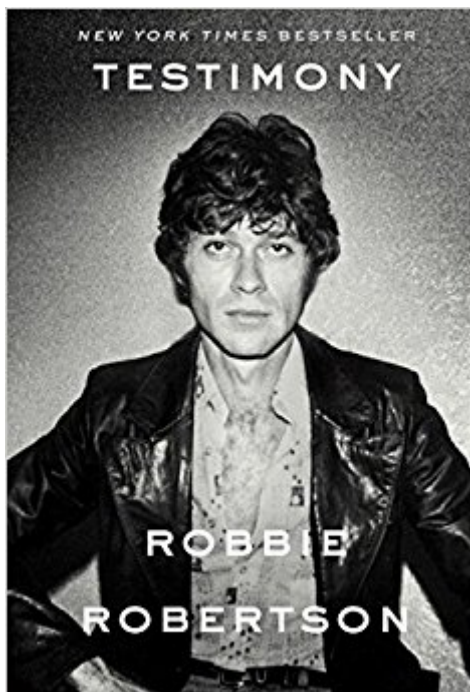


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# Testimony



## Synopsis

The New York Times Bestseller—“High-spirited, hugely enjoyable and generous from start to finish.” —New York Times Book Review —“Robust, wry, gritty and wise.” —The Wall Street Journal —“Confident and well oiled. At times it has the mythic sweep of an early Terrence Malick movie.” —New York Times On the 40th anniversary of The Band’s legendary The Last Waltz concert, Robbie Robertson finally tells his own spellbinding story of the band that changed music history, his extraordinary personal journey, and his creative friendships with some of the greatest artists of the last half-century.

Robbie Robertson’s singular contributions to popular music have made him one of the most beloved songwriters and guitarists of his time. With songs like “The Weight,” “The Night They Drove Old Dixie Down,” and “Up on Cripple Creek,” he and his partners in The Band fashioned a music that has endured for decades, influencing countless musicians.

In this captivating memoir, written over five years of reflection, Robbie Robertson employs his unique storyteller’s voice to weave together the journey that led him to some of the most pivotal events in music history. He recounts the adventures of his half-Jewish, half-Mohawk upbringing on the Six Nations Indian Reserve and on the gritty streets of Toronto; his odyssey at sixteen to the Mississippi Delta, the fountainhead of American music; the wild early years on the road with rockabilly legend Ronnie Hawkins and The Hawks; his unexpected ties to the Cosa Nostra underworld; the gripping trial-by-fire “going electric” with Bob Dylan on his 1966 world tour, and their ensuing celebrated collaborations; the formation of the Band and the forging of their unique sound, culminating with history’s most famous farewell concert, brought to life for all time in Martin Scorsese’s great movie *The Last Waltz*.

This is the story of a time and place—the moment when rock ‘n’ roll became life, when legends like Buddy Holly and Bo Diddley criss-crossed the circuit of clubs and roadhouses from Texas to Toronto, when The Beatles, Hendrix, The Stones, and Warhol moved through the same streets and hotel rooms. It’s the story of exciting change as the world tumbled through the ‘60s and early 70s, and a generation came of age, built on music, love and freedom. Above all, it’s the moving story of the profound friendship between five young men who together created a new kind of popular music. *Testimony* is Robbie Robertson’s story, lyrical and true, as only he could tell it.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

A Rolling Stone Top 10 Music Book of 2016"Robertson's book is written with a full range of literary devices| his strong point of view is offset by the tenderness he shows, and his stress on his own experience is set within a craftsman's effort to tell the story whole • an effort to do justice to their adventures as young men, talented, stylish, successful and lucky, who knew the joy of creative friendship| Testimony is high-spirited, hugely enjoyable and generous from start to finish."• New York Times Book Review "Robust, wry, gritty and wise."• The Wall Street Journal "Confident and well oiled. At times it has the mythic sweep of an early Terrence Malick movie."• New York Times"Robertson has the same knack for cinematic storytelling that he displays in his songs| Testimony reads like one long, grand adventure through rock's golden age, as told by a world-class raconteur."• Billboard"Captivating... this is essential reading."• Rolling Stone"Testimony proves that Robertson is an immensely capable storyteller and a keen observer of the gifts of others."• New Yorker "Astonishing... [Testimony is full of] detail and remarkable intimacy."• Esquire"A riveting memoir from the Band guitarist, who chronicles his journey from the Six Nations Indian Reserve to the heart of rock and roll."• People Magazine"Mr. Robertson is a natural storyteller... Testimony shines."• Pittsburgh Post Gazette"There's a lot of rock and roll history in the life and times of Robbie Robertson... Robertson delves deeply into [the Band's] tale in his memoir Testimony, tracing their evolution from bar band to Rock and Roll Hall of Famers"• New York Daily News "Robertson recalls all the key moments of an

eventful life with a songwriter's eye for detail. Essential for any devotee of the Band, Dylan, or rock music in the last half of the 20th century. Kirkus Reviews, "This long-awaited and colorfully told memoir paints a masterpiece of a life in rock and roll." Publishers Weekly, "Robertson is a masterful and engaging storyteller who brings his genius for hitting the right note in the right place to his melodious and riveting memoir...." No Depression "Robbie Robertson's Testimony is a book of memories and wonders, a personal testament of a magical time in American music from someone who was there, at the center of it all, playing and casting spells and writing songs that helped define those great lost years. There's history here, and anecdote, regret and reminiscence, a long fond look back at the trials and triumphs of finding your voice then holding your ground. The tone is easy, conversational, like reminiscing with a friend about things you never realized you were part of too. Robbie brings you along with him, keeps you right by his side first to last, just the way his songs do, drawing you close, spellbound by his easy sorcery. You can feel the music in every word." Martin Scorsese "Well, once I started, I couldn't put it down. It is such a well-paced, well-structured narrative. Robertson's voice is powerful and strong. He has harnessed a vivid language to a clean, elegant, writing style, and the sense of honesty, openness, and completeness makes it so very compelling. The personal and the historic that he bears witness to is, of course, extraordinarily special. One of the best documents of our times. And one of the best books on rock and roll ever written." Jann Wenner "Nobody tells a story like Robbie Robertson. I can't think of a memoir that is more compelling, fascinating, or rich in history. Across every page you can feel his love, passion, and musical genius." David Geffen

