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# SpoonFed



## Synopsis

"With a string of smash hits - Nova Heart, Tell No Lies, Old Emotions, Romantic Traffic - the Spoons redefined the musical landscape and captured the hearts of fans everywhere. The Spoons toured extensively, playing sold-out shows with an array of fellow icons including Talking Heads, Police, Culture Club, Simple Minds and many more, during a decades-long journey-adventure that continues to this day. The Spoons gold album *Arias & Symphonies* was named one of the 20 Most Influential Albums of The '80s by The Chart Magazine and Nova Heart was named one of The Top 100 Canadian Singles. *SpoonFed* is the compelling life story of Spoons frontman Gord Deppe, whose creative vision defined one of the most influential, original bands of the '80s and beyond."

From the Foreword by Michael B Davie

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## Customer Reviews

With a string of smash hits - Nova Heart, Tell No Lies, Old Emotions, Romantic Traffic - the Spoons redefined the musical landscape and captured the hearts of fans everywhere. The Spoons toured extensively, playing sold-out shows with an array of fellow icons including Talking Heads, Police, Culture Club, Simple Minds and many more, during a decades-long journey-adventure that continues to this day. The Spoons gold album *Arias & Symphonies* was named one of the 20 Most Influential Albums of The '80s by The Chart Magazine and Nova Heart was recently included in Bob Mersereau's book *The Top 100 Canadian Singles*. *SpoonFed* is the compelling life story of Gord Deppe, the Spoons' driving creative force, principal songwriter, lead singer and lead guitarist,

whose creative vision defined one of the most influential and original bands of the '80s and beyond.

As singer, guitar player and songwriter for the Canadian new wave band the Spoons, Gord Deppe has been in the music business for over thirty years. Born in Vancouver, B.C., his family moved back and forth between Canada and Germany several times before finally settling in Burlington, Ontario. There, in 1980, fresh out of high school, Gord, Sandy Horne, Rob Preuss and Derrick Ross would go on to make Spoons a different kind of household word. The young band would also catch the wave of a brand new video-driven phenomenon that was about to hit TV screens nationwide. The video for their hit Nova Heart would be aired on the very first broadcast of MuchMusic. Romantic Traffic, shot in the subways of Toronto, remains as one of the most iconic Canadian music videos of all time. Gord and the Spoons have stayed active to this day, continuing to record new music and perform across the country. This is Gord's first published book.

(2017-06-18)

30 years ago a needle fell on my very first Spoons album – changing the way I felt about music, subtly – yet profoundly. The emotional impact of that time has never left. If as a teenager you felt music this powerfully, it is very difficult to grow up and grow out of it. In this honest, heartfelt, examining book – surely one of the best and most beautifully written – Gordon Deppe offers a fascinating insight into his life, and how it shaped him into becoming a musical legend. The Spoons were there from the start. One of the most original, intelligent, and innovative bands to hail from anywhere, they didn't so much burst onto the new music scene at the time as they helped create it. Their songs have never failed to inspire, excite, and challenge their listeners. This book reminds me of why I love music in the first place. Deppe's writing continually astonishes, alters itself, shifts with time, shifts through time, constructs areas within itself, contrasts the past, finding different ways of possibly saying the same thing. The Spoons have created some of the most magical moments in life. Still playing today, they are better now than they have ever been. So is Deppe's writing. Spoonfed is a poetic encounter with the greatest band.

