

## When The Screaming Stops: The Dark History Of The Bay City Rollers

★★★★

Simon Spence

OMNIBUS PRESS. £25

The full horrific story of "Scottish Savile" Tam Paton and the Bay City Rollers.



By the end of the Bay City Rollers' short reign as pop superstars in the late '70s, their young lives were already ruined by predatory Svengali manager Tam Paton's incessant abuse and the millions they had earned being spirited away by greedy accountants and ruthless record companies. Although lurid revelations about Paton, who died in 2009, and epic financial skulduggery have fed tabloids for years, this first proper account shows they were the tip of a massive iceberg that reached the highest levels of government (explaining Savile-style cover-ups). Spence should be commended for his brutally forensic detail over 540 pages, interviewing Rollers, associates and victims, though sometimes he derails his own flow with archaic phraseology ("her tits were enormous", when describing a 14-year-old fan) or jarring typographical errors. A difficult read, and not for the squeamish.

Kris Needs

## Life And Death On The New York Dancefloor 1980-1983

★★★★

Tim Lawrence

DUKE UNIVERSITY PRESS, £22.99

Painstaking chronicle of New York during its crucial melting-pot era.

The tornado of creativity and seismic cultural revolutions that gripped 20th century New York seem doomed to be examined as separate movements rather than pieces of the same historical jigsaw, with the vital early '80s often overshadowed by the previous decade. Thankfully, Tim Lawrence, author of *Love Saves The Day*:



A History Of American Dance Music Culture 1970-79 and Arthur Russell's biography, has turned his forensic gaze on this most crucial time in New York's history, when future cultural trends were forged in a frenzy of cross-pollination, experimentation and anarchic celebration before Reaganomics, AIDS and corporate takeovers crept in. Using hundreds of interviews, Lawrence intricately weaves evolving underground scenes, concurrently charting the rises of hip-hop, graffiti and electro, survival of disco, besieged gay scenes and post-punk (although overlooking Suicide), awarding each chapter its own playlist. Compelling and often beautiful, his meticulous account hums with incandescent street noise.

Kris Needs

## I Live Inside: Memoirs Of A Babe In Toyland

★★★★

Michelle Leon

MINNESOTA HISTORICAL PRESS. £16

Life with the pioneering noisers, as viewed from the trenches.



Bassist with the molten Minnesota punk trio until early 1992, Michelle Leon's memoir of her days with Babes In Toyland doesn't aim to place the group into historical context or make grand claims for their rolling, brilliant noise. Rather, it's an impressionistic account of tour buses, parties, backstage tension and on-stage exultation; Leon doesn't attempt an objective overview of the Babes' mission, and the book is a better read for it. Her diary-like entries would be less tolerable if she were a less sensitive or poetic writer, but Leon has a great feel for the personalities of her larger-than-life, feet-of-clay bandmates and for the highs and lows of her touring life, able to grab nuanced poignancy from wandering hungover and unslept past queues of commuters, while the book's later passages, covering her love for ill-fated roadie Joe Cole – shot dead in a robbery in December 1991 – are heavy and moving.

Stevie Chick

## Testimony

★★★★

Robbie Robertson

WILLIAM HEINEMANN. £20

The Band's tale beguiles still.



How did a group so rich in talent and promise implode so hopelessly, only to pull the rabbit out of the hat with such a spectacular leaving do? Almost a quarter century after

the late Levon Helm published his autobiography, de facto Band leader/guitarist/songwriter Robbie Robertson finally has his own say in the solemnly-titled *Testimony*. (Did he, one wonders, wait for Helm to go before committing pen to paper?) The sad truth, however, is that *Testimony* makes for a slightly soulless read. While there's much to learn and many gaps filled in for the curious, the book is written in a clichéd style of numbing, if self-regarding, banality. However much sympathy one has with Robertson's desperate attempts to herd The Band's cats, there's rarely the sense here of a flesh-and-blood human being behind the rote recollections. Helm's book may have been written by Stephen Davis, but the drummer's irresistible voice was audible in its every phrase.

Barney Hoskyns

## Total Chaos: The Story Of The Stooges – As Told By Iggy Pop

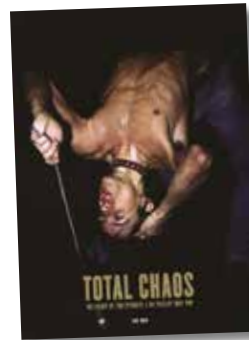
★★★★★

Jeff Gold

THIRD MAN. £40.70

A perfect marriage of Stooges-related images and Iggy insight.

Total Chaos deploys an effective ruse: Stooges memorabilia hoarder/former record label bigwig Jeff Gold shows Iggy his stash, then



prints his responses as first-person Stooges history. Evocative, often previously unpublished photos and facsimiles of recording contracts etc prove excellent *aides-mémoire*, Iggy soon riffing about living in a lavatory and telling of smoking dope with Chubby Checker. Nico and sometime Stooges producer John Cale are "The Munsters", Ron Asheton contacts Three Stooges' leader Moe Howard to clear purloining their name ("fine so long as you're not doing comedy"), and with Iggy dipped in glitter or peanut butter, bleeding from errant stage-dives and suffering drug-related "total amnesia", books don't come more vivid or visceral. There are also Q&As with Josh Homme and Joan Jett, plus props from Jack White and Johnny Marr. Fitting, somehow, that White first encountered The Stooges' *Fun House* – "the definitive rock album of America" – in a dumpster.

James McNair

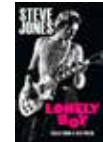
## Lonely Boy

★★★★★

Steve Jones

WILLIAM HEINEMANN. £20

Memoir of the "one-man West London crime wave" who gave the Pistols their Panzer tank guitar sound.



The fact the Sex Pistols looked so wrong was, of course, part of what made them so right. And Jones, seemingly a scaffolder in S&M gear, had a very strange energy: Lonely Boy explains why. Abused as a child by his stepfather – who demanded Jones give him a "pedal and crank" – he entered his teens a confused tearaway, addicted to stealing and "rumping" girls. The former enabled him to kickstart the Pistols by nicking David Bowie's gear from the Hammersmith Odeon Ziggy shows; the latter to use prostitutes from age 15 and shag everyone in punk. Here, the Pistols' story, retold refreshingly and with added rumpage, is followed by lurid episodes down-and-out in New York and LA, Jones out of his mind on smack. But what's special about this book is its story arc, which will make the most hardened punk well up: he gets clean, finally meets his birth dad and completes a circle by playing the Pistols' last (but one) show at the site of his Ziggy thievery. A poignant, honest, drily humorous rump-fest from a lost soul found.

Pat Gilbert

Not doing comedy: The Stooges' ringmaster Iggy Pop has the floor.

