

Bright Lights, Big City
by Jay McInerney
(Fontana Books)

This story of a young man in Manhattan has all the essentials — work (for a magazine), love (smitten, he is), and death (in the family). And for excitement — well, it's New York nightlife.

Okay, the details are scarce. It's got less of a narrative outline than many a Costello song. But it has all the grace and flash of its title. Sure, it's a fast food novel for the video generation, but sometimes the stodge of the latest blockbusters palls. Also, it's beautifully written and has tips on how to behave at loft parties.

Personal experience tells me it's perfect for a day in bed with the flu. And it's that time of the year ... right?

Michael Howley

The True Adventures of the Rolling Stones
by Stanley Booth
(Abacus, \$9.95)

This is no *Up and Down* piece of sensationalism, despite the title — this is a classy piece of writing (why, it's even been excerpted in the UK literary quarterly *Granta*).

Stanley Booth's book is actually three books in one. First, a history of the Rolling Stones in the 60s; second, the fall of Brian Jones, culminating in his death. And third, a blow after blow ac-

Off The Record



Some boys look sharp for 'Sticky Fingers', 1971.

count of the Stones' 1969 US tour. The book has other good things, including portraits of old blues musicians, hangers-on, and an account of sessions (secret and illegal) at Muscle Shoals at the end of the tour, contributing to the *Sticky Fingers* album. And it has a view of the 60s through the eyes of the Stones as they stumbled through it to Altamont, in the last month of '69. Most of all, the book sends you back to the records of what was the greatest rock and roll group in the world.



The father of gospel before he was saved — Thomas A Dorsey in 'Black Gospel'.

It took Stanley Booth 15 years to write this book — he became "too close a friend" of Keith Richards — but it was worth it. MH

Black Gospel: An Illustrated History of the Gospel Sound
by Viv Broughton
(Blandford, \$16.95)

As Broughton says in his introduction, gospel is "sometimes unpleasant to the uninitiated"; some addicted soul fans find it difficult to delve into the gospel roots because the religious element is so difficult to stomach. Broughton, as a one-time "radical Christian" and gospel journalist, doesn't have any problems with the music — or detailing some of the more bizarre happenings in gospel done in the name of God.

Black Gospel is a straight, light history, well researched and an excellent introduction to the form. It's also full of great stories — 'Amazing Grace', the pivotal hymn

sung by Sam, Aretha and thousands more, was written by a former slave-ship captain — and expresses well the major conflict of gospel: its attitude towards secular music. One by one the gospel stars go over "to the other side", and there's no doubt which side Broughton is on.

It seems to be the eternal issue in gospel. Tom Dorsey, the grand old man of the form and composer of 'Precious Lord', began not in church, but as a barrelhouse pianist — and he went back and forth between the gospel and secular worlds several times. Mahalia Jackson was the first gospel superstar to go for the white audience; John Hammond says she was primarily interested in the money anyway. Bobby Womack was rejected by his parents for going pop, and Al Green is still straddling the fence.

It seems the sinners are those who went commercial. Their stories are well detailed — Aretha's dad, who made a lot of money recording his sermons, got convicted for tax evasion; Andrae Crouch, 70s gospel superstar, got busted for cocaine. "But 20 exquisite voices stayed behind for every one who left," says Broughton, "this book is a tribute to those who stayed."

The book covers the complete history, from the days when spirituals joined with Protestant hymns, through the Civil War, Sister Rossetta Tharpe, the Five Blind Boys, right up to the Michael Jackson clones in gospel today. It has a hurt tone when discussing the defectors, and the final chapter overstates the importance of British gospel, when Broughton sounds like a 70s Jesus person, but otherwise *Black Gospel* is a succinct, entertaining history of a moving and influential genre.

Chris Bourke

Come Together: John Lennon in His Time
by Jon Wiener
(Faber & Faber, \$27.50)

Everything you ever wanted to know about John Lennon's politics — more, in fact. This is not another biography, but a 400-page academic dissertation on the political Lennon. Wiener divides the John and Yoko years into several phases: "Rock against revolution", "Avant-garde peacenik",

"Personal/political artist", "Song-writer for the movement", "Defeated radical" and "Feminist father". Like much academic literature, the book is mostly taken from secondary sources, however it does divulge interesting new material about the FBI's obsession with Lennon. While many Lennon fans may have read Wiener's sources in their original form, this is an easily-read thesis, and it's got a superb 80-page bibliography — probably the book's most useful feature.

CB

Like Punk Never Happened
by Dave Rimmer
(Faber & Faber, \$16.95)

The subtitle of this book is "Culture Club and the New Pop" which is a fair indication of its contents. It is a hybrid fan/music book, mixing pop sociology with pop adulation. Rimmer, who has written for both *Smash Hits* and the *Face*, takes a bus tour through the early New Romanticism, spotting such figures as Steve Strange and George O'Dowd, who changed into Boy George shortly after rehearsing with Bow Wow Wow and before becoming Jon Moss's lover (bitch, bitch).

Subsequently, this book is about the rise of the Cult With No Name and its initiation into Culture Club and Duran Duran's chart success. Rimmer is actually far more interested in Duran Duran but, for reasons of access presumably, spends a fair portion of the book on CC's 1984 season.

Dave writes short sentences. The book is readable. It is neither solely a fan book nor a *Mystery Train*. This is its failing.

Michael Howley

Jesus on a Stick
(available from Sleeper Subvisuals, 2 Hakanoa St, Grey Lynn, Auckland, \$4 p&p inc.)

When ya call a comix mag *Jesus on a Stick*, god knows ain't every-one gonna dig it. But, seeing as the venture is "non-profit ... necessitated by a love of comix and the desire to show you us," even rabid fundies might feel some sympathy towards the artists (led by editor Chris Knox) concerned. Probably not, tho', cos this is pretty irreligious stuff: dark, violent, rude words — you know the score, Seymour.

Some of it's good. Fane Flaws

story, 'The Life and Times of Joe', from whence the mag's title springs is worth laying out a fan-tail and tui for alone. Derek Ward's panel is nifty, and Knox's colour back-cover ad for A Record Company is kinda cute. But further issues will hopefully draw in better drawing skills, smarter ideas. Hardly any experimentation with framing takes place, some of the work is tenuous scribble (Hamish Kilgour), with rather a lot of broody adolescentism (Siobhan Ryan's 'Visitors', Chris Matthews' illustration of Ubu's 'Heart of Darkness' — like, uh, stay off the depressing drugs, dudes).

The colour cover and black and white interior is well printed (Peter Geerlings) and there are even collectible stickers. Wow!

Razor
(8 Propero Tce, Mt Eden, Auckland)

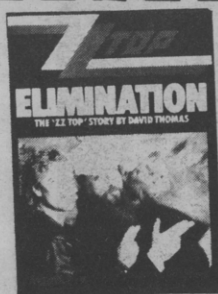
Presentation isn't the strong point of *Razor*. On the evidence of issues two and three, these fat (64 and 80 pages respectively) mags were designed by a visual illiterate. The type is tough going, a pity, as there's some interesting words, unless they're from mainman Cornelius Stone sharing his Views on Life.

Guess he's the one to blame for the, uh, chaotic look of the thing and the sometimes dubious content. But wait, without his endeavour this wouldn't exist and it's worth a casual peruse. The work of Kupe is always worth having around, as are the Stephen Jewell/G Romanes (?) efforts. Wit-ty, with good art. Same can't be said for 'The Associates' strip, a Stone/Paul Sherriffs thing — obscure banality, uninteresting graphically (ditto for the Stone/Reufien collaboration).

So, a mixed bag, with fanzine reviews stuff that points in the right directions (*Love and Rockets*, etc), some worthwhile interviews and strips and a whole lotta crap. For \$3, acceptable, reek tho' it do of hippy dippydrom (edged with yer adolescent murder fixation bit — yeah, guys, really fascinating).

Meanwhile, at the other end of the production scale, Frank Miller's deluxe DC comics four-parter, the *Dark Knight* series, breaks new ground on all fronts: astonishing work. But more of that, and other stuff, next time around.

Jim Tonic



96 page definitive bio by David Thomas with lots of pix. From their days as The Moving Sidewalks to video fame — beards, bars, tall stories — no stone is left unturned in this frank and amusing account. \$20.

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Y & R GSI 060 140

- 30 Sweetwaters issue programme; John Martyn, Elvis Costello, Renee Geyer, No Nukes, Squeeze, NZ Band profiles, Split Enz, Toy Love, Hello Sailor Citizen Band, Th' Dudes, Street Talk.
31 Sweetwaters, Swingers, Mi-Sex.
32 Police & Split Enz interviews.
34 Tom Petty & Street Talk interviews, Mi-Sex, Virgin supplement, Whizz Kids & Pop Mechanix bandfiles.
38 Howard Devoto, Tim Finn interviews.
39 XTC, Lip Service, Motels.
40 Martha Davis, David Byrne, Dave McCartney, Doors, Bruce Springsteen, Hammond Gamble.
42 Clash interview, Cold Chisel, INXS, Tigers, Jo Jo Zep, Borich/Tilders.
48 Cold Chisel, Blams, Wgtn Zone.
49 Angels, Beat, Lemmy Motorhead, Desmond Dekker, Heavy Metal Guide.
50 Swingers, U2, Psych Furs, Clean.
51 Newmatics, Cramps, Stray Cats, UB40, Blind Date & Gordons interviews.
52 Echo and the Bunnymen, Danse Macabre, Penknife Glides, Mockers, Valentinos, Jimmy & the Boys.
54 Dave McCartney & Pink Flamingos, Go-Gos interview, Sunnyboys, INXS.
56 Teardrop Explodes, DD Smash, Mick Innes Part 2, Neighbours.
57 Clean, Pretenders, South Island bands, Joan Armatrading, Mental As Anything, Chaz Jankel.
58 Blams, Teardrops, Hall & Oates, Bill Wyman, Kottke/Redbone interviews.
59 Human League, Men At Work, Chills, Tim Finn, Motels, Elvis Costello live, Kiwi Animal, Sneaky Feelings, Depeche