My thoughts on Spoonfed. I have to say I enjoyed reading this book. It's a lighthearted reflection at what many considered the fairytale success of this band. The Spoons were in the right place, at the right time, and met or had access to the right people. In so many ways they seemed to be spoon fed success. Starting out as school friends, to the beginning of the video age, to the end of the 80's, it

was a run that lasted longer than most bands. Some mistakes were made, and not taking advantages of opportunities due to creative differences are admissions made in the book. If your looking for mud slinging, its not to be found here. The image of the spoons was always clean cut, and true to form, Gord keeps the memories above board that way. He starts out talking about his childhood, and moving around the world. Finally a kid who's English was non-existent, came back to the continent that had Disneyland! Children can be cruel about such differences, however he finds his strengths and learns English, music, and song writing. He goes through the pre-teen years, with creative ideas, and meeting new people. Starting several bands in school, finally the four members of the Spoons came together. Deciding on musical styles and instruments, somehow this tiny girl ended up carrying the heaviest instrument, that was also just about as tall as she was? Visually at first the group looks the part of the partridge family in their first jumpers, but again thanks to help at the right time, they grow and emerge from their jumpers with style oozing! Gord, the handsome lead singer, Rob the super preened keyboardist, Derrick the tall drummer, and Sandy, the little girl that blossoms into major eye candy! Enter the video age! What is evident in the visuals is that this tiny girl, who struggles to carry this bass guitar, that somehow just added to the bands appeal. Who knew that under the Tutu, she had to wear that gizmo, but she kept smiling and singing through it all? Then there's the hair, lets face it, she had miles of it, and used it like a woman could! She spawned a few nation wide hair style trends as every video or interview was an event to see her latest creation. The one picture that sticks in my head is of her playing her bass, with skin tight black spandex, a white top, and her head swaying to the music. Her lions mane of hair flying around,,, wow the imagination of all us impressionable young lads! Even today she has more hair than the men in my class reunion combined! Many people the band meet are up and coming people themselves. While Gord phrases them as the people that helped the band, using some reverse psychology, the people who helped the Spoons also become famous and used the bands popularity to springboard their own careers. Its a win/win scenario that can be a trap for bands. Riding too high a wave of success, and then having mismatched managers, and record company people, can make for an unsymmetrical combination of talent. A winning combination takes both sides to be in sync with each other. Gord wrote songs meant for one persons style to engineer, but then having another work on it, with their own ideas and intentions did not help the creativity process. Another fault he admits to is holding on too long to the success of Arias and Symphonies while trying to make new music under these non ideal conditions. Some singers and bands have disintegrated just after one hit single, but he recognizes that he should embrace these new ideas before its too late. Touring with other bands brings out some dirty tricks, some funny, some funny a few days later. Some

Spinal Tap moments, and some close calls, like arriving to play on stage with no seconds to spare. Another aspect of himself he goes into is focusing on lyrics, rather than the tune itself. While not necessarily a fault, Old Emotions, Tell No Lies and Romantic Traffic came from simple inspirations and became their biggest hits, while some other songs he details were never released on radio. Going through their catalog of music, the progression from their earliest days, thoughts and ideas, to the end of the 80's is well covered. While each album had its success, four songs that I think use both Gord and Sandy to their best strengths are Closing Credits, which is a thank you to the fans of the band for staying with them all these years. Trade Winds which shines as an example of youthful creativity and those two songs, written some 30 years apart just blend beautifully back to back. No Electrons captures the uplifting spirit of the early 80's electronic music, and Old Emotions. Part of the early 80's contained a rehash component of the 1930's in the fashion area. Kid Creole & the Coconuts nailed that visually. On Old Emotions, Gord and Sandy's voice shine as they captured this old style vocally rather than visually. Along with a simple creatively played catchy tune, remains my favorite song. There's some good laughs as he recounts the pillow fight scene from the video. Some things are only covered briefly. The breakup is several paragraphs long. Simply stated the business of running the band caused the two to grow apart. While couples like to believe they can keep personal issues from affecting others, when four people are cocooned together, simple changes of habit, emotion, and body language between two, become easily felt and noticeable to the others. Miniscule little things can become major emotional reactions, even if nothing is implied. Derrick obviously taking it the hardest, by hanging up his drum sticks, and not knowing Rob would also leave, shows how distant they all became. Many of us have experienced relationship failures from the inside and witnessing them from the outside. Understanding what was said between Gord and Sandy to keep the band going, will remain between them, but understandably could not have happened without some honest conversations! One band in particular that was famous for the partners breaking up was ABBA. Some of their later songs included little jabs about the other partner, so its funny as to how things work out. The Spoons song Be Alone Tonight, is their break up song, and Rob after he left the band, would go on to play ABBA music nightly in Mama Mia. Gord continues to discuss the events up until today, working and playing with other band members, and other bands after the Spoons. One senses a sadness or longing in his writing from this point. He does not state it, but in these years, he and the others members have had time to talk with other bands, and reflect on how their moments in the limelight ended. Every musician knows some real horror stories of endings, but the Spoons demise was largely due to changing times, changing record management, and not enough knowledge of the music industries workings, or billing

