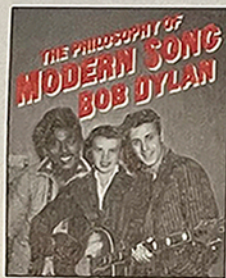


Telling Stories: Photographs Of The Fall

Kevin Cummins
★★★★★
Mitchell Beazley, £30
ISBN 9781784728250, 256 pages
Visual anthology of Mark E. Smith's post-punk legends. You get the sense that Mark E. Smith, almost always damning about written interpretations of The Fall, would have approved of this visual history. Photographer Kevin Cummins was present at some of the band's earliest gigs and continued to capture them throughout their career. His photos document their shift from early, somewhat chaotic, democracy towards an ongoing realisation of one man's singular vision facilitated by an ever-shifting line-up of musicians.

Presented chronologically, the changing faces serve to highlight the significant role that women played over the decades, from Una Baines and Yvonne Pawlett's contributions in the early years to Brx Smith's pop-leaning overhaul alongside Marcia Schofield and Elena Poulou's employment as vital members in their later years. Smith's wife during much of the latter part of his life, Poulou's youthful presence also serves to emphasise Smith's severe health decline in some of the book's most affecting photographs. It is, inevitably, the figure of Smith who dominates throughout, alternately scowling or gurning for the camera, his acerbic, witty and combustible personality felt keenly across the photographs, offering an alternative dimension for fans to remember this most personality-driven of bands.
Paul Bowler



The Philosophy Of Modern Song Bob Dylan

★★★★★
Simon & Schuster, £35
ISBN 9781398519411, 430 pages
Buckle up! A tour through 66 tracks with the great man. You've got to be good to get away with a title like that and it turns out that Bob Dylan knows a thing or two about songwriting – who'd have thought

it? But it also feels like a typical put-on, a reaction to the literary prizes heaped at his feet, to the shelves of books attempting to gimpise into the ditch of what he means, so to speak.

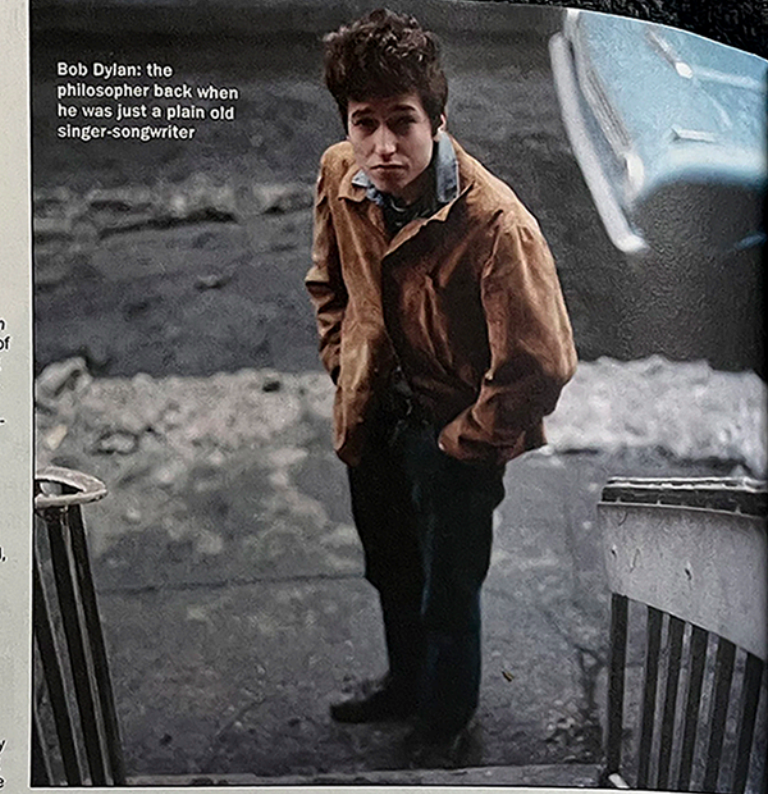
The *Philosophy Of Modern Song* feels like an extension of Dylan's witty and illuminating introductions to songs on his much-missed *Theme Time Radio Hour* series, or the live-talking, revelation-packed take on music criticism that informed his *World Gone Wrong* sleeve notes and his 2004 memoir *Chronicles: Volume One*. He tackles 66 songs, mostly early rock'n'roll, blues and country. The treatments vary wildly: there are pulpy short stories (Ray Charles' 'I Got A Woman'), hilarious tall tales (Little Richard's 'Long Tall Sally'), serious social commentary (War by Edwin Starr) and so much more. It's wild, wise, often funny stuff and endlessly quotable – you'll be returning to these the next day to make sure you read them right.

