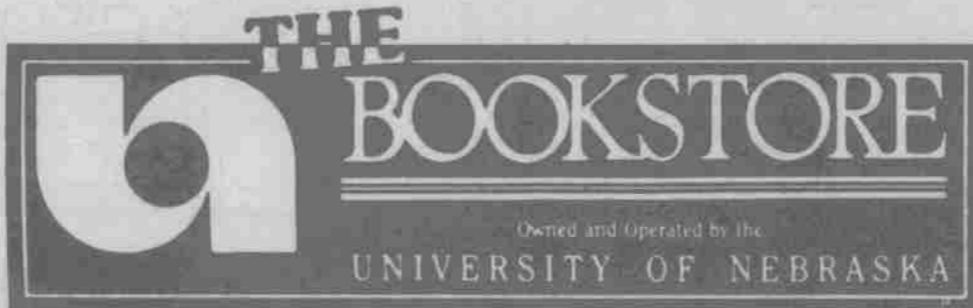


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Rock'n'roll readings kind of like sex lives

Reading about rock'n'roll is a little like reading about someone else's incredible sex life, but there's much to be said for printed material that can generate one-tenth the excitement in even the most hackneyed pop song.

Texts and magazines that are as vital and prurient as the best rock'n'roll come along just about as often as a verifiable tale of someone else's incredible sex life.

Most of the magazines and books in this short list are available locally: the books at the Nebraska Bookstore or the University Bookstore and the magazines at either Dirt Cheap or Pickles Records and Tapes (the fanzines listed are available at these stores sporadically).

rock will lead us (or has led us), fashion, hating some music and liking other music, touring, bars, alcohol, dancing and fetishism. Bangs' prose goes from bashfully documentarian to out-of-control without skipping a beat. Sometimes intolerant and braggish, sometimes lost and timorous, Bangs, a rock'n'roller himself, has written prose that comes as close to rock's pagan abandon as it gets.

His death was a rotten, foul thing. 3. "Rolling Stone's Book of Lists," Rolling Stone writers.

Everything odd, spooky, absurd and revolting about rock music is contained herein. Just when you thought you were too old to be spooked over things like backmasking, Paul McCartney death rumors and where Jim Morrison really is now, this book comes along to open up rock's most hallowed caskets.

There's also ridiculous fluff lists, like Top 10 Songs About Fashion, Top 10 Songs About Drugs, etc. All in fun. 4. *Trouser Press Record Guide*.

Trouser Press was, for four or five years, the only serious alternative to Rolling Stone magazine. The writers liked the music more than the sound of their own overly educated voices, had a pubescent love of trivia and noisy racket instead of a post-pubescent love of Bang and Olafsen sound and good cocaine, and you could read about the latest releases from Pere Ubu and the Fleshtones instead of the newest Joni Mitchell or Journey.

The Trouser Press Guide came out after the magazine closed down and it critically profiles most every band or musician on the fringe of mainstream rock music. The guide covers hip-hop, rap, new wave, hardcore, industrial, electronic and some ambient space music.

The writing is fresh and as objective as good rock journalism can be. Perhaps the best word is "open," not objective. The writers are open to most anything from the far-out to the poppy.

Put Dave March, et al.'s "Rolling Stone Guide" in a dark attic where you can find it when ravaged by middle age. "Trouser Press" is the superior guide for anyone continually interested in the shifting landscape of rock music.

Magazines:

1. SPIN

SPIN magazine is just the hippest thing available right now. It's got its faults, sure. One, it's run by Bob Guccione Jr., who seems to take more interest in protecting his daddy from Jimmy Swaggart than in where music is heading. Two, the writers sometimes come from irreputable places. Glenn O'Brien, for instance, is completely full of poop.

These are small faults, however, in a

See LIEURANCE on 19

Charles Lieurance



Books:

1. "Mystery Train" by Greil Marcus.

Marcus, who has been published as a critic and writer in every major rock magazine, writes about American music (blues, rockabilly, country and hybrids of those forms) a bit too academically at times (citing Melville in an essay about Robert Johnson's influences does seem to be stretching things a bit), but generally the energy of his prose and the scope of his knowledge wins out.

Marcus knows American literature, American folk myths and American musical traditions inside and out. He reacts to the musicians discussed in this book — Presley, Johnson, The Band and Randy Newman — with a poetic, worshipful reflex that brings life to the landscapes he creates. He populates the Mississippi delta that spawned Robert Johnson not just with the colorful characters that actually wandered through that area but with the friendly chimeras of the American imagination, too.

The essay on Elvis Presley's television comeback in the late '60s and early '70s is enough to send shivers up your dorsal fin. Beautiful writing even if it doesn't have the "common man" appeal and rhythm of the music itself.

2. "Blondie" by Lester Bangs.

The name of this book doesn't really encourage you to do all the searching you might have to do to find it, but don't be misled.

"Blondie" is about Blondie, the rock group, but it is also about drugs, the inception of New Wave, where punk

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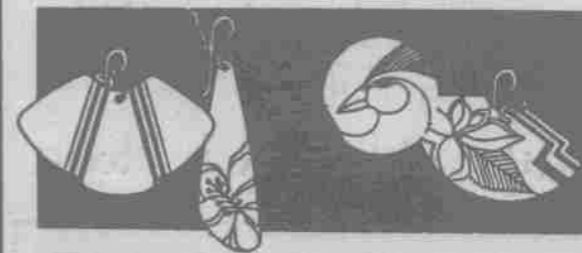
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