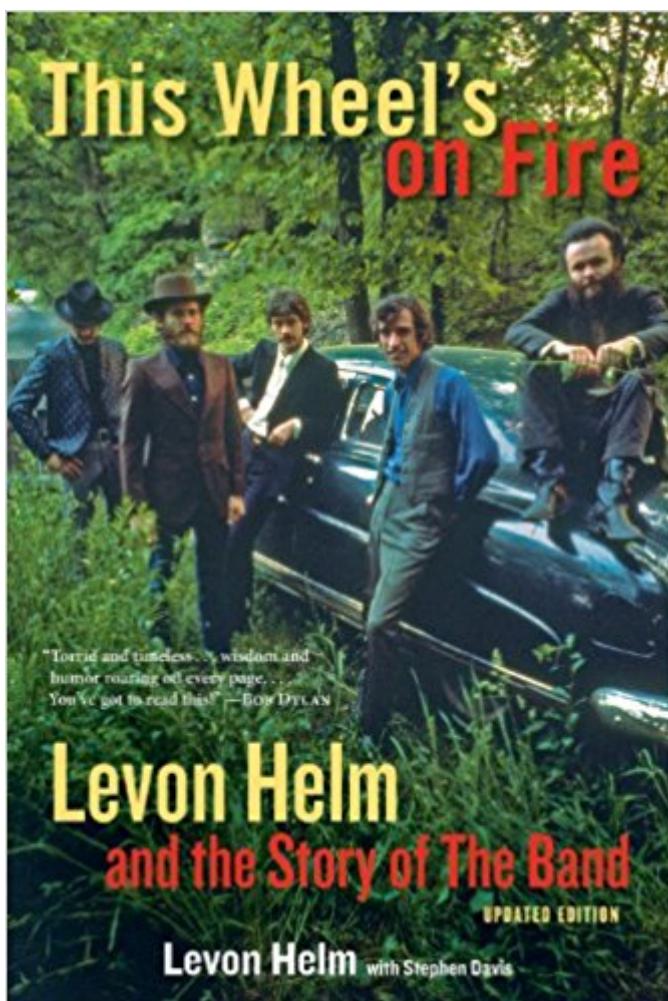


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# This Wheel's On Fire: Levon Helm And The Story Of The Band



## Synopsis

The singer and drummer of the Band details, in this book, the history of one of the most influential groups of the 1960s. While their music evoked a Southern mythology with their beautifully crafted, image-rich songs, only their Arkansan drummer, Levon Helm, was the genuine article. This updated edition of his life story includes a new epilogue that covers the last dozen years of his life. From the cotton fields to Woodstock and from seeing Sonny Boy Williamson and Elvis Presley to playing for President Clinton, This Wheel's on Fire replays the tumultuous life of Levon Helm in his own unforgettable folksy drawl. The Band, who backed Bob Dylan when he went electric in 1965 and then turned out a half-dozen albums of beautifully crafted, image-rich songs, is now regarded as one of the most influential rock groups of the '60s. But while their music evoked a Southern mythology, only their Arkansawyer drummer, Levon Helm, was the genuine article. From the cotton fields to Woodstock, from seeing Sonny Boy Williamson and Elvis Presley to playing for President Clinton, This Wheel's on Fire replays the tumultuous history of our times in Levon's own unforgettable folksy drawl. This edition is expanded with a new epilogue covering the last dozen years of Levon's life.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"A must-read for anyone interested in Rock and Roll's golden age." - Williamsport Sun-Gazette "This Wheel's On Fire delivers Levon Helm unfiltered, at once feisty and welcoming to anyone who comes across his story. . . . It's one hell of a story." - PasteMagazine.com "Levon Helm's memoir has real wit and passion. His

