

Alternativereel.com, Florida, review (325 words)

The Ghost of Neil Diamond is a rare find, a totally original and fascinating novel that held my interest from beginning to end. The novel is a dark comedy that follows the exploits of Neil Atherton, a Neil Diamond impersonator struggling to make a name for himself in Hong Kong.

I was originally attracted to The Ghost of Neil Diamond by the interesting title. Wasn't Neil Diamond still alive? What the hell was Neil Diamond's ghost? I remember the first time I watched The LastWaltz, the brilliant 1978 documentary about The Band, which featured such musical legends as Bob Dylan, Eric Clapton, Neil Young, Van Morrison, Ringo Starr, Muddy Waters, Emmylou Harris, Joni Mitchell . . . and Neil Diamond?!? How the hell did he get an invite! When I think Neil Diamond, I also remember his cameo in the 2001 comedy, Saving Silverman, which concerns a Neil Diamond cover band called "Diamonds in the Rough." So essentially I've always thought of this dude as a total joke. And here was this novel about a Neil Diamond impersonator of all things! How original was that? And I thought Elvis impersonators were kind of a joke, here was a guy trying to impersonate a third-tier entertainer and failing miserably at it! The novel was just full of this great mixture of humor and pathos.

Indeed, this well-crafted novel captured my attention from the first paragraph:

"Amen to all sorrows.

With a few splashes of cold water Neil washed away his sins. He watched them slip down the plughole, one by wretched one. The wrongdoings and wrong turns, the bad debts and bad memories sank beyond the U-bend, and his soul lay empty and prepared."

Well, I could go on and on but the bottom line is that I highly recommend The Ghost of Neil Diamond if you're tired of reading the same old stuff all the time and want to check out something truly unique. I for one am looking forward to David Milnes' next novel!