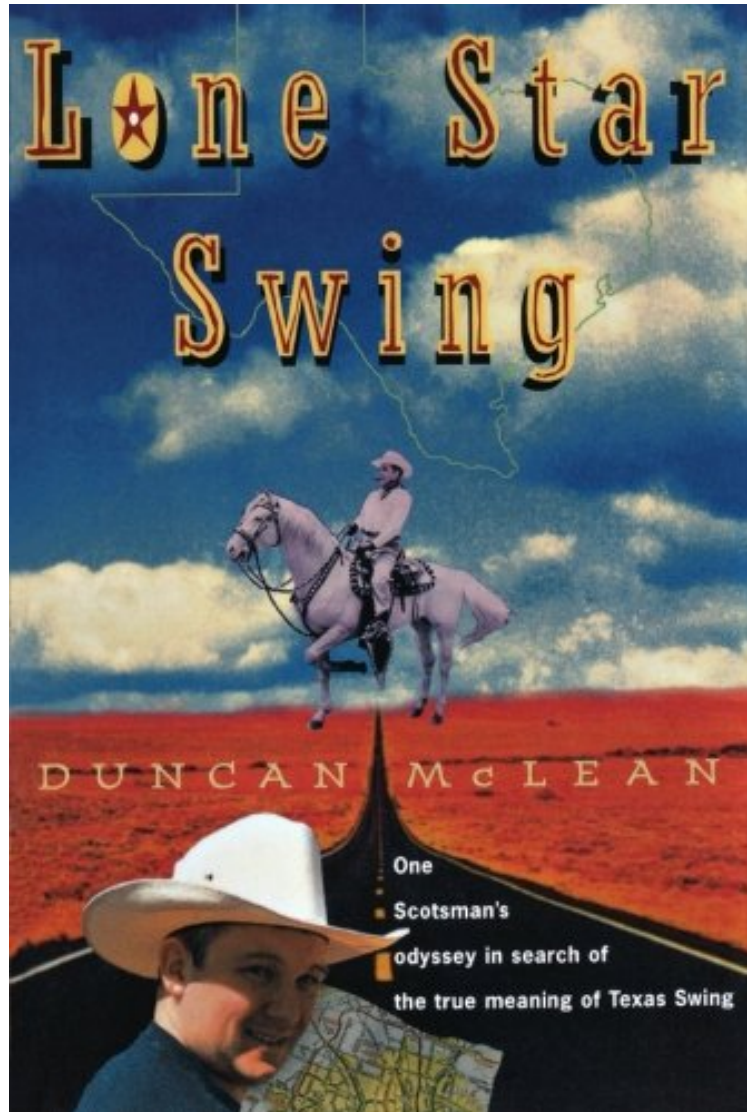


[Mobile book] Lone Star Swing

Lone Star Swing

Duncan McLean

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Duncan McLean : Lone Star Swing before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Lone Star Swing:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A wonderfully personal and funny travelogue By mandosallyA wonderfully personal and funny travelogue. As a fan of western swing music, and thus Bob Wills, I just loved it. And I read it while on a trip to Austin. Perfect! 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. This Book Is A Gem By Deanna D'Errico I'm rather surprised that readers didn't unanimously rate this book with 5 stars. The quality of the writing is superb. And the book manages to cross so many genre lines with great success. Part travelogue, part

memoir, part biography, part music criticism. Maybe that's the problem for people who didn't deem this book a masterpiece: the book defies literary categories. A friend recommended that I read this book before I set out for my 2nd or 3rd Rt. 66 road trip. I made a mix tape based on the book to accompany me on that journey, and it was the perfect soundtrack. A real gem. 5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. A great book for a beginner, and a wonderful homage by C. Hurley. So I'll admit, I find country and western music a drag, but I always loved the crossover jazz of Duke Ellington, or the early 20th century trumpet sounds of the great swingsters, and could always find a good word to say about the Burrito Brothers, The Byrds or even Hank Williams senior. Duncan Maclean wrote a very good first novel whose last few pages were a bit ropey - never mind, says I, the good ideas were there, the beautiful imagery: this lad could well turn in the goods one day. So I bought *Lone Star Swing*, and then kept it on the shelf for a year and a half. Having run out of things to read, I took it down one day and was entranced. Yes, it's very, very "boy obsessed with music" with its ridiculous lists and obsession with detail (anyone who has any doubts only has to read the Nick Hornby book, "High Fidelity" to know just how obsessive some blokes can be - er, and women, but this is not the place to discuss my A-Z'd old vinyl collection). But here is a man passionately in love with this music, enthusiastically staying in touch with ancient DJ's who live their last years in shacks filled with old tape recordings, who goes all the way from Orkney to Texas on the longest journey of his life to taste such alien and delicious treats as the Texas Rose and stand, in awe, like a small boy, at the feet of the elderly Texas Playboys as they stomp their way through their old standards.... Then came . Then came the opportunity for this English girl living in London to find out just what on earth this Maclean guy found so alluring about some old Texan fiddler and his bluesy, jazzy, folksy playmates. More Cd's than I could possibly buy and they're brilliant. All of them. Respect. Thank you Duncan. This book has more pure love and tender, respectful energy in it than any other music book I've read. Hurrah for decent music not being pigeonholed in to history and obscurity, but celebrated! Well done, well done. Read it - particularly if you're not sure.

High Fidelity meets *Blue Highways* in this gloriously offbeat quest for the true roots of Texas Swing. Using the prize money from his Somerset Maugham Award, Duncan McLean traveled from Orkney, Scotland, to Texas in search of the extraordinary mix of jazz, blues, country, and mariachi that is Western Swing. This account of his travels takes in barbed-wire museums, onion festivals, hoe-downs, ghost-towns, dead dogs, and ten thousand miles of driving through the Lone Star State. A constant soundtrack of vintage music from bands like the Texas Top Hands, The Lightcrust Doughboys, and the Modern Mountaineers cheers McLean as he tries, with great difficulty, to track down any trace of his greatest heroes: Bob Wills and the Texas Playboys. Both a quest for a musical grail and a wildly funny travelogue, *Lone Star Swing* captures the singular wonders of Texas and its maverick inhabitants, its staggering 100-in-the-shade heat, its mouth-blistering chilies. . . . Above all it captures the spirit of the glorious mongrel music-once incredibly popular, now all but forgotten-that he crossed the world to hear.

.com Duncan McLean has a dilemma. He's head over heels for a music that's not only going out of style, but is found most prevalently in Texas--a long way from his home in the Orkney Islands of Scotland. After exhausting Scotland's supply of western swing, in 1995 McLean travels to America, rents a Chevy Cavalier, and heads west to explore the birthplace, meet the makers, and dig up the roots of the sounds with which he's fallen in love. As he describes it: "This is the hottering chili-pot of New Orleans Jazz, old country fiddling, big-band swing, ragtime, blues, pop, mariachi and conjunto that dominated Texas, Oklahoma, Louisiana, and beyond--all the way to San Francisco in the west, Memphis in the east--from the mid-Thirties till mid-Elvis. This is western swing." *Lone Star Swing* is both musical pilgrimage and witty travelogue. As McLean trails his favorite music over the back roads of Texas, his adventures make for interesting reading. He has a way of making you feel you're riding along in the passenger seat as he finds the top 10 things to do in Turkey, Texas, on Bob Wills Day (Bob is McLean's western-swing hero), learns how to nibble an onion cooked up sunflower style at the Presidio Onion Festival, gets lectured for cussing in front of ladies after his Chevy gets its doors rehung by a hit-and-run driver, and suffers the wrath of Gulf Coast prawns eaten too far from their home waters. And although he's far away from the Orkney Islands, McLean has a way of making himself at home in just about every place the music takes him. From Booklist Touring Scotsman McLean focuses on the underappreciated western part of what used to be called country-and-western music. As he searched for the roots of the western swing music of, most notably, Bob Wills and his band, he also took in other manifestations of the glorious cultural wonderland known as Texas. His initial encounter with Texan fried cuisine leaves him confused as to which platter deposit is the catfish and which the hush puppies, and that sets the stage for bemused commentary on the cultural landscape displayed on the Lone Star's seemingly endless highways. Of a Pink Panther mural at the Roy Orbison museum in Wink, McLean ventures, "Why the Pink Panther? . . . Why the pink 100 lb. weight at his feet? Why the pink three of clubs?" Haunting questions, indeed. Much to his consternation, McLean found precious little contemporary interest in classic western swing. The style reached its zenith in the 1940s and is periodically revived, without much effect. Oh, well. McLean's rollicking journal is immensely good fun, anyway. Mike Tribby From Kirkus s This first nonfiction outing by the award-winning Scottish fiction writer McLean (*Bucket of Tongues*, 1994; *Bunker Man*, 1997) is sure to make some waves on this side of the Atlantic. McLean took the money he received for winning

the Somerset Maugham Award and went to Turkey, Tex., of all places, to attend the annual Bob Wills Festival. Along the way, he also tried to trace the past that Wills, a pioneer of western swing, left scattered all across the Lone Star State. Laughingly chronicling his progress, McLean equals the best of American road literature. The principal source of his humor? The nearly constant problems Texans faced in deciphering McLean's Orkney-Scottish accent. A particularly fine moment in the saga: McLean's telephone conversation with an aged, nearly deaf swing musician who can only understand half of what the author is saying. McLean is also able to offer gentle yet pointed observations on American culture in general. His fascination with tabloids such as the Weekly World News (he claims to take it literally), his obsession with right-wing talk radio, and his enjoyment of such specifically Texan events as the annual Presidio Onion Festival display McLean's biting sense of humor, which distinguishes his book from the mere music survey or the everyday travelogue. But of course, music is still a subject here. McLean confesses himself to be left cold by Austin, regarded by many in the music industry as the music city in Texas. Instead, he finds the smaller towns, where Bob Wills and his band members left their legacy, to be far more inspiring. If, like many another postmodern narrator, McLean often prefers anticlimax over climax in his writing, it's because existentialism made him do it. A funny and charming lookthrough Scottish eyes at Texas as a microcosm of America. (illustrations, not seen) --
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