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### ***One Hit Willie: A Classic Rock Novel***

William Westhoven

CreateSpace (2011)

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Reviewed by Joseph Yurt for Reader Views (2/12)

“One-Hit Willie: A Classic Rock Novel” is the debut novel for longtime performing arts and newspaper columnist, William Westhoven. While the author successfully avoids most of the criticism leveled at many “first books” – style consistency, pacing, character development – “One-Hit Willie” is a bit choppy and rough in a few spots. But overall, Westhoven’s feature writing acumen and mastery of his writing craft have resulted in the creation of an appealing and intriguing read. This should be especially so for post-forties, rock/pop music buffs and those interested in the social influences of music during the last half of the century, as well as those drawn to the eternal flame of Las Vegas/organized crime legend and lore.

The story of “One-Hit Willie” takes the reader on a spirited, top-down road trip through five decades of music history. After Westhoven’s intriguing prologue and luscious word portrait of Willie’s mother in Chapter One, you hop in just as a young Willie Taylor is readied by his mother to embark on a successful career as a 1950s, child radio performer. The next stop on the trip is the tale of Willie and his older brother Bobby, The Taylor Brothers, appearing every weekend in their hometown, Las Vegas, at the Full House Casino Regal Lounge! After this almost quaint portrayal of Americana, Westhoven suddenly sends the story barreling down the road like a hotrod Lincoln. What unfolds in the remainder of the book is often unpredictable, unexpected, inexplicable, and on occasion, implausible. I noted that the pacing of the story waned in places, and on a few occasions, I sensed that the author had displaced his new novelist voice with his honed and comfortable columnist voice. But that aside, I found “One-Hit Willie” to always be mesmerizing, fascinating and entertaining.

In the book’s Author Notes, Westhoven readily admits to being a frustrated musician. He never made music, finding his calling instead as a journalist who could adeptly write about a wide range of subjects, but whose passion became covering the performing arts. “So when it came time to focus on a novel, music was the natural target.” Indeed, “...music was my master” he writes, and it compelled him to explore an expansive range of musical genres. His ability to successfully draw deeply from this musical wellspring in creating a content rich, multi-faceted story is what truly distinguishes this book.

William Westhoven’s “One Hit Willie: A Classic Rock Novel” is a truly wonderful enigma of a novel. Westhoven can write, and he knows how to tell a good story. I hope he is working on another one. I would like to read it too. And like Aaron Lowe, one of the central characters in “One Hit Willie” says, “You just never know what’s around the corner. You just never know.”