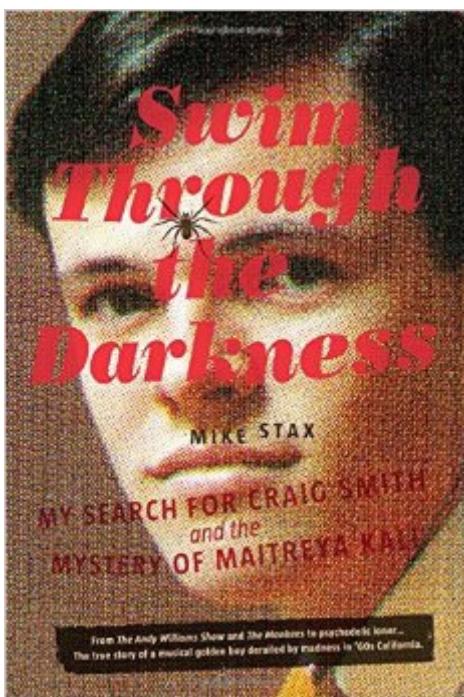


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# Swim Through The Darkness: My Search For Craig Smith And The Mystery Of Maitreya Kali



## Synopsis

Craig Smith was a 1960s golden boy – good looking, charismatic, outgoing; a preternaturally gifted musician and songwriter whose songs were recorded by some of the biggest names in entertainment – Andy Williams, Glen Campbell, the Monkees. His future success seemed assured, until an unexpected turn of events plunged him into a terrifying darkness. Clean-cut Craig Smith became Maitreya Kali, the self-proclaimed psychedelic Messiah. He laid out his poignant, disturbing schizophrenic vision on a sprawling self-released double-album before disappearing completely. Author Mike Stax spent fifteen years piecing together the mystery of Maitreya Kali, uncovering one of the strangest and most tragic untold stories of the 1960s and '70s. *Swim Through the Darkness* reveals author Stax's fifteen year quest in tracking down this strange saga of American pop culture. Included in the story are Smith's close ties to the Monkees, particularly Mike Nesmith, who produced and promoted Smith's band, Penny Arkade. Also covered are the bizarre self-released albums he made as Maitreya Kali, which now command thousands of dollars among psychedelic music collectors. Purchasers of this book will also receive a code to be able to download Smith's music in all its obscure and variant styles.

## Book Information

Paperback: 240 pages

Publisher: Process (September 20, 2016)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1934170658

ISBN-13: 978-1934170656

Product Dimensions: 6 x 0.6 x 8.9 inches

Shipping Weight: 14.4 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 5.0 out of 5 stars – See all reviews (7 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #48,262 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #24 in Books > Arts & Photography > Music > Biographies > Pop #50 in Books > Arts & Photography > Music > Musical Genres > Popular #65 in Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Social Sciences > Poverty

## Customer Reviews

Even though a study of 60s rock and roll and culture has been an ongoing quest for me since I was about 8 years old, I had never heard of Craig Smith until reading an article about the Clinger Sisters penned by Mike Stax in the Spring/Summer 2015 issue (#39) of his *Ugly Things* magazine. The sisters Mike interviewed described Craig as this fun loving, charismatic guy who was an immensely

talented musician and a great performer who was wonderful on stage. A reference was made to an article Mike had written about him in a previous issue that I'd missed. Craig had drifted in and out of their lives a few times, and I just had this feeling there was maybe quite a bit to this guy's story that I wanted to know. But, time passed and I pretty much forgot about Craig Smith- until Mike announced the imminent release of this book. After reading that he had spent 15 YEARS not only tracking down the details of Craig's life and music, but all that very same amount of time trying to actually FIND the man himself, and that Craig had gone through some type of major personality change that turned him from a happy go lucky young man into a man who genuinely believed he was the messiah sent to save all mankind... well, then I HAD to know. After getting the book, I immediately started reading it and could hardly put it down! It's a very enthralling, poignant, and at times very sad story, and Mike's dogged attention to detail and writing style make you not hardly be able to wait to see what happens on the next page. This is honestly one of the best books I've ever read. I did not want it to end. When you read it, you'll find out why.

I don't normally consume a book in just a couple days but I found this story completely fascinating. I admit that I am a psychedelic pop and 60's culture junkie, so I was familiar with Craig Smith from the Chris & Craig recordings, the ill-fated "The Happeners" TV show and his contribution of "Salesman" to The Monkees LP "Pisces, Aquarius, Capricorn & Jones, Ltd." That said, I think anyone, 60's novice or expert, would find this story both engrossing and heartbreakng. There are some very emotional twists and turns as the story unfolds and one can't help but feel devastated by the lost potential of Mr Smith. He was a man who had everything and for a multitude of reasons ended up with close to nothing. As Mike Stax freely admits, there are some narrative gaps that I found a little maddening. Not the author's fault mind you, but simply due to the circumstances of the story. Smith's trips to the Middle East and South America play important parts in the narrative, yet neither Smith nor the people he encountered were able to or wanted to provide details. My desire to learn even more about this period is actually a compliment to Stax for having so well fleshed out Smith as an empathetic and complex person. I won't give away any details but there is a bittersweet conclusion that will leave you teary eyed.

Having known Craig back in our Penny Arkade days, I found this book especially poignant. To readers who didn't know Craig, Mike Stax's totally engrossing book may read like fiction...but as the old saying goes, the truth is often stranger. Craig's story would make a fantastic movie and maybe some producer will agree. I couldn't stop reading it and felt emotionally exhausted when I reached

the last page. What a story and I was a little part of it. Thanks, Mike, for documenting Craig's incredible story. I strongly recommend and endorse this book.

I first read about Craig Smith in Mike Stax's fascinating , compelling article, "The Mystery of Maitreya Kali" , originally published in Ugly Things magazine. Intrigued , wanting to know more , I next purchased Smith's brilliant solo albums , Inca and Apache , and was absolutely floored by the almost otherworldly beauty of Smith's songwriting and singing. Now , Mike Stax has brought us even closer to unraveling the mystery of Craig Smith/ Maitreya Kali . Like Apache and Inca , *Swim Through The Darkness* is an essential purchase !!

Mike Stax (major-domo at the fantabulous Ugly Things magazine) first told Craig Smith's Bizzare story in an article in Ugly Things, and has widened and further explored the story in this gripping book...From writing songs and working with Andy Williams,to almost-made-it TV star,to folk-rock,to working with Mike Nesmith....to the tragic events of his Isd-laden travels along the hippy trail.....to.....well, get the book....you'll never guess where its going...and where it ultimately ends...Mike Stax can write about the dark corners of the music world like few others...I personally have discovered many groups in the pages of UT that would've otherwise been lost to time....and on the subject of Craig Smith...he has put heart and soul into this amazing story....and his personal involvement in the story (especially in the final pages of the book) will let you know about Mike Stax...not just hip, but a real stand-up guy....Smith's story is a fascinating one....you NEED this in your life!!

Mike Stax went through every possible hoop and more to tell the story of one of the greatest (albeit unknown to most) songwriters. I have been enthralled by the music of Craig Smith since I first heard him, and this book is an emotional ride through his life that, while tragic, also brings closure to those of us who have had their lives strongly affected by this talented man. 100% recommended.

The long, incredible journey of musician Craig Smith AKA Maitreya Kali is as sad and tragic as any story I've ever encountered. What began as an article in a music magazine turned into an all consuming research project that took Stax into often strange and unchartered waters. The resulting book is an utterly compelling read. I expect that I'll return to it often.

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