

Browsing

SIGNED, SEALED AND DELIVERED: True Life Stories of Women in Pop, by Sue Steward and Sheryl Garratt. Pluto Press, London, 1984. \$12.95, paperback, 168 pages.

The history of women in music has been the subject of many books. Most concentrate on a few "superstars", usually in only the pop category. *Signed, Sealed and Delivered* gives a much broader, well researched, feminist view of women in all areas of the music industry from the '50s onwards.

Much of the book is based on interviews with women who are musicians, packers, producers and promoters. This approach reflects how differently the industry treats women who are "pre-packaged" stars from those who have approached their work as "real" musicians. The book highlights, however, that it is not only women musicians who have been fighting against this "pre-packaged prejudice".

The authors' analysis of the political influences in music runs through this book, linking up the sections of the music world (or at least that part of it which comes from the US and UK) with general trends in the western world. This is one of the book's strongpoints.

The book is also diverse in the range of music styles it explores. Jazz, African, reggae, pop, soul and punk are all reasonably well covered, with pop being the dominant category. The book's broad coverage of occupations and music styles results in an unfortunate lack of detail and information within some categories — a whole book could be written on each one. The chapter on punk covers a lot of ground in a short space and begins to analyse the nature of the music performed by all-women punk bands during the growth, impact and diffusion of feminism and the '70s economic climate. At this time, there was an explosion of women moving into the industry or, rather, creating an industry of their own.

The extent of women's participation in the industry, both past and present, has brought about a "sense of female" lineage. This book is a good reference to that lineage and gave this budding musician lots of encouragement and insight.

Anne McKillop

MINUTE TO MIDNIGHT, Red Spark Books, Sydney, 1985. \$6.00 paperback, 118 pages.

Contemporary young Sydney writers with their thoughts on the bomb, in an arrangement of poetry, prose and short stories. Their response to the nuclear age makes, at times, fascinating reading. Although it's not that bleak, is it?

FIGHTERS AND SINGERS: the lives of some Aboriginal women. Edited by Isobel White, Diane Barwick and Bett George Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 1985. \$14.95 paperback; \$24.95 hard cover, 226 pages.

Brings together Aboriginal women's experiences of a century of history in fifteen communities scattered from Cape York Peninsula, Arnhem Land and East Kimberley to the Western Desert, The Centre, South Australia, Victoria and NSW... "With an introduction by Judith Wright.

A HISTORY OF INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY: in words and images, by Joyce Stevens, IWD Press, 1985, \$6.95 paperback, 64 pages.

A short, informative and accessible review of the history of IWD in Australia which, incidentally, dates back to 1928. Joyce amassed the text and images while researching other material on women's history in Australia. She thought it was too good to lie in a filing cabinet — thank goodness she did. A lively tome for your bookshelf.

EXPLORING WOMEN'S PAST, Patricia Crawford (ed.), George Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 1984. \$9.95 paperback, 215 pages.

Presents a good deal of interesting and exciting research with essays on: Pre-Industrial England (1500-1750), Victorian Spinsters; Dutiful Daughters, Desperate Rebels and the Transition to the New Women; and Brides of Christ and Poor Mortals: Women in Medieval Society, among others. Contains a useful "Suggestions for further reading" index in the back of the book.

CRISIS IN CENTRAL AMERICA. A collection of conference papers. School of Spanish and Latin American Studies, University of NSW, James R. Levy (ed.), 1984. \$5.95, paperback, 69 pages.

If you want to be informed about what's going on in Central America currently, then this deserves your attention. A group of scholars and activists present such topics as: Towards an Understanding of US policy in Central America, The Soviet Union and Central America, Mexico and the Contadora Plan, Theory and Practice of Revolution: What works in Central America, and Roque Dalton and El Salvador: the intellectual as outlaw.

Available from your usual bookshop or the School of Spanish and Latin American Studies, Universities of NSW, P.O. Box 1, Kensington, NSW 2003.

