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Rush Hour Italian



Synopsis

Sing your way to a new language, anytime, anywhere! The new enhanced edition of Rush Hour Italian includes two audio programs, a bonus music-only version of favorite Rush Hour songs, and a free downloadable word game (see www.berlitzbooks.com for link). Original music and catchy songs help you remember everyday words, phrases, and sentences, and the exciting storyline keeps you involved. Fun to use alone or with your family!

Book Information

Audible Audio Edition

Listening Length: 2 hours and 29 minutes

Program Type: Audiobook

Version: Original recording

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Language: English

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Customer Reviews

I've noticed a great number of negative reviews of this series, and I've got to disagree. I picked up this Italian CD 4 months before a trip to Italy. I'd taken a little French in high school, but didn't know a word in Italian other than "spaghetti". Yes, the songs are a bit cheesy, but by the time I got to Italy I was able to get along really well speaking Italian. From exchanging greetings, giving directions to cab drivers, checking into my hotel, ordering at restaurants and getting train tickets, (I even gave someone else directions in Italian!) this CD was ALL I needed to get by on vacation. While touring a winery one day, the owner actually asked me if I was a native speaker because my pronunciation was so good. (Believe me, it took a LOT of hours to get it down, but it was worth it). It took a solid month of listening to the first CD to and from work each day before I felt like I was really getting comfortable with it. I'd suggest listening to it the first time while also reading the accompanying booklet with the transcript. Seeing how the words are spelled and how they fit together helped me better grasp some of the words that are harder to understand on the CD. After that, I'd just listen in the car as suggested (going back to the booklet every once in a while to refresh my memory). There were even a few times before bed when

I just read the booklet and sing the songs in my head. Again, don't think you'll get all of this overnight! It'll take a couple of months to get really comfortable with it. As suggested by the other reviewers, the 2nd CD jumps the shark a bit after the 4th lesson. Once the protagonist (John) heads home for dinner with his family it gets off track and I stopped listening to it once he starts singing about his bedroom. Don't bother listening to the last track at all! It is really weird. As an aside, this CD also comes in a French version with exactly the same storyline and songs too. I picked up the French CD and was able to learn French even faster because I already knew the structure from the Italian CD. I was able to get along just as well in France too. On a final note, I listened to this with my 7 year old niece in the car and she's started picking up little phrases too. It's an easy way to get kids to start speaking another language without them realizing they're learning!

This language course has 2 CDs with text and songs, plus a third CD with songs only. The accompanying book covers the first two CDs, not the third, but includes a short grammar and a vocabulary list of all the words used in the lessons. Each of the 10 lessons includes conversations in English to set the stage, then the new words and phrases in English and Italian. The course is advertised as a rush hour course to be used in the car. I think, the lessons require too much concentration to be used while driving. Some of the words are used in songs and repeated over and over again -- so you will definitely remember those at the end of the lesson -- others are used in conversations with some opportunity to repeat the phrases after the speaker. Lessons 1 through 3 make sense. After that, the course brings lists of words, e.g. all the days, then all the months, then all the seasons, etc. without much repetition. So, in order to memorize those words, you will have to listen to the same lesson many times. Which would be okay, if the lists were not interrupted by one song that comes again, and again, and again until you are oversaturated. Although all Italian conversations are spoken by native speakers, the American student often repeats phrases in an American accent. I found that distracting because I really wanted to hear correct Italian only. The cover text says that the course teaches Italian through songs. In reality, only very few words are used in songs, primarily the easy ones. Why would I need so many repetitions for "andiamo" or "ciao", while I get hardly any for more complicated words and phrases? I basically was disappointed, although the course does give a basic introduction to Italian. In order to really profit from the conversations and lists, you need to read along in the book. Which means, please don't drive.

First off, I use songs in my language classroom - so I know they can be useful and fun! But this

hodge-podge of spoken English & Italian, 'now repeat' and cheesy songs misses the mark by a mile. Maybe because the 'tunes' were cheesy, and they often used a kind of sing-song voice to drill sentences. Look elsewhere -- unless this sounds appealing

Good things--the songs will stick in your head, and this will help memorization. There is a logical progression. The accompanying book generally helps, especially if you're like me and want to see the word as well as hear it. It is especially useful in some of the pronunciations not always covered in guide books. Bad parts--the main male character has an awful pop voice. The romance story-line can get uncomfortable; when he is singing about how he wants her to kiss/hold/touch him now, I wanted to leave the room. And some of the choices are foolish. If you are only going to learn the basics, wouldn't you rather know how to talk about sights than how to leave a message or tell someone they have a nice refrigerator? Since I expected the songs to be cheesy, I can't hold that against them. But I expected better thinking of what lessons would be covered. My advice to Berlitz would be to skip having a plot and focus on what we actually need to know.

Does anyone really need to know how to say nice purple tie? I wanted to learn basic Italian, but what I got instead was annoying songs that got in the way of learning the language. My kids were laughing so hard at the lame songs that we forgot what we were trying to learn! While it was good to have the book that goes along with the CD, the format and some of the first lessons were not where I wanted to start out (scrambled eggs vs fried?). The lessons did get better as you went along. If you don't mind learning Italian Sesame Street style, then this is the CD for you.

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