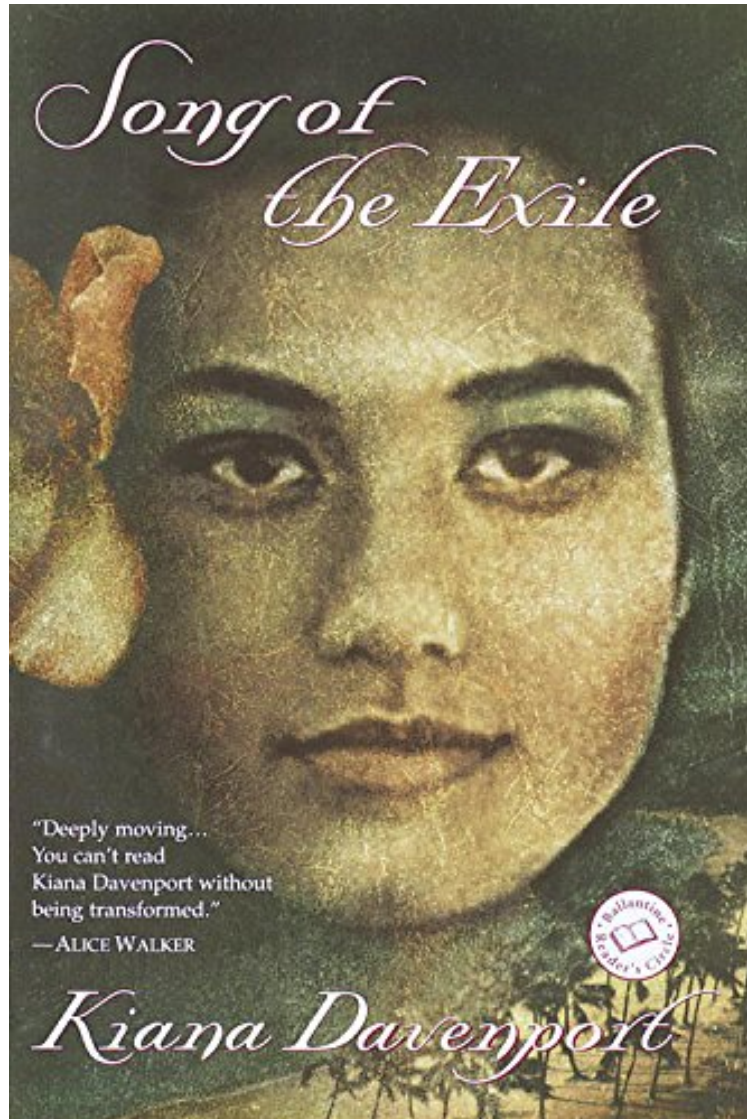


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Song of the Exile (Ballantine Reader's Circle)

Von Kiana Davenport

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Von Kiana Davenport : Song of the Exile (Ballantine Reader's Circle) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Song of the Exile (Ballantine Reader's Circle):

KundenrezensionenHilfreichste Kundenrezensionen2 von 2 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. A haunting tale of a dark time in historyVon Linda LinguvicTo Kiana Davenport's credit, she didn't try to recreate her former book "Shark Dialogues" and moved on instead to break new ground.The story starts during a time of innocence for Hawaii, shortly before WW2 and extends through the time of statehood in the 1950s. This is more than just the

story of Hawaii, however. It is the story of a native Hawaiian jazz musician, Keo, who travels to New Orleans, Paris and then Shanghai, and finds himself in a brutal Japanese prison during the war. It is also the story of Sunny, his Korean-Hawaiian girlfriend, who finds herself a Japanese "comfort woman". The author doesn't spare the reader the horrors of the war. Her searing words shed light on this dark time in history with an intensity that made me shudder with its graphic violence and unremitting horrors. Over and over the reader experiences the starvation, disease, pain and physical and mental deterioration of people who are forced to live in unspeakable conditions where human endurance under such circumstances is tested to the limit. Woven throughout the plot is the story of their families, life in Hawaii, and the spirituality of the Hawaiian people. The reader also feels the cadence of Hawaii and the magic in her words as she describes Keo's music. I would have liked this book to be lighter. I would have liked to smile rather than cringe at the unrelenting horror. I would have liked a happier ending. But that is not the story that the author wanted to tell. And so I accept it on its own terms. And, if nothing else, it makes me appreciate the good life I have. I recommend this book but be forewarned. It will haunt your dreams and inspire nightmares.