There's a moment in his dissection of Elvis Costello's *Pump It Up* that reveals plenty about Dylan's attitude: "Knowing a singer's life story doesn't particularly help your understanding of a song... It's what a song makes you feel about your life that's important." This book suggests that, to Dylan, songs are jumping-off points for visions and realisations. But it's not only a fascinating insight into what makes him tick, it adds up to an alternative history of pop songs and the modern era.
Jamie Atkins



Dead Moon: Off The Grid Sizm

★★★★★
Ventil Verlag, £39.99
ISBN 9783955751739, 336 pages
Softcover edition of the punk trio's tale
Dead Moon were a lo-fi force of nature garage punk trio from Portland Oregon, active from 1987-2006. Already something of a veteran (he was pushing 40) by the time he formed the band, Fred Cole had previous form with



Bob Dylan: the philosopher back when he was just a plain old singer-songwriter

60s psych outfit the Lollipop Shoppe and had also fronted punk band The Rats, but with Dead Moon his uncompromising aesthetic kicked in. It saw him remain resolutely opposed to new-fangled technologies, and the band routinely turn down support slots with big-hitters like Nirvana in order to play sweaty bars on the other side of the world. It might not have made them a household name, but it certainly earned them the respect of their fellow musicians and gained them a cult following in mainland Europe and New Zealand.

Author Simone (Sizm) Müller was allowed access by Cole's widow (and Dead Moon bassist) Kathleen 'Toody' Cole, to her husband's bulging archive of bill posters, flyers, sketches, diaries, magazine articles and photographs. The result? A lovingly curated patchwork of Moon memorabilia complimented by her own passionate recollections, as well as those of writers/fans Mark Sten, Erin Yanke and Eric Isaacson.

First published in very limited quantities in 2018 as *Dead Moon: The Book*, today copies routinely fetch ridiculous prices, so a reprint is most welcome.
Johnnie Johnstone

The Beatles 1963: A Year In The Life Dafydd Rees

★★★★★
Omnibus Press, £25
ISBN 9781913172220, 532 pages
Fabulous account of a whirlwind year
The Beatles career arc in

1963 remains breathtaking: on New Year's Day (a year on from their Decca audition) they returned from their final stint in Hamburg, with a debut single modestly in the UK charts. Just 365 days later, they had won the hearts of millions, enjoyed four No 1 singles and released two albums which had both topped the charts. Fed by royalty, a mania had been named after them, and they were just on the verge of conquering America.

Like all diary books, the mixture of the magnificent and mundane exhilarates. On the day Paul has to cancel a show in Portsmouth with a temperature of 102 degrees, Brian Epstein is in New York securing them their place on Ed Sullivan's Show that would make them global superstars. The reader gets the dizzying sense of just how many interviews and appearances they had to make on regional television and in papers; every show had a carousel of press attached to it. Looking at the success of the *I Was There* books, the interweaving of the fan and fellow traveller stories that accompany each diary entry offer a new take on a Beatles book. Both have, of course, been available separately, but intertwined they act as a potent link between the professional and the personal. 1963: *A Year In The Life* is well-written, and beautifully presented, underlining just how far a music book has travelled. And Dafydd Rees has at least six more to write...
Daryl Easlea

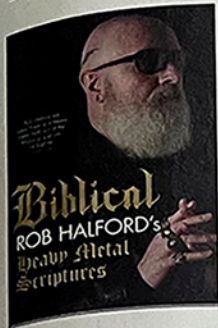
Soul Serenade: King Curtis And His Immortal Saxophone Timothy R Hoover

★★★★★
University Of North Texas Press, £31.50
ISBN 9781574418811, 352 pages
Born in Fort Worth, Texas in 1934, Curtis Ousley was inspired by sax giants Earl Bostic, Illinois Jacquet and Lester Young. Spurning a music scholarship, he toured Texas with Lionel Hampton and, while visiting New York in 1952, he succumbed to the lure of session work.

Debuting for Gem Records in 1953, Curtis provided the memorable sax breaks on The Coasters 50s hits *Yakety Yak* and *Charlie Brown* on Atco (a subsidiary of Atlantic Records). Recording with R&B stars LaVern Baker, Ruth Brown, Big Joe Turner and Sam Cooke, he backed Buddy Holly and cut albums for Tru Sound, Prestige and Enjoy and charted with 1964's *Soul Serenade* on Capitol.

His band The Kingpins backed Brenda Holloway, opening for the Beatles at Shea Stadium in 1965 – the same year he joined Atlantic as a producer, arranger and numero uno saxman.

