



## Deep in a Dream: The Long Night of Chet Baker

By James Gavin

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### Deep in a Dream: The Long Night of Chet Baker By James Gavin

The wild ride of the most romanticized icon in jazz is thrillingly recounted in this first major biography.

From his emergence in the 1950s—when an uncannily beautiful young man from Oklahoma appeared on the West Coast to become, seemingly overnight, the prince of “cool” jazz—until his violent, drug-related death in Amsterdam in 1988, Chet Baker lived a life that has become an American myth. Now, drawing on hundreds of interviews and previously untapped sources, James Gavin gives a hair-raising account of the trumpeter’s dark journey.

The story of Baker’s demise—a heretofore unsolved riddle—is revealed here at last. So is the truth behind his tormented childhood, the pain of which haunted his entire life. Gavin explores the birth of the melancholy trumpet playing, the fragile tenor voice, and the otherworldly personal aura that catapulted Baker to fame. Sexy, angelic, needy, and forbidding all at once, Baker became known as the James Dean of jazz. Like Dean, he struck a note of menace in the staid fifties: behind his ultracool, handsome façade lay something ominous, unspoken. The mystery drove both sexes crazy. But his only real romance, apart from music, was with drugs. And in mesmerizing detail, Gavin narrates the harrowing spiral of dependency down which Baker tumbled, dragging with him those who dared get close.

From his golden promise to his eventual destruction, Baker’s life mirrored America’s fall from postwar innocence. *Deep in a Dream* is the portrait of a musician whose singular artistry and mystique have never lost their power to enchant and seduce us.

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## Deep in a Dream: The Long Night of Chet Baker By James Gavin Bibliography

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## Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

The 1988 funeral of famed trumpet player and vocalist Chet Baker in L.A. was emblematic of the disorder and dysfunction of his life though he was world famous, only a small clique of loyal fans and family attended, and they were fighting with one another. Even his death in Amsterdam (possibly an overdose or drug-related murder) was an unsettled, sordid enigma. Gavin's elegantly written and thoroughly researched biography traces the astonishing highs and lows of Baker's personal and professional life. Born in 1929 in Oklahoma to a doting mother and alcoholic father, he spent 18 months in the army at age 17 before his prodigious talent blossomed when he went back to high school. Aggressively pursuing his career, he became famous for both his trumpet playing and his equally impressive hard drug habit, both of which increased over the next two decades. Gavin is superb at placing Baker in a clearly defined cultural context the "defiant new youth culture: Marlon Brando, Montgomery Clift, and James Dean, all of whom symbolized disgust with every false hope infecting America" and in explicating Baker's out-of-control actions. Gavin has an unerring eye for the salient detail as he charts the continual down-spiraling of the trumpeter's life. Drawing upon a wealth of personal interviews, music journal reviews, national media, jazz criticism and a sound sociological sense of the period, Gavin has produced a stark, troubling portrait of both the artist and his times. Copyright 2002 Cahners Business Information, Inc.

From Library Journal

There's a point at which the reporting of salacious or sadistic behavior overwhelms more important aspects of a person's life. Gavin (*Intimate Nights: The Golden Age of New York Cabaret*) comes perilously close to crossing that line in this biography of jazz trumpeter Baker, whose drug-addled life is well known to music fans. Often, Gavin examines the minutest details of Baker's heroin abuse at the expense of detailing his musical triumphs. While he provides valuable information on Baker's neglect and bad treatment of family and friends, as well as his European and Japanese tours, he fails to demonstrate an understanding of his subject's music, which demands respect. Art Pepper's *Straight Life* is still one of the best examples of jazz biography/autobiography; it not only conveys the toll that heroin took on Pepper (one of Baker's contemporaries) but also gives a good feel for the music. Readers looking for a less commercial (though slightly more fawning) biography are directed to Jeroen de Valk's *Chet Baker*. Recommended with reservations for academic and public libraries. [This month, Blue Note Records will release *Deep in a Dream: The Ultimate Chet Baker Collection*, produced by Gavin. Ed.] William G. Kenz, Minnesota State Univ., Moorhead.

- William G. Kenz, *Minnesota State Univ., Moorhead*

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From [Booklist](#)

Jazz trumpet player and singer Chet Baker is remembered today mainly for his angelic face and his ethereal singing voice. His life, as Gavin makes clear in this compelling but painful biography, was utterly unlike his music. Vaulted into sudden fame by his work with Gerry Mulligan in the early 1950s, the photogenic Baker found himself the heartthrob of female jazz fans and the winner of numerous polls for favorite trumpet player. This early adulation as the Great White Hope of jazz earned Baker the enmity of dues-paying black musicians and helped launch him on the self-destructive lifestyle that eventually ruined his looks and wasted his talent. A full-tilt heroin addict for more than 30 years, the once-angelic Baker soon became the antithesis of his romantic music. Gavin chronicles it all, following Baker on the endless search for his next score and describing the failed relationships and missed opportunities left in his wake. And yet, even near the end, his face ravaged and his body covered with abscesses, Baker could still, on occasion, play and sing beautifully.

A difficult book to read but an eye-opening reminder of the chasm that sometimes separates life and art. *Bill Ott*

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### **From reader reviews:**

#### **Derek Morton:**

Why don't make it to become your habit? Right now, try to ready your time to do the important work, like looking for your favorite guide and reading a e-book. Beside you can solve your long lasting problem; you can add your knowledge by the publication entitled *Deep in a Dream: The Long Night of Chet Baker*. Try to make book *Deep in a Dream: The Long Night of Chet Baker* as your friend. It means that it can to get your friend when you experience alone and beside that of course make you smarter than ever. Yeah, it is very fortunated for you. The book makes you more confidence because you can know anything by the book. So , we should make new experience along with knowledge with this book.

#### **Alex Tipton:**

The particular book *Deep in a Dream: The Long Night of Chet Baker* has a lot associated with on it. So when you read this book you can get a lot of help. The book was written by the very famous author. The author makes some research previous to write this book. This book very easy to read you can obtain the point easily after looking over this book.

#### **Betty Jordan:**

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#### **Jacquelynn Laverty:**

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