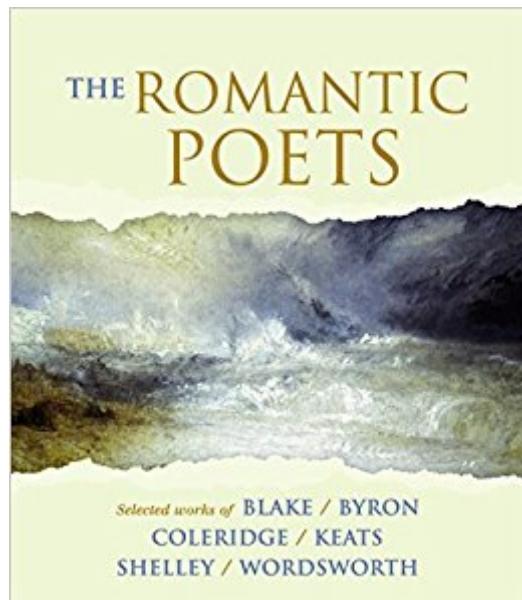


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The Romantic Poets



Synopsis

The spirited words of the Romantic poets have inspired countless readers and writers, down to the current day. Their expressiveness is well-suited to the spoken word. Hear on this collection the words of William Blake, Lord Byron, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, John Keats, Percy Bysshe Shelley, and William Wordsworth read by Derek Jacobi, David Horovitch, Diana Quick, Douglas Hodges, Nicol Williamson, and others. The pieces are linked by a commentary that places them in a historical and biographical context. Originally published as six individual HighBridge Classics, now the complete set is available as a single CD collection.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Coming soon...Coming soon...Coming soon...

Actors rich in experience and classical training perform these poems and do a wonderful job with their formal elements. They know how to read verse so the rhythm comes through; the cadences in these poems march, skip, and dance, allowing the structural energies behind the words of these great British poets to be heard clearly. Likewise, the brief introductions bridging the different poems provide useful information in a focused fashion. The only weaknesses is that there seems to be no clear personal or even professional connection with the poems; it isn't clear why, for example, Derek Jacobi reads one poem and Diana Quick another. G.T.B. © AudioFile 2006, Portland, Maine--
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What a gorgeous book! I bought this book for a bridesmaid gift and to carry in lieu of a bouquet at the ceremony with some flowers and ribbon to bind it. The beautiful poems inside have such sentimental value to us. The bright orchid purple is vibrant, and the roses are a glittery almost vinyl instead of a muted pink color. I thought I would hate it, but I actually really love that it has a touch of sparkle.

The most beautiful edition I have ever seen. I am a sucker for covers and this one knocked it outta the park for me. It is purple, sparkly and flexibound. The poems are well curated and very special. A must have and a must read.

I think poetry needs to be listened to...not just read. The trick is finding an audio Cassette or audio CD that does justice to the music of the poem. Since the Romantic poets wrote some of the most wonderful poetry in the English language, many people will want to have such an audio product. I do recommend this CD without reservation. Why four versus five stars? One of the most interesting parts of the CD collection are the autobiographical materials that precede the poems; neither John Keats nor William Blake received "that historical treatment" in this audio product. This is a minor complaint. Also, some of the readers are better than others. Jeremy Northam version of Coleridge's THE EOLIAN HARP is wonderful, perhaps worth the price of the CD alone.

I think it should have a page marker built in the cover. That's a nice touch to have for a book like this

The only negative point about this collection of Romantic Poetry is that it consists mainly of poetry by William Blake. In between, a few pieces by other Romantic Poets (Wordsworth, Byron and so forth) can be found, but in comparison to other collections, the scale very much tips towards Blake. Some of the comments that are shown as connected to this collection are misleading insofar that this is NOT the same collection as "The Romantic Poets" available on Audio CDs published by HighBridge Audio. There are no comments on the poets' lives in this recording!

Unfortunately, I cannot write a totally positive review of this collection of poetry. But the fault does not lie with the fine recording itself, nor with the talented British actors selected to read these poems. The fault lies rather with the poets Byron and Shelley. You may admire their poetry, and know absolutely nothing about their lives--and that is perhaps the way it should be. I've never particularly cared for Byron's verse but much of Shelley's poetry I have always admired, and loved.

Unfortunately, on this recording, for Shelley, Byron, Wordsworth, and Coleridge, we don't just hear their poetry, we must endure talk about the various events of their lives. For Wordsworth and Coleridge, this is fine. But for Byron and Shelley, this amounts to not much more than a running account of their wantonness and irresponsibility, thoughtlessness toward others, selfishness and lust. These two poets certainly brought great suffering into the lives of others, especially women they loved and later abandoned, and the children they carelessly fathered out of wedlock and later abandoned. (Regrettably, I will have to count Wordsworth also among this list.) There's no doubt their poetry is inspired and often very beautiful. But at what cost to others, and ultimately to themselves? Having to listen to the wastrel saga of their lives distracts from the appreciation of their verse. For that reason, I am reluctant to recommend the discs devoted to Shelley and Byron. Sample and admire their poetry to your heart's content, but spare the biographical commentary about their lives. As for the others, they are absolutely wonderful! Nicol Williamson does not just read Blake; he IS Blake! Listening to him read the Songs of Innocence brings tears to my eyes. You will come away from hearing the Blake CD overwhelmed by this man's humanity and spiritual depth, as well as his poetic inspiration. The other poet who truly surprised me was Coleridge. We've all heard stories about his opium addiction, but the man himself is presented as excessively thoughtful and considerate of others, perhaps too much so. He apparently had a very nervous disposition, and was easily discouraged. His life-story is presented in a very positive light, and he comes off very well here. The Keats CD is another miracle. We are spared the details of Keats' short tragic life. Douglas Hodge reads Keats' greatest poems with such perfect phrasing and the finest British diction, again it is as though one is listening to Keats himself read; it's simply stunning. I will come back to this particular disc many times to hear this authentic Keatsean voice, which gives the great odes their perfect vehicle. The two Wordsworth CDs are also quite excellent, and again one often has the sense that this is Wordsworth reading from his own work. All of his greatest poems are presented here, as well as generous excerpts from the Prelude. He comes across as a great poet of nature, and above all else a man who tried to see harmony and concord in nature. But it is also evident that he was a man consciously trying to beat back a sense of deep depression as he grew older. There is one short poem of Wordsworth's, the one about the young boy who died, a poem which I believe he later included in the Prelude: I had not been familiar with this short poem, but hearing it read one day while I was driving brought me to a state of almost complete emotional breakdown; I'm glad I was on a country road, for I just had to pull over. To this day, I cannot hear this poem read as masterfully as it is on this CD without feeling a sense of deep, almost mystical, emotion sweep over me. This superb set is sure to be a constant resource for me for many years. This poetry was meant

to be heard! Of course not all the poems in this collection are great, but if you are familiar with the romantic poets you will find the poems you most admire in this collection, and you will likely find new ones to admire as well. I highly recommend this set. Many thanks to Highbridge audio for these recordings. Here's hoping that the Victorian poets will soon be presented in the same format.

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