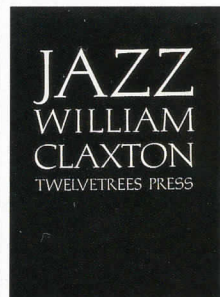
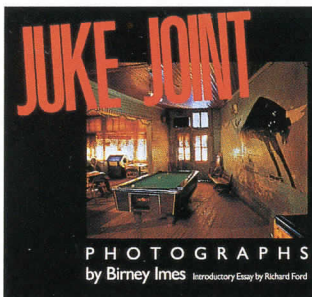
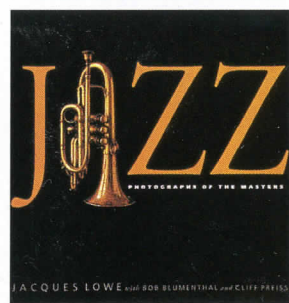
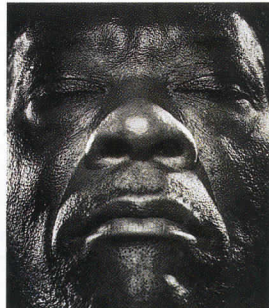
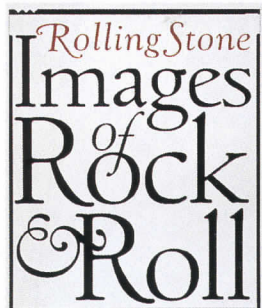
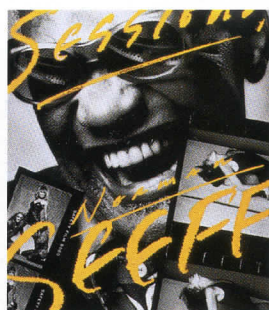
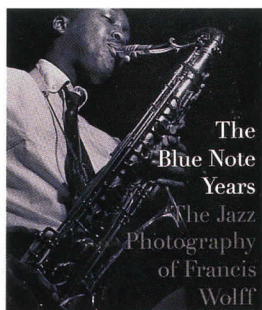


AN ECLECTIC MUSIC

A famous Victorian critic once argued that all art forms aspire to the "condition" of music—that condition being music's lack of reference to anything but itself. Photography might seem too literal a medium for such an aspiration, yet many photographers feel that music is its closest ally. So we were surprised, when we visited our favorite photographic bookstore to browse recent volumes on musical subjects, that there weren't more—and that more of what we found didn't strike a chord with us, photographically speaking. We can only surmise that photographing music is a special visual challenge. After more looking (and polling photographers who we know are avid listeners), we offer nine books of photographs that are music to our eyes.

Jazz bassist Milt Hinton has long worked in both art forms, having toted a camera to just about every gig he's ever played, from his 16-year stint with Cab Calloway to studio sessions with songsters as unlike as Billie Holiday and Paul McCartney. Unstyled and informal, his black-and-white candids are collected, along with remembrances of his colleagues, in **Over Time: The Jazz Photographs of Milt Hinton** (Pomegranate Artbooks). If Hinton has an insider's view of jazz, Jacques Lowe brings a photojournalist's detachment to it. The 200 portraits in **Jazz: Photographs of the**



Masters (Artisan) range from young lions like Joshua Redman to living legends like Oscar Peterson (with brief biographies of each), and have a lightness that is almost dissonant with the music's moody stereotypes.

Of more visual weight are the oversized black-and-whites in **The Blue Note Years: The Jazz Photography of Francis Wolff** (Rizzoli). A partner in the vaunted Blue Note record label, Wolff documented 25 years of studio sessions, capturing bop's best—John Coltrane, Art Blakey, Horace Silver—with a hard-edged light that spared no bead of sweat. Wolff's photographs, originally used only on classic Blue Note album covers, were stashed in a trunk until the publication of this book. William Claxton's 1950s mise-en-scène studies of jazz greats like Dizzy Gillespie, Charlie Parker, and Miles Davis appeared more widely in their day, along with the photographer's fashion and movie work. If Wolff's pictures are formal and intense, the images in Claxton's **Jazz** (Twelve-trees Press) give a breezy sense of the creative energy of the time. Claxton's photographs of a fresh-faced Chet Baker (his career-long subject) are particularly poignant in view of the self-induced physical decline that would later claim the great trumpeter.

The photography in **Rolling Stone: Images of Rock & Roll** (Little, Brown) proves that rock is as much a matter of outward style as musical content. This fat, absorbing history ranges from Lennon to Snoop Doggy Dogg and from Leibovitz to

(continued on page 98)

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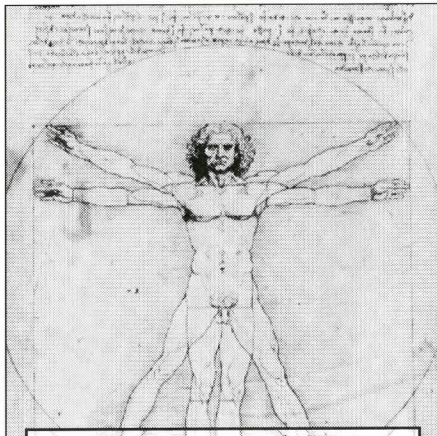
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(continued from page 32)

Seliger, and shows that while rock musicians make for interesting pictures, their performance shtick can be an obstacle to meaningful portraiture. **Sessions!** (WhaleSong) sidesteps that dilemma with a razzle-dazzle graphic design incorporating contact sheets, collages, and abundant cropping and tilting—all the work of Norman Seeff, a former record-company art director who has photographed most of music's recent stars. (The book's design and prepress work were both done on a Macintosh computer—a showcase of what's possible on desktop.) Familiar, larger-than-life mugs jump off the book's big pages with the in-your-face energy of rock itself.

The portraits of blues musicians in **Black & White Blues** (Graphis Publications) receive a full-frame treatment that's in keeping with photographer Marc Norberg's considered style. Shot in 2¼-square medium format, Norberg's beautifully lighted and printed black-and-white pictures show that 12-bar tradition still thrives in the cacophony of the postmodern era.

Sweet or sour, musicians can't make music without their instruments. So **Ferrington Guitars** (Jonathan Cape and Callaway Editions) is both a photographic tribute to the extraordinary craftsmanship of Danny Ferrington and a testament to the instrument as an extension of the artist. Striking in design and state-of-the-art in reproduction, it showcases dozens of Ferrington's custom-built guitars in all the quirky colors, shapes, and inlays requested by musicians from Hoyt Axton to Elvis Costello. Twenty different guitars (played by their owners) are featured on a high-quality music CD inset into the book's trapezoidal cover, proving that it's possible both to look good and to sound good.

Finally, music is about the disparate places people gather to hear it, and few such venues are as evocative as the Mississippi Delta blues clubs in Birney Imes's **Juke Joint** (University Press of Mississippi). Their walls decked with dots and swirls of spray paint, random lines of tattered streamers and Christmas-tree lights, and even tacked-up 45rpm records, these ramshackle structures—as vividly captured by Imes—really do seem to aspire to the condition of the music they host. —RUSSELL HART



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