Hoover traces Curtis' life from a Texas farm to becoming Aretha Franklin's musical director and playing on John Lennon's *Imagine* album – issued a month after Curtis was murdered outside his Manhattan apartment in 1971. With rare photos and using research based on UK discographer Roy Simonds' 1984 *King Curtis: A Discography*, this is the definitive work on a soul music legend.
Tony Burke



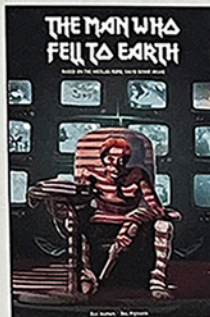
Biblical - Rob Halford's Heavy Metal Scriptures

★★★★★
Headline, £25
ISBN 9780306828249, 336 pages
Halford's heavy metal Haynes manual
Whereas Rob Halford's first autobiographical foray *Confess* was an enlightening discussion about his experiences as a gay man in a metal world, its follow-up sees the Metal God dabbling in advice-giving and storytelling. "I like the idea of a book that compiles all the knowledge that a person has collected through their life," he writes. Hence *Biblical*: "the gospel truths that I have picked up in the nearly 50 years since I first started fronting a band called Judas Priest."

The cod-religious overtones aside, this sort of book seems to be a rite of passage for ageing rock stars. Whereas *Confess* was almost unique, *Biblical* is cut from the generic cloth of a musician ruminating on his past. In a chummy yet encyclopaedic fashion he relates anecdotes from his life and his band's lengthy career, explaining by way of example, experience and direct observation what to do – or what not to do – if you're in a band. It's *Jackanory* for metal fans, an allusion Halford should appreciate, given that the book is littered with references to older TV programmes and celebrities. But despite some silly mistakes, and far too many footnotes, it's a highly amusing and easy read, entertainingly delivered by one of metal's great raconteurs.
John Tucker

with either outfit's oeuvre will welcome this book with open arms. For the small band of people for whom Brutus was more a way of life than merely a pop turn, *A Licence To Rock And Pop* captures their spirit, wit, fury and threat. As a self-help manual, it offers an opportunity in today's bland music world to stir up some rebellion; it is full of wise words, straightforward statements and instructions such as: 'Hair Comes Before Sound', 'Sport Is For C'nnts' and 'How To Take Drugs.'

RC's very own Luke Haines and Bob Stanley contribute, too, providing illuminating essays. Stanley's, especially, injects new and thoroughly amusing life into the now over-familiar pop-fan-growing-up-at-a-certain-time trope. It comes with a questionnaire to fill in after completing the book; readers can send off to Fry for their *Licence To Rock And Pop* – questions like, 'If you became famous, would your hair obtain a name? If so, what would it be called?' and 'In 20 words, please explain what cultural effect you anticipate your group, band or act will have on its surroundings?' It all amounts to a whole lot of tremendous fun.
Daryl Easlea



The Man Who Fell To Earth

Dan Watters & Dev Pramanik
★★★★★
Titan Books, £26.99
ISBN 13: 978178737013, 126 pages
Bowie's thin white visitor rises again...

Why revisit sacred territory? That's the question that a 2022 Showtime TV series failed to answer with its follow-up to Nicolas Roeg's near-perfect 1976 David Bowie film, adapted from the novel by Walter Tevis. With writing by Dan Watters and art by Dev Pramanik, this tactile graphic-novel version makes a keener fist of revisiting the story, honouring the source material while teasing in playful updates.

While Watters captures Bowie's flat-earth on-screen intonation accurately, Pramanik makes artful work of the images. Sharp angles

A Licence To Rock And Pop: An Inventory Of Attitude James Fry

★★★★★
Stimulus, 240 pages
ISBN 97819105162018, £19
Earl Brutus man's guide to making it in music
Originally an extremely limited-edition book and in PDF form, *A Licence To Rock And Pop: An Inventory Of Attitude* is now available widely in paperback. Aside from being an accomplished photographer, James Fry made his name with the trailblazing, truculent cult pop of Earl Brutus and later The Pre-New. Anyone familiar

and heavy shades impart a sci-fi noir quality to the book, suggestive of alien perspectives. Elsewhere, Pramanik channels Roeg's experiments with fragmentation and juxtaposition into panels charged with surreal suggestion. Most notably, Watters interweaves an almost direct transcript of the film's narrative with added retrospective talking-head commentaries from key characters, as if under interrogation. And if alien-on-earth Thomas Jerome Newton's 'patents' seem rather less impressive in retrospect than they might in 1976, Watters plays clever games with this, too – imagine, if you will, a wireless network connecting all computers... A scholarly essay by RC contributor Stephen Dalton complements a welcome extension of Newton's world: a recognisable landscape judiciously re-envisioned, as if through new (contact) lenses.
Kevin Harley

Came The Lightning: Twenty Poems for George Olivia Harrison

★★★★★
Genesis Publications, £25
ISBN 9781905662739, 104 pages
The love that never dies
Twenty-one years after George Harrison's death, widow Olivia reveals her continuing sorrow in this delicate collection, sometimes dark, always deep. Another Spring sets the stage, the longing for more time together as the Beatles slipped away, the first of the erudite verses that gaze over a life together, so much of it within the fairytale world of their Friar Park retreat.