0 von 0 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. Prodigious talent, in need of control

Von Mary Whipple

If all you are looking for is a good love story, set in unusual places, with well-drawn characters, you will love this book. If you are looking for a book that contains fully integrated themes, a controlling idea, and a sense that the author has shaped and limited her subject matter, you may be as disappointed as I was. There is no doubt that Kiana Davenport is prodigiously talented with the ability to describe ineffable beauty and horrific ugliness, to use vivid verbs better than most other writers, to create characters the reader cares about, and to keep her various narratives moving along smoothly. Unfortunately, she also gave this reader, at least, the feeling that she was also "pushing buttons," calling up subjects and images that the reader may already be well familiar with in order to add to the emotional impact of her story--Hitler's treatment of gypsies and people of color, Japanese atrocities against comfort women, the excitement of the early jazz scene in New Orleans, the plight of the women left behind during a war, injustices against Hawaiians. Her additional resentment against Americans that she feels have spoiled the "paradise" of the native Hawaiians--the earliest missionaries, the sugar barons, and even those who argued for statehood--is palpable, and the political speeches near the end of the book sound more like newspaper reports used in a term paper than part of a narrative whole. In short, a story that starts in Hawaii, moves to New Orleans, to Paris during World War II, to Shanghai, to Japanese prison camps, and ultimately back to Hawaii during the push for statehood, is a story of such enormous scope that this reader, at least, wished the author had limited her material more effectively and concentrated on developing relationships more fully. The theme of prejudice against Hawaiians, however realistic it may be, is just not enough to bridge the enormous spatial dislocations of the narrative and keep the reader enthralled with her characters.

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Kurzbeschreibung

In this epic, original novel in which Hawaii's fierce, sweeping past springs to life, Kiana Davenport, author of the acclaimed *Shark Dialogues*, draws upon the remarkable stories of her people to create a timeless, passionate tale of love and survival, tragedy and triumph, survival and transcendence. In spellbinding, sensual prose, *Song of the Exile* follows the fortunes of the Meahuna family--and the odyssey of one resilient man searching for his soul mate after she is torn from his side by the forces of war. From the turbulent years of World War II through Hawaii's complex journey to statehood, this mesmerizing story presents a cast of richly imagined characters who rise up magnificent and forceful, redeemed by the spiritual power and the awesome beauty of their islands. From the Trade

Paperback edition. From Booklist Davenport weaves the history and culture of Hawaii, the U.S., Europe, and Asia, from the period just before World War II to Hawaii's statehood, into the restless search for self-discovery of her unforgettable characters. Keo is Hawaiian born, but he is deeply stirred by the allure of jazz, what one character calls "the tongue of the exile." Talented enough to be invited to join a band in New Orleans, Keo strikes out, leaving behind Sunny, an ambitious young woman bent on saving her mother from an abusive marriage and rescuing a sister abandoned in Korea. The lovers are rejoined in Paris in 1939, at a time when Americans are headed home. The war and their divergent drives separate Keo and Sunny and send them on a lifelong search to regain what they've lost: for Keo, his sense of family and of himself as a Hawaiian; for Sunny, the humanity lost during her brutal internment as a "comfort woman" in the Japanese war camps. Davenport writes profoundly of human relationships, lyrically of jazz, and insightfully of racial issues in this incredible novel. Vanessa Bush From Kirkus sAn engaging love story dissipates long before this chronicle of a native Hawaiian family's melancholy experiences comes to a minor-key conclusion with statehood in 1953. Davenport (Shark Dialogues, 1994, etc.) introduces us to Keo and Sunny, young lovers, in Hawaii during the late 1930s. After hearing a visiting jazz group, Keo is entranced by the music's energy and emotion and vows to master it. Dew, the group's leader, tells him he must come to New Orleans or Paris someday, and Keo vows to take Sunny with him in pursuit of his fortunes. Initially unable to travel, she finally reunites with Keo in 1940 in Paris. As the Nazis march into the city, pregnant Sunny flees to rescue her lost sister in Shanghai. Feeling guilty for having let her go alone, Keo follows and finds Sunny and his newborn daughter before he's imprisoned in Shanghai. Sunny's sister and daughter die, then Sunny spends the remainder of the war in Rabaul, where she's forced to serve as one of hundreds of thousands of comfort women, really, some as young as ten for Japanese soldiers. Released from prison, Keo returns to Hawaii, picks up his jazz music, and, while touring through postwar Asia, continues his unsuccessful hunt for Sunny. His heartache grows, his music declines, and the plot fans out to encompass several additional characters, including Endo, a former Japanese soldier who once saved Keo's life in Paris but who also participated in the abuse of Sunny on Rabaul. The tale ends with statehood affirming cultural pride but also bringing the expectation of further exploitation. Davenport has a clarity of vision that makes her descriptions of Hawaii a match for the island's lush environment, though her attempts to vary the themes of her core story add just complicated overgrowth. -- Copyright 1999, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved.