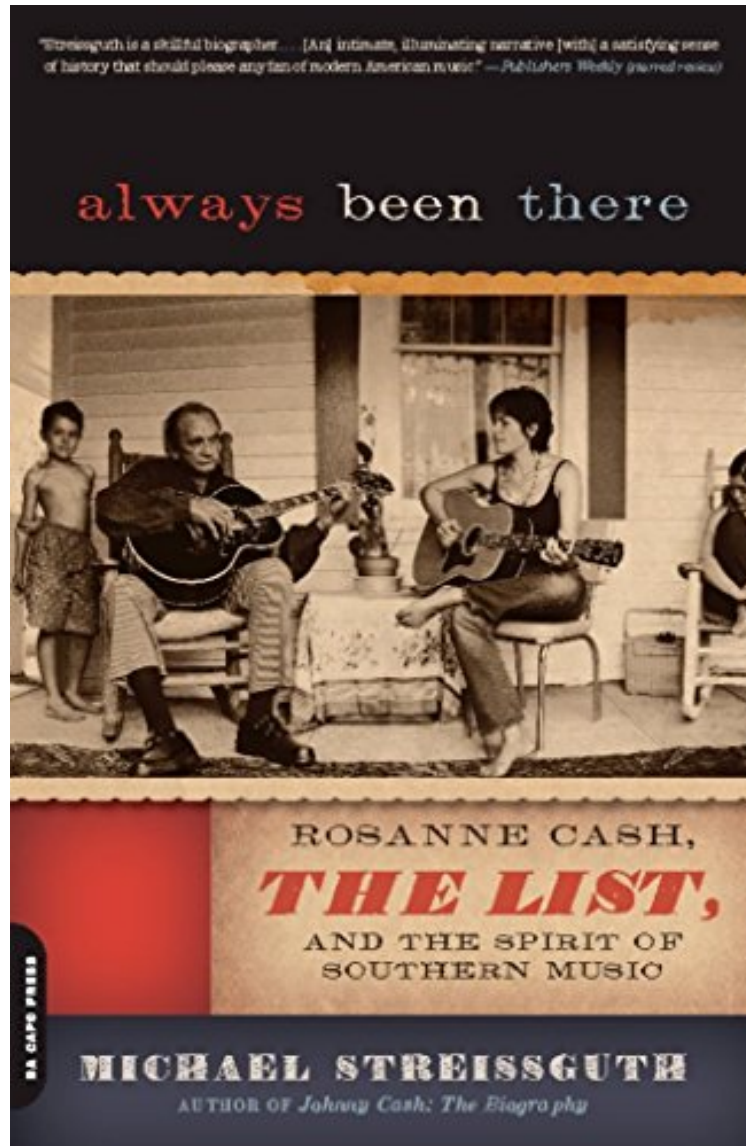


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## Always Been There: Rosanne Cash, The List, and the Spirit of Southern Music

*Michael Streissguth*

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**Michael Streissguth : Always Been There: Rosanne Cash, The List, and the Spirit of Southern Music** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Always Been There: Rosanne Cash, The List, and the Spirit of Southern Music:

2 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Not Horribly Satisfying By R. M. Ettinger I was expecting more from this book - a lot more. I'm a guy who loves process especially on how an album is being made, and in theory this