ROBBIE ROBERTSON was the guitarist and principal songwriter in the Band. He has produced many movie soundtracks for Martin Scorsese and others, and continues to record as a solo artist. His most recent record, *How to Become Clairvoyant*, came out in 2011.

This thick tome (495 pages) is a testament to Robertson's recall of the many parts of his life, while covering only the first 33 years of his life. From childhood to learning guitar, to hearing the various styles of music that would influence him, to his early days backing Ronnie Hawkins in his backing band the Hawks playing the rough roadhouses and joints, to his crossing paths and playing with Dylan (and not wanting to leave his fellow band members in the Hawks), and then to his time in The Band, to the drugs and money that helped tear the band apart, and finally winding up his story at the

legendary Last Waltz concert in '76, Robertson's sharp memory brings to light his life, the people, and the music he helped make. There's two sections of photos in both color and b&w. There's no Forward or Index. Of most importance to many people who will read this book is Robertson's time with Dylan--both on and off stage. His penchant for details paints a fairly vivid picture of the people and those times when so much was happening all around him. Robertson's writing style is straightforward but captivating as he describes the events and people from his viewpoint. He writes about his time with his band mates--both good and bad--and his time with Dylan and others (like the doomed Edie Sedgwick who introduced Robertson to using "special" shots, or the "almost" bank robbery), along with others from that era. Robertson also writes about his long time feud with fellow band member Levon Helm over songwriting credits/royalties, but for whatever reason never fully delves into the matter. This bitter feud lasted up through Helm's death (read "The Last Waltz" for another look at the feud), but since this is Robertson's story he chose not to go too deeply into their disagreements. But his feelings for Helm and his fellow band members apparently still runs deep. No matter your feelings on the feud this book is well worth your time reading from Robertson's viewpoint. For just about anyone interested in late '60s/'70s rock music or (especially) if you're a fan of The Band and Dylan and their slog around the world playing Dylan's "new" game-changing music, this book is worth your time. Robertson's way with words and phrases really brings out the flavor of both Robertson himself and that whole era. A good addition to most anyone's music shelf of good books. And for those who may wonder how I can review a book that's just been released, I'm lucky to have access to books before the sale date.

Robbie Robertson is a fine writer and a mesmerizing storyteller, but if you're already familiar with his songs, you already knew that. I expected to enjoy *Testimony*, but I didn't expect to have trouble putting it down. If you've read other books about The Band, Bob Dylan, or music in the 60s, you'll likely be familiar with some of the stories in this book. Here they seem fresh because Robertson writes with a keen eye for detail, honesty, and genuine empathy for the people, some famous and some not, who populate his stories.

Robbie Robertson can write anything - songs ( great ! ) non-fiction ( excellent ) RR tells of his growing up and his side of the story of The Band. Always so interesting to read how UNglamorous fame ALWAYS turns out to be. Robbie Robertson would qualify for any songwriting hall of fame on the strength of "Up On Cripple Creek" and heaven itself for "The Weight" - Great artists are complex

people - RR is no exception. He slowly drives a shiv into the ribs ( in these pages) of the man who made his lyrics come to life, Levon Helm as repayment for Levon's kvetching about publishing royalties in his memoir "This Wheel's On Fire". RR technically owed no one in The Band for his (RR's) publishing-writing income over the years (millions of dollars) but as all the other Band members got old and broke, one imagines that the member smart enough to "HOLD ON TO YOUR PUBLISHING !!!" would have shared more of the wealth. Without Levon's vocals( or the contributions of any and all of the other Band members) RR's songs would have languished in the middle of a vast army of popular talent in the 1960s-1970s. With Levon's and the other's gifts RR's songs rose to stratospheric heights of global acclaim. One is left with a feeling of a scrappy, shrewd, sublime talent with a greedy, vengeful streak.

I grew up in the 60's and 70's and music has always been one of my passions. Reading has been another. I always get a kick out of reading bio's of rock stars. It gives me pause to remember what is now nostalgia, how things were back in the day, how I went on my own wild ride and so thankful I'm still alive to enjoy the memories. And also realize that they don't make music like that anymore. As a guitar player, the Band has always has always been special to me. The older I got, the more I appreciated their music. That still holds true. Like a fruit that won't rot, just keeps getting riper. As some members have passed over time, it always feels like I just lost something.If you have read bio's of Ozzie, Eric, Keith, Pete, and others as I have, you owe it to yourself to read Robbie Robertson's journey. A very gifted and talented musician\songwriter has put together his story, and epic it is. It reads like watching the movie Forrest Gump, always in the right place at the right time.As I finished this book, the 40th Anniversary of The Last Waltz tour will be at the Ryman Auditorium in 3 weeks. I love it when a plan comes together!!!!

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