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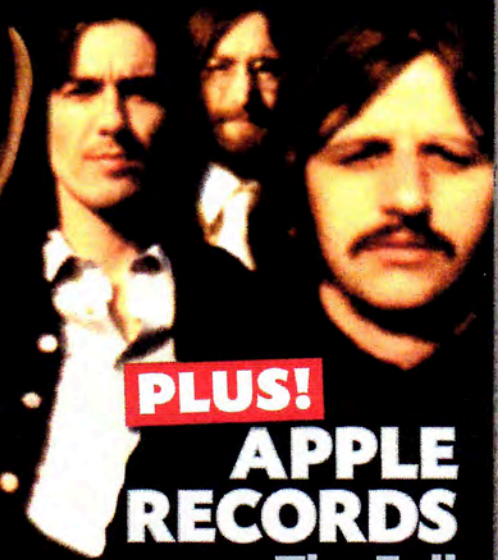
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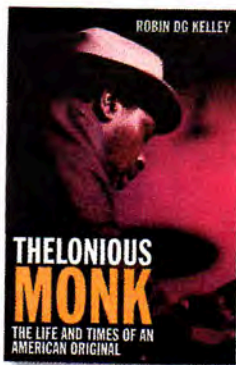
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Thelonious Monk: The Life And Times Of An American Original

★★★★★

Robin D.G. Kelley

JR BOOKS £25

Absorbing portrait of a misunderstood jazz legend.

Sporting cool shades, a beret and an obligatory goatee beard, in the early 1940s Monk, in sartorial terms at least, seemed to epitomise the archetypal bebop hepcat. But as this biography reveals, Monk's music, though revolutionary with its angular chromaticism and dissonant harmonies, was a world away from Charlie Parker's and Dizzy Gillespie's aesthetic. Monk, in fact, ploughed a lone furrow and throughout his life had to deal with an army of detractors who misunderstood the uniqueness of his music. Kelley leaves no stone unturned in his quest to penetrate the pall of myth and mystique surrounding the pianist/composer to reveal the real Monk – warm, witty and a devoted father who suffered from debilitating bi-polar disorder in later life.

Charles Waring

Art Music & Life

★★★★★

George Frayne aka Commander Cody

Q BOOK PRESS IMPORT \$49.95

The headneck king of the 80s rocks the canvas.



George Frayne, as Commander Cody, mixes up honky-tonk, Western Swing, rockabilly, and boogie-woogie. But he is also a fine artist and interspersed among this collection of his paintings and sculptures are autobiographical reminiscences of Jerry Garcia, Waylon Jennings, Miles Davis and more. Best story: how Louis Armstrong got Richard Nixon to carry his cannabis-stuffed trumpet through customs. Much of Frayne's

work centres around red, white and blues iconography – old cars, old jazzmen, old movies – and as his recent CD *Dopers, Drunks And Everyday Losers* attests, he has a soft spot for the wild side. While gentrification leeches soul from the American landscape, Cody's art, like his music, celebrates a fading America of big dreams and cool myth.

Michael Simmons

Max's Kansas City: Art, Glamour, Rock And Roll

★★★★★

Edited by Steven Kasher

ABRAMS IMAGE £15.99

Memories of NY creative hub illustrated with snaps of performers from Diddley to Thunders.

It's Lenny Kaye's essay in this history of Mickey Ruskin's nightclub, which opened in 1965 on Manhattan's South Park Avenue, that gets to its beating heart. His recollections of catching The Velvet Underground's residency in 1970, a Bruce Springsteen acoustic show in 1972, Bob Marley's first New York appearance in '73 and the same year's New York Dolls Max's debut are related with wide-eyed wonderment. Elsewhere we hear how Andy Warhol controlled the backroom – "the exact place where Pop Art and pop life came together in New York in the '60s," he said – while Robert Rauschenberg and Jackie Winsor had space out front. Why the appeal? Well,

Ruskin's philosophy was, "If I liked somebody... they had an absolute right to do whatever they wanted."

Lois Wilson

Neil Young: Long May You Run – The Illustrated History

★★★★★

Daniel Durchholz and Gary Graff

VOYAGEUR PRESS £18.99

Worthy companion to Jimmy McDonough's definitive Shakey biog.



It seems strange it took this long for a Neil Young coffee table book to appear.

It's almost a no-brainer, given past similar tomes on Bob Dylan and Van Morrison. Dylan, in fact, dominates one of this book's early sidebars (Neil & The Dylan Domain). Also included are side trips into the Lynyrd Skynyrd 'feud', the brief Motown tenure and family ties. There are testimonials, first-source quotes from David Crosby, Stephen Stills and Graham Nash, various Crazy Horse dudes and the kooky old codger himself. Visually, Voyageur does the same excellent job here as has in the past with Led Zeppelin and Queen projects. And if Young isn't as photogenic or flashy as those two, his chameleon-like nature is fully exploited, alongside such rare images as the artist aged two and in high school.

Bill Holdship

Sinister Resonance

★★★★★

David Toop

CONTINUUM £17.99

Subtitle: The Mediumship Of The Listener.

