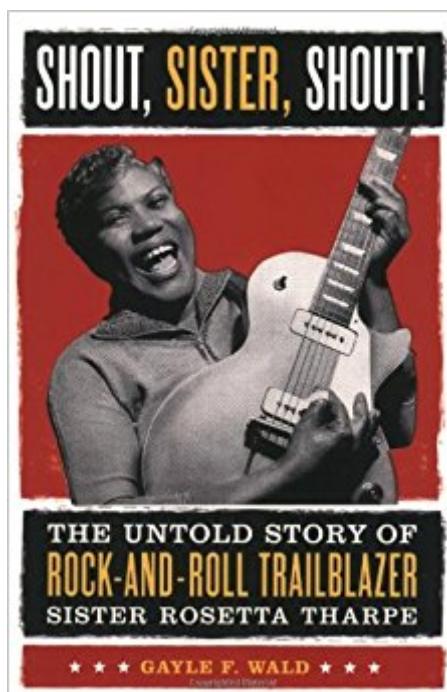


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# Shout, Sister, Shout!: The Untold Story Of Rock-and-Roll Trailblazer Sister Rosetta Tharpe



## Synopsis

A New York Times Book Review Editor's Pick Long before "women in rock" became a media catchphrase, African American guitar virtuoso Rosetta Tharpe proved in spectacular fashion that women could rock. Born in Cotton Plant, Arkansas, in 1915, Tharpe was gospel's first superstar and the preeminent crossover figure of its golden age (1945–1965). *Shout, Sister, Shout!* is the first biography of this trailblazing performer who influenced scores of popular musicians, from Elvis Presley and Little Richard to Eric Clapton and Etta James. Tharpe was raised in the Pentecostal Church, steeped in the gospel tradition, but she produced music that crossed boundaries, defied classification, and disregarded the social and cultural norms of the age; incorporating elements of gospel, blues, jazz, popular ballads, folk, country, rhythm and blues, and rock and roll. Tharpe went electric early on, captivating both white and black audiences in the North and South, in the U.S. and internationally, with her charisma and skill. People who saw her perform claimed she made that guitar talk. Ambitious, flamboyant, and relentlessly public, Tharpe even staged her own wedding as a gospel concert in a stadium holding 20,000 people! Wald's eye-opening biography, which draws on the memories of more than a hundred people who knew or worked with Tharpe, introduces us to this vibrant, essential, yet nearly forgotten musical heavyweight whose long career helped define gospel, r&b, and rock music. A performer who resisted categorization at many levels—as a gospel musician, a woman, and an African American—Tharpe demands that we rethink our most basic notions of music history and American culture. Her story forever alters our understanding of both women in rock and U.S. popular music.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Though Elvis, Ginger Baker, Keith Richards and Jerry Lee Lewis paid her tribute, Sister Rosetta Tharpe's vast contribution to American musical history has nearly faded away. With the publication of this entertaining and enlightening biography, Tharpe— who reputedly played her electric guitar "like a man," withstood failed marriages, racial and sexual discrimination plus economic hardships— should receive the recognition she deserves. George Washington University professor Wald (Crossing the Line) has knit together memories of 150 people familiar with Tharpe and her work. Wald's competent research provides readers with the larger historical framework within which Tharpe's contributions can be appreciated. Born in Arkansas in 1915, Rosetta Tharpe became a well-known child performer, honing her gospel guitar style in Pentecostal churches and tent revivals throughout the South. By the late 1930s Tharpe relocated to Chicago, made the life-altering choice of forsaking Pentecostal church performances and embarked on a secular career, eventually signing with Decca Records. During the 1950s Tharpe's career sagged due to changing musical tastes, but a well-timed European tour in 1957 reignited her career. Tharpe courageously cut across racial, musical and sexual boundaries, defying easy categorization, which may have contributed to her obscurity. Wald's biography of this unique performer will hopefully reawaken interest in her life and music. (Feb.) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Most people today probably have never heard of Rosetta Tharpe or even seen pictures of her during her heyday at the Cotton Club, the Apollo Theater, Carnegie Hall, and even the Grand Ole Opry, spectacularly picking an electric guitar while decked out in a spangled evening dress. Ward's illuminating biography brings the deliciously flamboyant singer to life as gospel's first superstar and a seminal figure defying musical categorization. Tharpe influenced such stars as Johnny Cash, Jerry Lee Lewis, Etta James, Little Richard, Bonnie Raitt, Ruth Brown, and Isaac Hayes by incorporating blues, jazz, country, R & B, and pop ballads into a fundamentally gospel style, and without her precedent, Wald asserts, there would have been no Elvis (Wald suggests that Tharpe's 1945 crossover hit, "Strange Things Happening Every Day," may be the first rock 'n' roll record). What truly sets her apart is her extraordinary guitar playing. Now buried in an unmarked grave in Philadelphia, Tharpe was a larger-than-life figure in American pop music. May Wald's shimmering

book revive her for new listeners. June SawyersCopyright © American Library Association. All rights reserved --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

A superb book about an amazing guitarist, singer and performer. If you read this book you will appreciate Rosetta's contribution to the early rock and roll pioneers. Check out some of the YouTube videos of her performances and you will be amazed. I wish I could have seen her perform - what a treat that would have been.

Very good biography of an extremely influential, yet under-appreciated musician. Sister Rosetta Tharpe's influence is still felt today. She was a complex and sometimes contradictory individual, and Gayle Wald does a great job telling her story while also giving the context of the world and times in which Sister lived. Highly recommended.

A good book covering a great artist who was a huge influence on many. Very interesting read.

Wonderful story! I couldn't put the book down! I love reading the history of those we think are/were successful to see their road was not always easy. We grew up listening to Sis. Rosetta Tharpe because my Dad loved gospel music, especially the guitar. Because of her (and others), all of my parents' six children pursued their own musical talents. And Sis. Rosetta's music is still as inspiring today as it was when we were kids in the '60s!

This is a great book.... How this goddess is not in the r + r hall of fame ????? A highly recommended story for any rock musician or music historian. Only wish there were more photo's .....Thanks .....

As I have been looking forward to someone writing a book about Sister Rosetta Tharpe I was excited that one was on the market. I thoroughly enjoyed the book. It was sensitively written and with a lot of information about this neglected gospel star who pioneered so many trends in music and what she did on stage. A lot of what she accomplished she has not been given due credit by writers of popular music and this book seeks to balance this oversight. My only criticism was that there were not enough pictures of rosetta in the book and could of done with a fully discogrphey.

Being a white mid-westerner I knew virtually nothing about the Black gospel experience. Over the

years, as a university music teacher at a HBCU I have become aware of many great artists and stories. Rosetta Tharpe is one of them. What a colorful and challenging life she lived. Read this book and tell me it would not make a great movie! When you read the book, you must also listen to her music. Better yet, look for her performance clips on YouTube. You MUST see her play the guitar. I mean, go look for them now!

If you like Rock N Roll you MUST READ this book. Gayle does an exceptional job sharing the untold and unknown story of the Godmother of Rock n Roll. Sister Rosetta Tharpe had a magic like no other and was DECADES ahead of her time.

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