

# Books

## 'Book of Rock II' should quench insatiable thirsts

Review by Douglas R. Weil

The *New Musical Express Book of Rock II* has a limited, but I think substantial audience—the legions of insatiable rock fans.

Edited by Nick Logan and Bob Woffinden, *Book of Rock II* is a compilation of the well-known and not-so-well-known groups and artists that, in the words of the editors, "have come and gone in the pulsating and precarious world of popular music."

*Book of Rock II* is simply organized. It lists bands and artists in alphabetical order and includes a surprisingly near-complete look at the evolution of rock music. *Book of Rock II* begins with A Band Called 'O' and after 553 pages concludes with a 14-line history of the Zombies.

But it's unlikely that anyone will be able to begin on page five and follow the book through to page 553 without some skipping and jumping from page to page. This is the real beauty of *Book of Rock II*—it's a browser's book. One can select those biographies that appeal to an individual's interest, while discarding those not so interesting.

### Band biographies

The authors also guide the reader throughout the book in the course of a band's biography with the use of related references. For example, Eric Clapton's two-page historical account includes references to the Yardbirds, John Mayall, Delaney and Bonnie, Blind Faith, Derek and the Dominoes and Cream—all bands Clapton played in at one time or another.

Using these references, the reader gains a more full picture of the artist's career. In Clapton's example, the references explain who played in the band, for how long and why they eventually split up.

Incorporated in each band's biography, aside from the usual biographical information (birth, education and musical influences are short comments about each album recorded by the band or artist.

Here the author of each section gives his personal critique of each album in addition to how the album was received by critics in general.

Also included at the end of each artist's biography is a chronological discography listing each album's release, the record label it appeared on and the year of the album's release.

Though Clapton is one of the more well-known artists in the book, *Book of Rock II* also includes those artists dead or alive, active or inactive, that manage only cult

followings of a few loyal fans. Examples of this type are the shotgun biographies of Pink Fairies, Moby Grape, Dr. Feelgood, Joy of Cooking, Michael Nesmith (yes, the Monkees are included), Curved Air and It's a Beautiful Day.

*Book of Rock II* also includes simply-stated definitions on terms like psychedelic, raggaie, punk rock, gold record criteria and Philadelphia soul.

The editors also find room to mention such non-musical personalities as Don Kirshner, Ralph Gleason, Dr. Ray Dolby, Bill Graham and Richard Perry, all of whom played large roles in the development of rock music as it is today.

The book should also provide some material for trivia buffs. Answers to questions such as "What rock star is insured for \$25 million by his record company?", "Who were originally known as the New Yardbirds?", "What was the original name of Chicago (prior to Chicago Transit Authority)?", or "What group influenced Peter Townshend to compose rock opera 'Tommy'?" are all included in the book.

### Deficiency

Although the book is extremely interesting and I've already spent several mindless hours paging through it, the book has one serious deficiency.

## Local farmer. . .

Continued from p. 8

What is amazing about Bray's sculptures are their likeness to real creatures. They have a gentleness about them that gives the animals the look of flesh instead of steel.

Bray, in spite of his talents, said he will not quit farming for art.

"I'm reluctant to quit farming and try going into this all together. I'm afraid it would put too much pressure on me and I wouldn't get any fun out of it at all," he said.

Yet the farmer said he looks forward to the nights when he gets to work in his shop and gets away from the chores of farming.

"You know, when you're out on the tractor and going up the rows, it soon gets automatic," he said. "That is where I think much of the art up, so I'm only half there most of the time."

This single drawback is the absence of an index. An index would have proved especially helpful in determining where new artists have come from.

Aside from this complaint, *Book of Rock II* is an interesting and almost addictive book. Hopefully *New Musical Express*, Britain's number one pop music publication will continue to provide frequent updates to this fascinating catalog of rock music's history.

(The *New Musical Express Book of Rock II* sells for \$3.50 and can be bought in Lincoln at Dirt Cheap Records.)

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