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Bookfile

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BOOKFILE



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Martin & Malcolm & America: *A Dream or a Nightmare*, by James H. Cone, Orbis Books, Maryknoll, N.Y., 358 pages.

This book breaks new ground, especially in the direction the author takes in examining the contrasting views of two great American heroes, whose lasting impact on the social and political fabric of the nation has been the subject for history books.

In this formidable work, Cone presents a thesis that challenges prior superficial studies on the complex personalities and goals of Martin Luther King and Malcolm X. While both leaders emerged into the American public scene through opposite routes, in their final years there was a movement toward convergence of their visions. And their work on behalf of their people, as Cone puts it, was indeed complementary. "The 'dream' and 'nightmare' images" in the title "are used to focus their perspectives on American and to reveal something about the audiences to whom and for whom they spoke." Both men, Cone suggests, were influenced by the activism of their fathers. Some excerpts from the second chapter:

"In contrast to Martin King's origin in southern Negro middle class, Malcolm X was a product of the northern poor black masses. . . . Like Martin, Malcolm was the son of a Georgia Baptist preacher; but unlike the influential Martin King, Sr., Earl Little was a 'jackdeg' preacher who was never called to a permanent pastorate. Like Martin's father, Malcolm's father was deeply involved in Black people's struggle for dignity and justice. But unlike the integrationist King Sr., Earl Little was a nationalist and 'dedicated organizer' for Marcus Garvey's UNIA. As Martin was influenced by the integrationist activity of his father, Malcolm was affected by the nationalist work of his." □

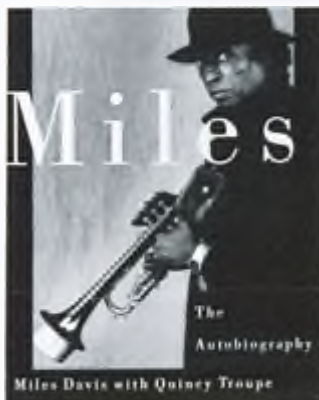


Jazz Cleopatra: *Josephine Baker in Her Time*, by Phyllis Rose, Vintage Books/Random House, New York, 321 pages.

This is a delightful book on the life and legends of a delightful international star of another generation, Josephine Baker, in her day, was more than an average entertainer. She was a Star. Her artistic imprint as a political, cultural and social phenomenon is seeing a renewed revival.

Phyllis Rose, in this engaging documentary, manages to capture the soul and essence of this American treasure, who achieved fame in the 1920s and shared her creativity with a multitude of admirers in her adopted France and her native home.

"Usually, her own past was her theme—her revues were often tableaux of scenes from her life—and that theme shaded into the larger one of the passages of time. In between her dances and songs, she monologued about her projects, her children, her charities, her outrage at racial injustice, and her bittersweet feelings about the brevity of existence," writes Rose in the last of the book's eight chapters. □



Miles: *The Autobiography*, by Miles Davis with Quincy Troupe, Touchstone Books—Simon & Schuster, New York, 441 pages.

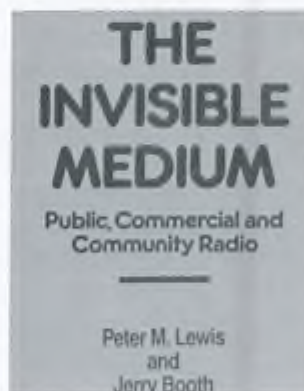
This is an authentic work of the life and contributions of one of America's universally acclaimed musical geniuses. