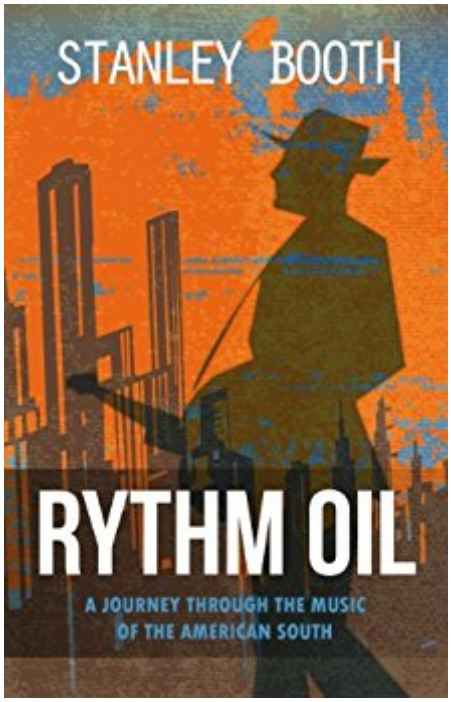
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Rythm Oil: A Journey Through The Music Of The American South



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Synopsis

Here are Stanley Booth’s acclaimed writings about the South and the music that emanates from it.Rythm Oil- you don’t have to know how to spell "rhythm" to have it in your body and soul- is a potion sold on Beale Street in Memphis. The home of Sun Records, B.B. King, Elvis Presley, Howling Wolf, and Jerry Lee Lewis, Memphis is also the home of fantastic stores and broke-down dreams. As Booth makes his way from Memphis to the Mississippi Delta to the depths of the Georgia woods exploring the sounds, the music, and the culture of the American South, "he has produced some of the most gracefully written, thoughtful, and thought-stirring musings on the characters- the famous and the forgotten, the infamous and the unknown- who command the kingdom or drift through the shadowland of the South’s rich-chorded patrimony" (Nick Tosches, Los Angeles Times).Stanley Booth’s work has appeared in Esquire, Rolling Stone, Playboy, and many other publications. He lives on the Georgia coast south of Savannah.

Book Information

File Size: 5463 KB

Print Length: 266 pages

Simultaneous Device Usage: Unlimited

Publisher: Vigliano Books (November 18, 2013)

Publication Date: November 18, 2013

Sold by:Ã Â Digital Services LLC

Language: English

ASIN: B00GG2O3MW

Text-to-Speech: Enabled

X-Ray: Not Enabled

Word Wise: Enabled

Lending: Not Enabled

Screen Reader: Supported

Enhanced Typesetting: Enabled

Best Sellers Rank: #427,956 Paid in Kindle Store (See Top 100 Paid in Kindle Store) #33 inÃ Â Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > Arts & Photography > Music > Musical Genres > Blues #52 inÃ Â Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > Arts & Photography > Music > Musical Genres > Country #289 inÃ Â Books > Arts & Photography > Music > Musical Genres > Blues

Customer Reviews

This is a collection of writings about the South (mainly Memphis), its musicians, and its music. Booth has gotten to know and hang out with musicians as diverse as Furry Lewis, Al Green, Phineas Newborn, Jr., and Keith Richards (okay, he’s not from the South). And his portraits of each gets right to what makes them tick.The most poignant, for me, was the chapter on Phineas Newborn, Jr., someone I hadn’t known much about. Newborn was a virtuoso jazz pianist, with unmatched style and facility. Booth’s portrayal sent me straight to iTunes and YouTube to check out Newborn’s music more closely.But the thing about Newborn, and all of Booth’s subjects, is the friction in their lives. Newborn was repeatedly hospitalized for mental or emotional disorders. Furry Lewis collected garbage on the streets of Memphis to make ends meet. Keith Richards is an unholy mess. James Brown ran into legal problems and some obvious emotional troubles. But the personalities, the talents, and the friction are all one thing -- that’s what makes these people interesting, more than just "heroes of music".Well worth the time spent reading, for the background of the music, but more importantly for the portraits of the musicians as people.

This read is amazing. Come step outside yo mind and put yourself in the hands of someone for whom the history is religion.He drank the water himself to listen, to ask, and to know so we too will begin to know...and mo’ importantly not forget."heard a man from WayCross, Georgiasold his soul for a remedy,looked for light in the darkest shadows,begged for silence on his knees."

Well done

Stanley Booth is an American Classic, as is this collection of his writing. If you love American Roots music, and specifically the music of Memphis, but this book! Booth is a superior writer who has had the good fortune to be in the right places at the right times, and to have the talent to write beautifully about it.A true Classic of American Music Literature-BUY IT!

Great book that really shows how big of an impact Memphis has had on music during the last half of the 20th century.

Stanley Booth has always sacrificed something for his work; whether it’s his health or his sanity or his relationships but never his sense of humour. Rythm Oil takes its shape as an overview of Memphis, living on through yellow fever and famine, the death of all its musical heroes, who as it happened, came to Memphis and died there or who were born there and who left never to return.

Even Booth, who today lives in Georgia, his home state, can't seem to find it in his heart to repudiate this strange and fascinating town with its greasy river that recently claimed another musical hero, Jeff Buckley. Memphis is a town of contradictions: its streets run north-south and its avenues run east-west, something Priscilla Presley never knew. "It's like she lived in a cocoon," remarks Booth, talking to his mother who replies "She did, it was on top of her head."

Like Norman Mailer's portait of Picasso, this book should be titled Memphis/Booth leaving it slightly ambiguous as to the true topic of the book. Stanley Booth approaches his subjects in this collection of essays about "the music of the American South" with adoration but with each sentence you get the feeling that Booth feels the need to impress upon the reader that he is worthy of writing about these subjects. His need to belong makes some of the essays unreadable as Booth will spend most of the text naming records that he "grew up listening to", defending his use of black vernacular as being the way "we (southerners)" speak, condemning Yankees, etc. Once you get past that there's some mildly interesting information, nothing too new, especially if you're a music fan. The chapters on Phineas Newborn and James Brown are interesting. As a Southern music lover, I found the book too much about Booth and not enough about music. This book, sadly, seems to be more for the people he tries to distance himself from in the book - northerners with limited exposure to black Southern music. Southerners will find that he tries a bit too hard.

This book really captured the true essence of the influence of Memphis on the world music scene. Popular music is poorly written about and is normally glamorized or scandalized. This book really seems to capture the true essence of the music, the musicians, and the times. This book was so interesting to me I went to Memphis last summer on vacation and went to many of the old out of the way musical history spots in Memphis.

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