

Book Reviews, and more Book Reviews

Strange Ritual: Pictures and Words

by David Byrne

(Chronicle/Raincoast Books)

176 pp Price: \$35.00 Canadian

David Byrne, founding member of musical group **Talking Heads**, has been called a modern mystic. This collection of his off-beat photographs, poetry, stories, and commentaries seems to be reasonable evidence of the above claim.

The photos are from Byrne's world travels, and depict his search for truth and beauty in simple things, his fascination with sacred objects, and his ability to see the extraordinary with in the ordinary.

The photos feature such strange and beautiful things as the wall of a Spanish church made entirely of human bones, brightly coloured plastic Buddhas, concrete monkeys, and the graffiti of madmen. The accompanying words are beautiful observations of our ever changing and ever shrinking world.

Tastefully bound in hardcover black leather-look cloth with gold print, *Strange Ritual* would make an interesting addition to any coffee table arrangement.

— Mike F. Beagan

The Electric Guitar: an Illustrated History

Edited by Paul Trynka

(Chronicle/Raincoast books)

162 pp Price: \$27.50 Can

With over 200 colour photographs, histories by expert journalists, and interview excerpts from the likes of Les Paul, B.B. King, and Keith Richards, this book is a definitive tribute to modern music's most important instrument.

Guitar nuts will love this book, as will lovers of modern music history. The photos are beautiful, and the articles are very informative and well written. The interview excerpts also add much to the book.

All the biggies of the guitar world are here; from the first "Tin Pan" lap steel electrics to the most modern guitar synthesizers. Gibson Les Pauls, Fender Stratocasters, Hofner Violin Bases, Yamaha SG2000s -- they're all here in full colour with complete production histories, the tales of their conceptions, and the changes and improvements made to the designs over the years.

For the historian, this book also features articles on how the electric guitar has changed the face of music and the revolutions caused by certain guitars, guitarists, and equipment.

The Electric Guitar: an Illustrated Guide is recommended to all of the guitarzans and music lovers out there who want to know more about the Western world's favourite instrument.

— Mike F. Beagan

The Best of Uncle John's Bathroom Reader

by the Bathroom Readers' Institute

(Bathroom Readers' Press)

No, this isn't the spoof issue. There really is a Bathroom Readers' Institute, and there really is a Bathroom Readers' Press. However, there is no indication in the book or the press release that there actually is an Uncle John. Even so, the BRI have been putting out *Uncle John's Bathroom Readers* since 1988, and they are America's best selling bathroom reader series.

It probably comes as a surprise to most readers that bathroom readers, let alone best-selling bathroom readers, actually exist. So, what exactly is *Uncle John's Bathroom Reader*?

Well, this "best-of" book is a thick (over 500 pages) paperback filled with all sorts of interesting and trivial information -- everything from an explanation of the Bigfoot legend to quotes from television shows. The information ranges from interesting to hilarious.

Although *The Best of Uncle John's Bathroom Reader* comes with the somewhat hefty price tag of \$24.50, it is worth it. This book is good for hundreds of laughs. Be warned, however, that the bathroom puns are plentiful.

On the last page there is information about joining the Bathroom Readers' Institute, which is in Berkeley, California (who would have guessed?). You can send a self-addressed stamped envelope to them and they will send you a membership card and a copy of the BRI newsletter (if they ever publish one). You will also get "a permanent spot on the BRI honor roll."

— Marko Peric

The North Atlantic Fisheries: Success, Failures and Challenges

Edited by Ragnar Arnason and Lawrence Felt

Volume 3

This collection of essays were compiled by the Institute of Island Studies, based here at UPEI. (See forthcoming papers for further information).

The book involves a discussion of the fisheries in five North Atlantic islands. This discussion is timely, as these islands are struggling to adapt to changes in marine stocks as a result of overfishing and mismanagement. Scholars cover a wide range of topics including histories of the fisheries, current situation, prospects and suggestions for the future. The book is very in depth, and should serve as an important guide for the future of the fisheries.

The essays are well written, however, generally are not pleasure reading. It is nonetheless informative and important to the understanding of the current dilemmas in the North Atlantic fisheries.

— Yvonne MacKean

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