Southern-fried storytelling stands on its own, and it will make you dig out your vinyl to remember why you loved the Bandâ™s music so much. . . . Helmâ™s tales from the road have real snap and humor; reading *This Wheelâ™s on Fire*, you almost donâ™t want that era to end.â•â "Boston PhoenixâœHelm lays it all bare in vivid, impassioned prose, adding an earthy, back-woods tone that makes the book read like a Southern novel, like Thomas Wolfe writing about rock â™nâ™ roll.â•â "Boston GlobeâœOne of the most insightful and intelligent rock bios in recent memory.â•â "Entertainment WeeklyâœA soulful and passionate memoir. On every page Helm offers the reader folksy, straightforward wisdom gained from a lifetime of roadhouses, stadiums, and dancehalls. . . . *This Wheelâ™s on Fire* is reminiscent of Woody Guthrieâ™s *Bound for Glory*â both books are compelling and unforgettable personal narratives about the power of music to transcend even the most unmitigated circumstances. . . . Levon Helm doesnâ™t miss a beat.â•â "Houston ChronicleâœThe best inside-look book Iâ™ve seen. . . . Itâ™s highly readableâœLevonâ™s narrative is written in a breezy, conversational styleâœand refreshingly honest.â•â "Indianapolis Review

Levon Helm met Ronnie Hawkins at the age of 17 and formed what would soon become the Band. He maintained a successful career as a singer and actor until his death in 2012. Stephen Davis is the author of numerous books, including *Hammer of the Gods*, *Jim Morrison*, *More Room in a Broken Heart*, *Old Gods Almost Dead*, and *Walk This Way*. He lives in Milton, Massachusetts.

I'm a longtime fan of The Band. I saw them many times including Watkins Glen and The Last Waltz. I remember Garth Hudson playing the introduction to Chest Fever as the clouds opened up to blue skies at Watkins Glen. This wonderful book was a trip through the history of The Band from Levon's perspective. It was eye opening. I would recommend this book to music lovers of the Woodstock generation as well as anyone who has interest and curiosity in the life of this multi-talented musician.

Easy read and enjoyable. I knew nothing about The Band except for interviews I've seen with Robbie Robertson. I'm glad I read Levon's story to get his perspective. He witnessed the birth of rock and roll so I think it's a must read for serious music fans. It did get pretty heavy into The Band's songbook, which I'm not familiar with. But, if you are a fan of The Band, I'm sure you'll really dig this book.

Given the chasm that developed between Levon Helm and Robbie Robertson, it's to be expected that any account of The Band's history written by a band member will be pretty biased. I give Levon a great deal of credit in not overdoing this. He gives Robertson his due when he thinks it's warranted, which turns out to be more often than you might think. And Levon's not shy about expressing opinions on things. But ultimately this is the story of a man who was the "real thing", a man with the varied mix of musical backgrounds that only those from the South truly have, and how it worked with a group of Canadians as far removed from those backgrounds as you could get. Helm's narrative is detailed and insightful. He's aware of his influence (particularly on other musicians), but doesn't brag about it. He just tells the tale in an easy, conversational style. A fine read from the guy I always thought had the most authentically American singing voice I ever heard.

Enjoyed this book. An astounding tale about early rock and roll in the south, grueling, dues paying gigs on the road and eventual stardom with the Band. Levon tells all, graphically. A great read.

A great chronological of a great Band. Levon was and is one of my life's greatest inspirations. It's sad to hear the bitterness and bad feelings that broke the great bonds of one of the greatest band on earth but the hat seems to be par for the course for the bands of the 60's and 70's who survived the drugs and rip offs from the record industry. I had tickets to the Last Waltz in SF and have always regretted they blew out of my pocket on the Golden Gate Bridge on my motorcycle on the way to the concert. Dang. Loved this book. Also read Robbie's side of the story. Sad memories.

For anyone who has seen "The Last Waltz" for the group known as The Band, this is a must read. Primary focus on Levon Helm's perspectives, and others. A great part of the youth culture in the mid-late 60's and early 70's. Enjoyed very much.

This and Small Town Talk are the two books to read if you are at all interested in 1960-1970s rock n roll, Woodstock, the music business, and "Americana" music. Levon Helm was a musical genius - this is a great book.

...to Testimony by Robbie Robertson. Interesting to hear them tell some of the same tales from different perspectives. For some reason, I found this to be the more believable of the two memoirs.

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