- 61 Graham Brazier & Harry Lyon, Fall, Jim Carrol, Daggy & the Dickheads, Hip Singles, Dropbeats.
63 Simple Minds' Jim Kerr interviewed, Split Enz Part 2, Renee Geyer, Nocturnal Projections, Willie Dayson Blues Band, Hunters & Collectors.
65 Yazoo (Alison Moyet interview), Joe Cocker, Zoo (ex Pop Mechanix), Guriz Jo Jo Zep.
68 Herbs, Culture Club, Bauhaus, Kiwi Animal, No Tag, Sharon O'Neill, Thompson Twins, ChCh Special (Wastrels, Flying Nun, Bill Dreen, etc).
69 Joni Mitchell, Dance Exponents, Who, Neighbours, Dire Straits, Talk Talk, Miltown Stowaways, Blond Comedy.
74 Malcolm McLaren, Heaven 17, Joan Armatrading, Sharon O'Neill, Childrens Hour.
75 Tim Finn, John Cale, Jonathan Richmond, Hammond Gamble, Dick Driver.
80 Police, Paul Young, Motown feature, John Peel Wastrels, Bryan Adams.
81 Smiths, Mockers, Def Leppard, Violent Femmes, Miltown Stowaways, Chills, Doublehappys, Marvin Gaye.
82 Billy Idol, Pamela Stephenson, Four Tops, Temptations, Verlaines.
83 Elvis Costello, Thompson Twins, Netherworld Dancing Toys, Mockers, Paul Morley.
84 Style Council (Paul Weller interview), Echo & the Bunnymen, Midnight Oil, Kiwi Animal, Sneaky Feelings, Depeche

- 87 DD Smash, U2, Bill Dreen Pt 1, Nick Cave, Stevie Ray Vaughan.
88 Herbs, Talking Heads, Aztec Camera, Narcs, Car Crash Set, Axemen, SPK, Apes, Look Blue Go Purple.
90 Lou Reed, Go-Between, Paul Hewson, Topp Twins.
91 Neil Young, Giorgio Moroder, Waterboys, David Puttnam, Freudian Slips, Electric Pandas.
92 Hunters and Collectors, Lloyd Cole, Pelicans, Peter Garrett, Left Right & Centre, Economic Wizards.
93 Dance Exponents, Huey Lewis, Robert Palmer (Power Station), Peking Man, Circus Block 4, This Kind Of Punishment.
94 New Order interview, Iron Maiden, Stranglers, Johnnys, Michael Winslow, Plans For A Building.
95 Chills, Killing Joke, Dazz Band, Expendables, Jason & the Scorchers, Last Man Down.
96 Netherworld Dancing Toys, China Crisis, Robert Plant, Doublehappys, Kiwi Animal, Nils Lofgren.
97 Bryan Ferry, Dynamic Hepnotics.

- Men At Work, Bats, Shriekback.
98 Mockers, Mental As Anything, Reggae, John Boorman, Bird Nest Roys.
99 Narcs, Bangles, REM, Jerry Harrison, Christchurch in Spring.
100 NZ Music 1977-85, RIU's Believe It Or Not, Tina Turner, Damned.
101 Verlaines, Drongos, Sam Hunt, WASP.
102 Thompson Twins, Tom Petty, Violent Femmes, Chills.
103 Feargal Sharkey, INXS, Fetus Productions.
104 Atlantic Soul, Bob Dylan, Stevie Ray, Go-Betweens, BIFM LP, Johnnys, Roy Harper.
105 Hunters & Collectors, Tim Finn, Flesh D-Vice, Kiwis in Oz, Nico inter view.
106 DD Smash, National Anthem, Terry Gilliam, Music Quota, Orange, Everything That Flies, Gotham City, Chrome Safari.
107 Peking man, Amy Grant, Cramps, Martin Plaza, Psychic Pet Healers, Ruby Taylor, Ardijah.

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