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Chasin the Trane

J.C. Thomas

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Chasin the Trane J.C. Thomas
He was always elusive, on and off the stand; like his music, he was constantly moving, incessantly changing. Just as Charlie Parker stood astride the jazz world of the late 40s and 50s, so did John Coltrane in the late 50s and 60s.

Trane was a giant of the saxophone and a major composer. His music also influenced rock and classical musicians, such as Roger McGuinn and David Amram. Yet he was more than a musician; there was a mystical quality, a profound melancholy that emanated from this quiet, self-contained man and moved listeners, some of whom knew little of music but heard something beyond music's boundaries from the sounds his saxophone created. Many even had their lives changed as a result.

J. C. Thomas traces John Coltrane's life and career from his North Carolina childhood through his apprenticeship under Dizzy Gillespie, Thelonious Monk, and Miles Davis, culminating in the saxophonist's classic quartet that played to steadily increasing audiences throughout America, England, and Japan.

The author has drawn on the recollections of those who knew Coltrane best—boyhood friends, band members like Elvin Jones, spiritual mentors like Ravi Shankar, and the women who loved him. *Chasin' The Trane* is the story of a man who struggled against drug addiction, studied African and Eastern music and philosophy, admired Einstein's expanding universe and the shimmering sounds a harp makes, and left behind the enduring legacy of a master musician who was also a beautiful man.

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