proved to be a great idea. The execution? Not so much. Michael Streissguth I think had the right idea about documenting the history of the list, the thought behind it, to the finished product and what it all meant to Rosanne Cash, but he seems to have gotten distracted along the way. Streissguth seems more enamored of traveling w/ Cash and her husband, John Leventhal, than he is about either recording the process of what is going on, to what he thinks is going on in the psyche of both Leventhal and Cash. And even with both the thought and the actuality, he kind of gives up mid-stream. If there is a highlight to the book, it is some of the revelations that Cash herself lets us in on: her relationship with her mother, with June Carter and with her father. It's more of an insight than I had heard from her ever and it is a little jarring, in a voyeuristic kind of way. Of course, there is no resolution to finding 'the list', which Streissguth made a big focus on for two-thirds of the book, but doesn't follow through on. There is either an assumption that it was found after the book was put to bed, or Cash, in her PR interviews, is stretching the truth that the original list is put away for safe-keeping. Either way, not addressing it with any finality in the book is a dissatisfier. Yes, it could be a metaphor for the actual feeling of Americana music, but it's not working for me. I struggled with the rating here. I wanted to say 2, but it somewhat short-changed it, but 3 might be shooting high. 6 of 9 people found the following review helpful. Save Your Money, Save Your Cash By Objective You're interested in this book because you're a fan of Rosanne Cash. So is the author. And that's the problem. You wanted to learn about the making of the CD. He wanted to make a documentary about it. It's a good thing his funding dried up, because reading his account of the early sessions suggests what Ms. Cash and her husband and producer/musical partner John Leventhal seem to know -- it's as hard to capture others' inspiration as it is to be inspired and creative in the studio. Or when writing. What we get from those sessions is the dry dialogue that characterizes the creative process. It's rarely interesting, and there are no epiphanies here. That should surprise no one who's been to a recording session or a rehearsal for almost any performing art. But it's something artists know all too well. It's hard to be inspired, even harder when you're being observed, and particularly hard when your observer is an omnipresent puppy whose observations ultimately reveal that he knows little about your craft. His fandom gets in the way. There's no insight in his accounts. They read as a transcript. Think about it. How honest would you be with your spouse trying to be creative and efficient in a small studio in front of a crew and writer observing everything for posterity? The book deteriorates as the project progresses. Rather than distance himself and offer some kind of objective look, Streissguth insinuates himself and becomes a palpable figure, detailing his travel preferences and foibles when you considered the book wanting to know about their journeys, not his. Buyer beware, he will become as much of a character as Cash, Leventhal, and her manager. In a laughable moment, he worries that helping them take their luggage off a German train will compromise his journalistic integrity. He lost it long before. That's not the end of the world. Clearly, Cash and Leventhal figured their project might benefit from the publicity he'd bring and let him in. But not totally. One gets the sense that they, particularly Leventhal, became wary. Streissguth following them across the Alps reminds of a guest who doesn't know when to leave. Were he a skilled writer (he isn't), possessed of a good eye (he isn't), or knew more about music than you do (he likely doesn't), he might be an entertaining guide. But he isn't. You wouldn't want the window seat with him in the middle. His writing is often cliché and burdened by forced images that pass for imagination. And you didn't buy it to learn about him. You wanted to learn more about her and what she thinks. Instead, buy Cash's new autobiography, "Composed." Somehow she's more objective. The worst book I've read in years. Well-intended as he is. 12 of 16 people found the following review helpful. Not Perfect, But It's Still A Great Book About Rosanne, "The List", and the "Spirit" of Southern Music!!!! By Gary Covington This is a good book, telling the story that lead up to the making of Rosanne's most recent album release - "The List". Plus, it contains a very candid story about Rosanne's professional personal life. In 1973, when Rosanne was 17, her father (Johnny Cash), gave Rosanne a 'list' of 100 songs, mainly from "southern traditional songs", that he felt a young musician had to know. Apparently the "list" her father gave her got lost, and Rosanne was not able to find it. The book does not contain this list. So, when Rosanne decided to start working on her concept album "The List", she had to resort to memory of the list, her father had given her. She knew it ended with songs from 1973, and she knew it contained 100 songs. So, as best as she could remember, the songs on the list, must have came from the Appalachian region, folk songs, gospel songs, country songs, even delta blues. It must have included songs from artists such as Jimmie Rodgers, the Carter Family, Lefty Frezzell, Sister Rosetta Thorpe, Don Gibson, Hank Williams, Porter Wagoner, Hank Snow, Willie Nelson and others. So, basically she and her husband producer, John Leventhal sort of reconstructed the list her father had given her. It was the "Spirit" of the list that really mattered. The first Chapter covers Rosanne's Brain Surgery, and how she had to adjust afterwards. This book covers both Rosanne's professional life along with her adult personal life. When Rosanne was a young adult, she spent a lot of time in Europe, and she even lived in Germany for a while. The book tells the story of Rosanne's professional career, and how she has to "juggle" her tours, recording, etc. to make time to spend with her children. She really cares deeply for her children. Rosanne does not tour very much. When Rosanne was living in Europe, her father, Johnny wanted her to come back home. She tried to settle into Nashville, but she just didn't feel like that was the right place for her. She wanted to move to New York, and her dad, Johnny encouraged her to do that, if that was what she wanted to do. Rosanne is just not your typical Country Music Star. However, the main focus of the book is about putting together her new album "The List". This book explains Rosanne's