PATHWAYS TO ACTION: A RESOURCE FOR SOCIAL CHANGE. Published by Combined Pensioners Association of NSW with the assistance of the NSW Board of Adult Education. \$5.00 for individuals, \$10.00 for institutions. Six booklets.

In NSW alone, there are just over one million people on pensions and benefits. Compare this with the number of people who are eligible to vote in the state (about 3.4 million) and you have about 33 percent of the voters in NSW on either a pension or a benefit. That's one hell of a lobby, and the sort of fact that politicians listen to!

Pathways to Action is a publication designed to assist pensioners concerned with the consumer rights to get into community action. The six booklets convey a clear, concise message about how to get organised, keep in touch, find facts, get the message across, and move into action. Available from the Combined Pensioners Association of NSW, Box 14, Trades Hall, Room 27, Goulburn St, Sydney 2000. \$5 for individuals, and \$10 for institutions.

Wendy Carlisle

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IT'S NOT THE RITZ — BUT IT'S HOME: Mt. Druitt Youth Resource Centre. \$1.00.

Young people in the Mt. Druitt area recently produced a collection of poetry and prose based on issues around the theme of discrimination; including discrimination against Aborigines, gays and people living in the western suburbs. The book was written entirely by young people as a project of the Mt. Druitt Resource Centre and made possible through a grant and the support of the New South Wales Anti-Discrimination Board.

"It's Not the Ritz" is available from the Mt. Druitt Youth Resource Centre. Direct orders or queries to Ali Halil or Steve Warren at the Mt. Druitt Resource Centre, P.O. Box V123, Mt. Druitt Village 2770. Ph: 625.6262.

Tony Westmore

STEEL CITY BLUES, by Julianne Schultz, Penguin Books, 1985, 255 pages, paperback, \$7.95.

The community of Wollongong has felt the pinch of the current economic recession harder than most. Julianne Schultz tells how the people of Wollongong have had to bear the costs of the restructuring of Australia's manufacturing sector. Designed for corporate benefit, they have left the area in a depressed state with massive unemployment. Local responses to this crisis have had to confront some massive problems, but some bold initiatives have emerged nonetheless.



BANNERS OF LABOUR, BANNERS OF PRIDE: Aspects of Working Class Celebration, by Ann Stephen and Andrew Reeves, Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences, George Allen & Unwin, 1985, 84 pages, paperback \$17.95.

Trade union banners which once so proudly celebrated working class life have become a much neglected part of our culture. This well-illustrated and researched book attempts to record this rich heritage, from the early Eight Hour Day marches to the present. The powerful use of images to represent working people provides an interesting contrast with recent attempts to revive and reinterpret this tradition.

THE PRICE OF AFFLUENCE: Dilemmas of Contemporary Japan, by Rokuro Hidaka, foreword by Gavin McCormack, Penguin Books, 1985, 188 pages, paperback \$7.95.

Rokuro Hidaka was refused an entry visa by the Fraser government in 1981 under controversial circumstances. Recently translated from Japanese, Professor Hidaka's book provides a thoroughgoing critique of Japan's economic success and its human costs. Written as a series of essays, the text covers the enormous economic and political transformations in the post-war period and their effects on that brittle identity known as the Japanese character.

MICHEL FOUCAULT, by Mark Cousins and Athar Hussain, Macmillan, 1985, 265 pages, paperback \$16.95.

As part of the Theoretical Traditions in the Social Sciences Series, this publication joins the growing number of commentaries on Foucault. This book is probably one of the more useful introductions to his ideas as it does not pretend to substitute for his actual texts. Cousins and Hussain have resisted the tendency of other authors to reduce Foucault's works to a unified set of theories. Instead, they have wisely chosen to provide a commentary on his methodological approaches to various topics such as knowledge and discourse, the asylum, clinic and prison, and sexuality and power

Colin Griffith

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