



Songs They Never Play on the Radio: Nico the Last Bohemian

By James Young

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Songs They Never Play on the Radio: Nico the Last Bohemian By James Young

In 1982 Nico, former model, film actress, singer with the Velvet Underground and darling of Andy Warhol's Factory, was living in Manchester, alone and interested only in feeding her heroin habit. Local promoter Dr Demetrius saw an opportunity, hired musicians to back her, rented a decrepit van and set off with Nico and the band on a disastrous tour of Italy. Over the next 6 years, until her death in 1988, Nico toured the world with assorted thrown-together bands. They made next to no money, appalled many of their audiences and occasionally, on the rare nights when the music worked, pleased a few. James Young played keyboards for Nico throughout those years. His "Songs They never Play on the Radio" is a tour de force in the literature of failure, recording the never-ending antics of a picaresque circus of addicts, outsiders and misfits who travelled the world - East and West Europe, the United States, Australia and Japan - encountering an equally bizarre and extraordinary mixture of people: poets, artists, gangsters, losers and drifters. John Cale, John Cooper Clarke, Allen Ginsberg and Gregory Corso are among those who appear in the compulsive, hilarious - but ultimately tragic - story of Nico, the last Bohemian.

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