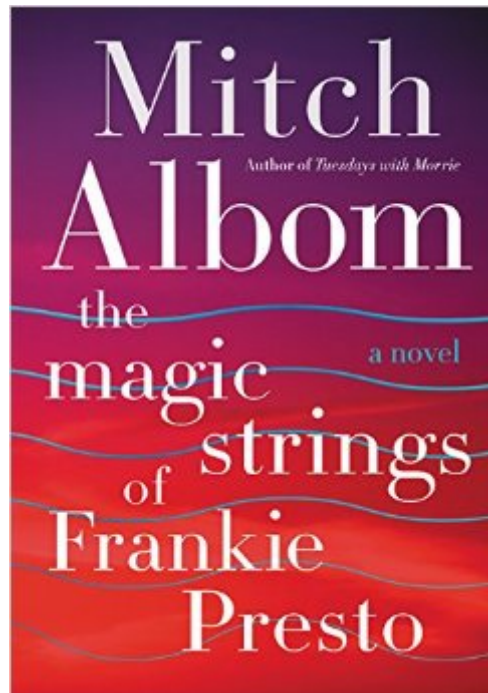


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The Magic Strings Of Frankie Presto: A Novel



Synopsis

Mitch Albom creates his most unforgettable fictional characterâ€”Frankie Presto, the greatest guitarist to ever walk the earthâ€”in this magical novel about the bands we join in life and the power of talent to change our lives. In his most stunning novel yet, the voice of Music narrates the tale of its most beloved disciple, young Frankie Presto, a war orphan raised by a blind music teacher in a small Spanish town. At nine years old, Frankie is sent to America in the bottom of a boat. His only possession is an old guitar and six precious strings. But Frankie's talent is touched by the gods, and his amazing journey weaves him through the musical landscape of the 20th century, from classical to jazz to rock and roll, with his stunning talent affecting numerous stars along the way, including Hank Williams, Elvis Presley, Carole King, Wynton Marsalis and even KISS. Frankie becomes a pop star himself. He makes records. He is adored. But his gift is also his burden, as he realizes, through his music, he can actually affect people's futuresâ€”with one string turning blue whenever a life is altered. At the height of his popularity, Frankie Presto vanishes. His legend grows. Only decades later, does he reappearâ€”just before his spectacular deathâ€”to change one last life. With its Forest Gump-like romp through the music world, *The Magic Strings of Frankie Presto* is a classic in the making. A lifelong musician himself, Mitch Albom delivers a remarkable novel, infused with the message that "everyone joins a band in this life" and those connections change us all.

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Customer Reviews

I've read around 2-3 books a week since I was 10 years old, which, if I did my math right,

means I've read between 7-8000 books in my life. I've had a few favorites but until yesterday I could not identify my favorite of all time. "The Magic Strings of Frankie Presto" just took the prize. I've always enjoyed Mitch Albom's writing, but this book resonated in a way that no other book has. The last book that affected me significantly was "The Alchemist" by Paulo Coelho. In fact, there are a number of similarities in the two books in terms of message and writing styles. This is not just fiction; it is literature. It is a challenge to write a compelling review in a few short words to describe a literary masterpiece. This is the type of book we would have studied when I was an English major in college, and I suspect there will be more than one professor adding this to his or her class syllabus. There were a number of places that were so well written that I literally stopped reading and inwardly smiled a few times when the words moved me to tears. This book tugs at your heartstrings. The story is woven into chapters between the narrator - an omniscient being (talent) named "Music" and excerpts from famous musicians whose lives were impacted by Frankie (read the authors notes at the back - he really connected with many of these musicians while writing the book). "Music" shares part of himself (there was no indication of gender, but it seemed like a "he") with people when they are born and collects that essence when they die - only to share it with someone else in the future. Frankie gets a large chunk of that essence. He becomes a gifted musician and singer.

Mitch Albom has had an unusual career. When I first became aware of him many years ago, he was a frequent guest commentator on ESPN's Sunday morning talk show, "The Sports Reporters". The show was lively, and Albom was one of a few participants who regularly impressed me with his insightful and sensible takes on contemporary sports topics. All I knew about him was that he was a sports writer with a quick enough mind and turn of phrase that he translated well to live television. Albom had written a couple of sports themed books, but he made his first impression outside of the world of sports with his book "Tuesdays with Morrie". My understanding is that the motive for the book's creation was Albom's desire to do something to pay the medical bills of his one-time college professor, and now reconnected friend. The book was moving, and did in fact accomplish his financial goals. It was eventually made into an equally moving film starring Jack Lemmon as Morrie. Mitch Albom next turned to fiction, where he has been equally well received. His fiction explores lives through a metaphysical lens, generally on the theme of how we impact others. I'm forced to think of the classic movie "It's a Wonderful Life" when I ponder Albom's inspirations. "Magic Strings" is told by a very unusual omniscient narrator, with periodic sequels into personal reminiscence by people who recall remarkable episodes from their time with Frankie.

Frankie is a gifted musician, inspired by the muse, favored with a unique magic. Albom tells his story with the skill of an author who has become not only an expert wordsmith, but a master at creating mood. His style adapts to the essence of each character and the demands of gripping scenes.

Mitch Albom's inventive new novel is a well-considered riff on the nature of music. A musician himself, Albom explores the eternal questions about the seductive power music has over our lives, our memories, our emotions and how and why some people are blessed or even cursed with this mysterious, consuming talent. Frankie Presto, a Spanish war orphan and musical prodigy comes to America all alone at the age of 10. His only real possession is a six string guitar given to him by his beloved Maestro. It takes Presto a good part of his life to realize that the six strings are magical and that when called upon, they can affect people's lives. This is a wonderful gift but also a terrible burden for him to carry throughout his life and it affects his behavior, his career, and his relationships. The story begins at Frankie Presto's funeral in Villareal Spain, the town of his birth. Considered one of the greatest musicians of the 20th century. Frankie has died while performing at a concert. His demise, though public, was of greatly mysterious causes. Similarly, though a public figure known to millions of fans, Frankie Presto's origins and life story remains obscured to most. Who is Frankie Presto, really? Why has his talent touched so many people? And what is going on with those guitar strings? This narrative is presented documentary-style, it unfolds as if it were a biographic film or miniseries. The narrator is the personification of Music itself and various members of the music world, both real and imagined, are interviewed talking head-style to fill in the public understanding of who Frankie Presto was and why his music mattered to them. The plot moves along fairly smoothly especially when interspersed with chapters of dialog and action.

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