artistic, creative process, along with her husband producer's input. Her husband is John Leventhal, he is both her husband and her producer. Rosanne considers many things in the process of putting together her album "The List". She thinks about her own legacy, and her own identity, but she also enjoys being connected to her famous father Johnny Cash and his legacy. When she performs before a live audience, she performs some of her Dad's songs, but there are some of his songs that she just won't perform. She does not perform "Walk the Line", but she has performed "I still miss someone". The "List" project is her way of "reconnecting" with her father. She is definitely proud of her father, and proud of the Cash name. Rosanne admits that Southern Music has had a great influence on her creativity, her music, and her writing. Plus, she wants to continue the legacy of the "Spirit" of Southern Music. She's like a link in a chain, she's connected to fathers music and his "list" from the past, and she also wants to pass the tradition on to future generations. The book covers Rosanne's process struggles of narrowing down the "list" from 100 songs to 12 songs for her new album, "The List". Also, Rosanne has struggles with the "list", her daddy gave her in 1973. She ponders about what songs from that list should go on her new album "The List". She considers things such as "do the songs have to stop at 1973"? Should the exact song from the list be selected, or can an "up-dated" song containing the "spirit" of the song in the list be included?. She considers can a song not even on the list, be included in her new album?. For example, she decided to include "Motherless Children", even though it did not meet her criteria, for the songs that must have been included in the list her father had given her. She did get to spend a lot of time with her father, around the time of June's death, and up until her father died. The picture on the cover was taken just 2 months before her Dad's death. Rosanne would sing Carter Family Songs to her Dad. Page 203 of the book concludes with "The List". A list of the final 12 songs selected for her new album. The album "The List" includes the following songs: 1. Miss the Mississippi and You (An old Jimmy Rodgers song) 2. Motherless Children 3. Sea of Heartbreak (Features Bruce Springsteen) 4. Take These Chains From My Heart 5. I'm Movin' on 6. Heartaches by the Number (Features Elvis Costello) 7. 500 miles 8. Long Black Veil (Features Jeff Tweedy of Wilco) 9. She's Got You 10. Girl From the North Country 11. Silver Wings (Features Rufus Wainwright) 12. Bury Me Under the Weeping Willow (an old Carter Family Song) This is a great, easy to read, 12 chapter book, with over 60 photographs and covering 223 pages including the index. The author of the book is Michael Streissguth. He authored the book "Johnny Cash: The Biography", and other books. Overall, this is a great book, and I highly recommend it. Thanks, and May God Bless!!!

In 1973, Rosanne Cash's father gave her a list of 100 songs that he felt a young musician had to know. Always Been There tells the inside story of the album that, more than thirty-five years later, resulted from that list. Based on original interviews conducted in the studio, on tour, and at home, Always Been There paints an unforgettable portrait of Rosanne Cash confronting music-making in the aftermath of serious brain surgery, a lifelong search for her legacy, and her unique creative partnerships.

From Publishers Weekly Starred . Author and music journalist Streissguth, having already written a biography of Johnny Cash (Johnny Cash: The Biography), joined Johnny's daughter Rosanne to document the creation of an album (and tour) that in many ways reflects the complicated relationship between daughter and legendary father. Having achieved musical success in her own right, Rosanne's project is based on a lost list of 100 songs that Johnny gave her at the beginning of her career, which he felt every young musician should know. In the process of reconstructing "the List," Rosanne and Streissguth explore Southern music, the family legacy, and Rosanne's memories of the Cashes and the Carters. Streissguth is a skillful biographer, investigating Rosanne's relationship with work and art as well as with her famous parents. Unfortunately for music enthusiasts, the actual "list" never materializes, but that doesn't stop it from giving this intimate, illuminating narrative a satisfying sense of history that should please any fan of modern American music. WNTI- New Jersey online "Always Been There moved me like few musical books that I have ever read." Publishers Weekly.com "Streissguth is a skillful biographerhellip;[An] intimate, illuminating narrative [with] a satisfying sense of history that should please any fan of modern American music." Atlanta Journal Constitution, 11/29/09 "emotion-packed, behind-the-scenes account of the making of the album." Austin Chronicle, 12/4/09 "An effortless readhellip; An enticing view of an artist." Minneapolis Star Tribune, 1/10/2010 "[A] thoughtful bookhellip;[A] portrait of a middle-aged woman coming to terms with a complicated legacyhellip;Top-notch."