Toop's latest is an audacious, densely erudite attempt to piece together a history of listening, "a form of eavesdropping", says the author. Music is just one aspect, for Toop is interested in sound in its widest sense, from nocturnal noises to the "expansion" of a poison he hears in the aftermath of his mother's death and from cave echoes in E.M. Forster's *A Passage To India* to the elusive "materiality of sound" implicit in 17th century Dutch painting. It's a vast, wonderfully partial map of sounds and silences that opens up grand vistas of extra-musical meaning, a virtuoso meditation on what we tend not to hear rather than what we blithely assume we do.

Mark Paytress

Gaz's Rockin' Blues: The First 30 Years

★★★★★

Gaz Mayall

TROLLEY £19.99

A behind-the-scenes figure as important as Guy Stevens and Pete Meaden?

Gaz, son of bluesman John Mayall, galvanised the '80s London underground. His vintage stall on Kensington Market was a magnet for the cool; his London R&B, reggae and ska club, Gaz's Rockin' Blues, first at Gossips on Meard Street, today at St Moritz on

Wardour Street, attracted Mick Jagger and David Bowie; his record label Gaz's Rockin' Records is a platform for hometown reggae groups; his collective The Trojans are a major draw. His is an inspiring tale of a cottage industry that with help from friends including Joe Strummer really made a difference. You won't find him on any 'Remember The '80s' TV shows but for many he is a model.

Lois Wilson

The Jazz Loft Project

★★★★★

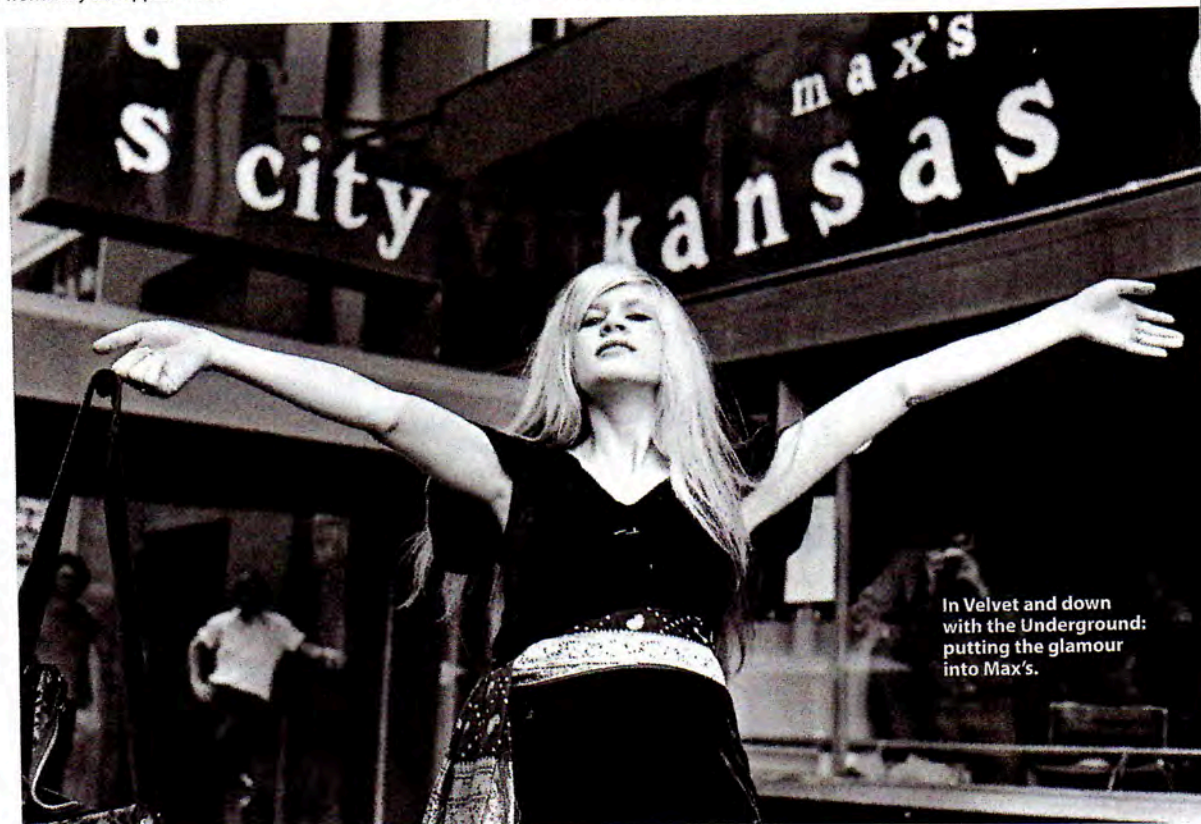
Sam Stephenson

ALFRED A. KNOPF £27

Mid-century musical greats caught by photographer W Eugene Smith.

Smith, a respected photo-journalist with wife and kids in the suburbs, chucked it all in 1957 to rent a run-down loft in New York and pursue jazz, photography and drugs. Hosting round-the-clock jam sessions featuring Monk, Mingus, Rollins, Kirk and many others, he wired the premises with microphones to capture the extraordinary oo-bop-sh'bamming and in the process caught musicians conversing: enthusiastic, sarcastic, stoned, dope sick. He photographed the players and the street scene outside the loft's windows, making stark black-and-white urban images of incomparable beauty. This breathtaking tome collects those pictures, transcribed yap and other ephemera, as well as Stephenson's history of Smith's hipster haven.

Michael Simmons



In Velvet and down with the Underground: putting the glamour into Max's.