30 albums and most are still available today. As Michael Owen points out in his excellent biography of London, it may have been the sexy cover albums that lured record buyers to try her albums, but it was her sultry voice combined with spare jazz productions that made lifelong fans. Those fans as well as curious newcomers to London's music will get the most out of "Go Slow." Owen details her records and live performances perhaps to the detriment of coverage of her marriages to actor/producer Jack Webb ("Dragnet") and writer/performer

Bobby Troupe ("Route 66"). The latter was a happy union for London both professionally and personally. Troupe and London would find late career success in acting on "Emergency!" a Jack Webb production, giving both a new generation of fans who were clueless as to their music careers. "Go Slow" (named for one of London's favorite songs) does justice to a singing career worth rediscovering. Start with "Cry Me a River." Recommended.

Tara says

While Julie London's records still sell well, and her hits from the 1950s and 60s are often featured on TV and in advertising, little is known of the lady herself. A striking beauty, she deserves to be considered among the finest popular singers of her era, but her laidback, sensual vocal style has been criminally underrated. This is, incredibly, her first major biography (barring the 2013 book, *Lady Liberty: The Definitive Julie London Handbook*, which arguably laid the groundwork.) Author Michael Owen makes a compelling case for reviewing her musical legacy, revealing a serious artist whose shyness and self-deprecation sometimes worked against her. Owen also covers her unhappy first marriage to *Dragnet* star Jack Webb, her heavy drinking and smoking which was something of an occupational hazard, and her lasting happiness with second husband, composer Bobby Troup. She also had an interesting film career which never quite took off, long before her best-known role in the 1970s TV series, *Emergency!*

Jane says

Thanks to Goodreads and Chicago Review Press for the opportunity to read this book.

To be honest, I didn't know anything about her except that she was a pretty blonde (during her *Emergency* days), and was once married to Jack Webb and Bobby Troup, her co-star on *Emergency*. I didn't know much about him either and I found out that he was a star in his own light, as a piano player, song writer and performer.

She really didn't want to be in the spotlight, but persevered and was very popular, on the stage, but hardly in her bit roles in movies.

I learned a lot and really enjoyed this book. Of course the end of her life was sad, due to a stroke and years of drinking and smoking.

Mandy Weeks-Green says

It has been said that the records of singer and actress Julie London were purchased for their provocative, full-color cover photographs as frequently as they were for the music contained in their grooves. During the 1950s and '60s, her piercing blue eyes, strawberry blonde hair, and shapely figure were used to sell the world an image of cool sexuality.

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performing.

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Diana says

Book received from Edelweiss.

The book focuses mainly on Julie London's musical career something that many people around my age know nothing about. My generation is likely to be more familiar with her acting roles especially as Head Nurse Dixie McCall on Emergency. I have to admit that is the main reason I wanted to read this book, even though I had "discovered" her career as a singer a few years ago, along with the songwriting career of her second husband Bobby Troup, Doctor Joe Early also of Emergency fame. At this time I still have not heard any of her music, though it seems to have been very popular in the 50's and 60's. While I was watching Emergency for the paramedics, especially Johnny Gage, I was a huge fan of Dixie McCall as well like many of my aunts she was a nurse, at least on TV, and like said aunts she was married IRL but worked outside the house. In the 70's that was still a not so common thing to not be a stay at home wife and mother. I highly enjoyed this biography, and I learned quite a few things about Julie London. This is definitely a book that I'll add to my shelves in the future.

#emojiathon Book You've Been Anticipating

Michael Ritchie says

(3-1/2 stars) Back in the days of Napster (end of the 90s into early 2000s), I discovered the music of Julie London. A sultry version she sang of the bubblegum song "Yummy Yummy Yummy" was included on an episode of Six Feet Under. I was quite taken with it, searched Napster for recordings by her, and downloaded a handful of them. This eventually led, as Napstering often did, to me buying some of her music on CD and later on iTunes. I never watched the TV show Emergency for which she is probably best remembered now (aside from her one big chart hit "Cry Me a River") so I knew little about her. So I excited when I saw this book at the library.

It ended up being more about her career and music than about her as a person, which is par for the course for bios that are pieced together mostly from press releases and old interviews. Still, if this is never really scratches the surface of her personal life, it is a fairly exhaustive survey of her albums and her concert and club appearances. If Owen couldn't hunt down many people who knew her well (she died in 2000), he did manage to collect lots of information about her recording sessions, her live shows, and her movie roles. It seems that London didn't really think much of her own singing, and admitted she didn't have the drive or ambition to keep a career going full steam ahead. Owen occasionally hints that she may have had problems with alcohol--she often needed a nip or two before recording--but he never digs up much evidence of real alcohol abuse. The middle of the book drags, becoming a string of unvarying descriptions of her live show, but still I enjoyed the chapters about her recordings, and I am now more interested than ever in getting more acquainted with her music.

Rob Christopher says

Brisk and entertaining.

Marisa Young says

Biography of the singer and actress Julie London - her successes and failures, her marriage and divorce from Jack Webb, her marriage to Bobby Troup and her children. Book provides insight on the ups and downs of her musical career. One problem with I had with book is that it is too detailed at parts (song titles, album names, reviews and reviewers).
