



Crosstown Traffic: Jimi Hendrix & The Post-War Rock 'N' Roll Revolution

By Charles Shaar Murray

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Called by "Entertainment Weekly" "The best book on Hendrix", "Crosstown Traffic" rode their A-list for over two months and won the prestigious Ralph J. Gleason Music Book Award. Roots-savvy British critic Charles Shaar Murray assesses the lifework of guitarist Jimi Hendrix in the context of black musical tradition, social history, and the upheaval of the 1960s.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Twenty years after his death at age 27, Hendrix's stature as an Afro-American musical innovator continues to grow. But until now discussion of his contributions has been limited to either biographical accounts or purely technical analyses. British pop journalist Shaar Murray's multifaceted study rectifies this by attempting to unravel the cultural contradictions that the guitarist embodied as a black performer with a white audience, who excelled in a genre that was popularized by whites yet rooted in a black musical tradition. Hendrix's catholicity crossed barriers within black culture as well: his sonic explorations with feedback and distortion paralleled developments in the Free Jazz movement but he could suddenly shift into the deepest, most primitive Delta blues, a language pointedly neglected by his black contemporaries. Clearly, Hendrix's achievements are broad-based and central to his era, as well as a daunting challenge to those wanting to digest his work whole. Shaar Murray (coauthor of *David Bowie*) augments solid musical scholarship with astute social and historical commentary, and meets the challenge admirably. Photos not seen by PW.

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From Library Journal

With his hippie trappings and revolutionary approach to the electric guitar, Hendrix was an anomaly on the American black music scene. Recognition of his talent did not occur until he performed in England. Shaar Murray, an established British author, brings a fresh and insightful perspective on this fascinating artist to American readers. More than just another biography, the book is a broad-based study of African-American music--blues, jazz, rhythm and blues, and soul--and how the music influenced, and was influenced by, Hendrix. Murray acknowledges David Henderson's *'Scuse Me While I Kiss the Sky* (Bantam, 1981) as "the best Hendrix biography published to date." A discography, videography, and bibliography are included. First published in 1989 by Faber and Faber, London, this book is recommended for music and black studies collections.

- Tim LaBorie, St. Joseph's Univ., Philadelphia

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About the Author

Charles Shaar Murray won the prestigious Ralph J. Gleason Music Book Award for *Crosstown Traffic: Jimi Hendrix and the Postwar Rock 'n' Roll Revolution*. He lives in England.

Users Review

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