Yet this is far from simply melancholy memories; the lengthy *My Arrival* is an autobiographical tale of coming to terms with her new home. "Musicians checking in and out, creating works of art..." subtly referencing rock'n'rollers then relating the day "the legendary Slowhand dropped in with the ex-Mrs..."

There's the joy of son Dhani (Song For The Son) and the moment of learning that John Lennon was gone (He Never Hurt No One), all set among drawings and family photos, not least mesmerising shots of the ever-present Friar Park grounds.

There's also a £125 signed, numbered edition with woven cover and a £315 edition, 500 of which are boxed with numbered photos taken in Friar Park plus a bookmark made from a felled estate tree (very likely the one remembered in *There But Here*). *Came The Lightning* is both moving and magical. Nick Dalton



Tool: Every Album, Every Song

Matt Karpe
★★★★★
Sonicbond Publishing, £15.99
ISBN 9781789522341, 122 pages
Enigmatic band's catalogue overview

"Three of Tool's combined influences were King Crimson, Peter Gabriel and Melvins," notes Matt Karpe in his album-by-album examination of the band's history and output, which might go some way to explaining Tool's enigmatic but influential output. Tool came together in Los Angeles in 1990 when guitarist Adam Jones suggested to frontman Maynard James Keenan that they should "form a band together just for fun, and nothing too serious". From this early premise – and despite the fact that Tool have only eight releases to their name since recording and releasing their first demo back in 1991 – Karpe is still able to create an interesting and detailed analysis of this most evocative (and occasionally frustrating) band. From the shortening of Toolshed, the band's first choice of name, to 'The Holy Gift', the title given to a re-interpretation of the running order of 2001's *Lateralus* using a Fibonacci sequence thought up by a group of geniuses (or, possibly, stoned students), the author keeps the narrative fluid and thought-provoking. The book does run out of steam a little by the end, requiring a bit of padding to make it to the finish line, but the dissection of the songs (and the context which frames them) is nicely handled.
John Tucker

The Listening Party Volume 2

★★★★★
DK London, £25
ISBN 9780241586563, 260 pages
Second time round, much magic retained
The brainchild of Tim Burgess, *The Listening Party* proved a wonderfully unifying, cathartic process: the ability to connect people in the darkest hours of the pandemic through the medium of pop, emphasising the best use of social media. As Lockdown restrictions lifted, the parties, while remaining on Twitter, became a proper living entity with live editions being held at festivals, at Abbey Road, and on London's South Bank. *The Listening Party Volume 2* retains much magic, and Burgess' passion is entirely infectious, his love for his subjects impressive. With an introduction from Susannah Hoffis, the best thing, as with the first book, is the unfettered access to the artists or their chosen representatives, telling the story as it was, with more honesty and – in theory – off-the-cuff comments than in interviews or autobiography. Established classics are explored: Prefab Sprout's Steve McQueen, Nirvana's *Nevermind*, but where it works best is when it piques a reader's curiosity, and offers a great opportunity to learn more about lesser-known artists such as Gwenno, Jane Weaver, and Arlo Parks. They're also bite-sized enough for groups out of a reader's normal comfort zone – Iron Maiden's *Powerslave* is a great example.
Daryl Easlea

Southend On Zine: Fifty Years Of Voices And Stories From Southend's Underground And Alternative Press

Graham Burnett
★★★★★
Pinty Tunes Press/Spiralseed, 210 pages
ISBN 9780955349240, £25
Oh I do like to read beside the seaside
Like many great regional books, *Southend On Zine* acts as a metaphor for the wider UK scene. This thorough overview by punk and permaculture veteran Graham Burnett is packed with

illustrations and interviews and celebrates the explosion of independent thought that arrived with the counterculture. It begins with fanzines as disciples of the *Whole Earth Catalog* (*Mushroom*), before mutating into the pub rock/avant-jazz scene that seemed to go hand-in-hand (*Precinct Press*), folk (*Iliad*) and then their flourishing in the DIY climate of punk (*Necrology*, *New Crimes* et al.). It concludes in the feminist/queer scene of the 21st century (*Griff In Print*). Burnett vividly offers a heartfelt overview of the enthusiasm, radicalism and cooperation of the numerous movements across the decades. Recently, there have been hi-gloss attempts to compete against social media platforms, which in one fell swoop provided method to immediately share a message but leave little of substance. *Level Four* offered glossy coverage of art, media, music and comics, while *Trawler*, took an artier, graphic design-based take on the medium, but it still remains the fact that fanzines that look like fanzines survive better than those that try to emulate magazines.
Daryl Easlea

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Daryl Easlea