practices. Technology of today can put a recording studio in ones home, whereas in years prior creativity and experimentation was all expensive studio time. The costs involved with foreign time, location and recording skyrocketed beyond the bands ability to recoup in sales. Nor does he explain if the band knew expenses got out of control, but the experienced reader will recognize how it happened. These are the failings between the band and their management, but that may not have been obvious to either until it was too late. The Spoons fans will enjoy the book for being a window into the life of the band, but this book can also serve another purpose. There's many things up and coming bands can learn from what happened to the Spoons. For instance, instructions on how to use a flash pot at school, and get away without suspension! It comes guaranteed to work every time! Ok, but seriously keeping knowledgeable of the music industries workings, and finding that balance of creativity, business, and personal relationship between band members. The lifestyle of the music industry is overwhelming, but is every bands dream when it happens, and every bands nightmare when its over. With emotional reactions, the longer the ride up, the harder the fall can be. How each handles success, and how each handles failure, is regrettably something not taught in schools. The original members have since played together, but it took many unnecessary years apart for that to happen again. Without a doubt, this book is a good read! Gord is the only one to write about the band so far, and this does not stop the other members from also writing their own memoirs, but perhaps those extra details would be better saved for the movie, there's more than enough material here for that! A Spoons fan I am, and shall remain.

The power of a pop song is amazing what it can do. It can make you dance, it can lift your spirits, it can play the part in setting the mood for a special moment, etc. But by far the most powerful thing that a song can do is make a connection between the writer/performer and the listener. For me, the connection between myself and the Spoons began with a little song called Nova Heart. I saw a video for the song on a local music video program and later the next day heard it on KROQ. I had to have it. In fact, I ended up riding my bike 5 miles to get a copy of the album *Arias & Symphonies*. One listen through and I had found my favourite band going on 33 years now. Being a teenager in Los Angeles, and a huge fan of a band hailing from Toronto in the days way before the internet, didn't lend itself to being able to keep up with the history and goings on with this band. But alas, along has come *SpoonFed* - to fill in a lot of the gaps on the band's history, some of the inspirations for their music and songs, antidotes on the adventures they shared and people they met along the way , and most importantly, a rare insight

into the private and quiet world of the author himself. If you are looking for a trashy, tell-all book full of things you would read splashed on the cover of the National Enquirer - this is the wrong book for you. And for me, I appreciated the fact that it wasn't because there is an innocence/normality about this band that is part of their appeal and the book only helps to reinforce it. The book is an easy read and I finished it over the course of a few evenings before bed. Gord's approach to telling the story is very self-reflective, informative, and respectful of the other people who helped the Spoons and Gord through the high's and low's of the Spoons story so far. And while I personally finally got a more in-depth history of the band during the 80's and early 90's - it was this insight that I enjoyed the most. It reinforced and helped to put to words the connection I have had with this band and their music for so many years. I "got/understood" the Spoons and Gord and I "got/understood" me. There was a connection and the book for me, just put it into words and provided clarity. In the interest of being honest and full disclosure - yes, I am the same LA Dan as on page 186. Yes, it is very special to me to be included in the "Spoons" story. I have provided my review here without any sort of consideration, other than to continue to support a band that I love.

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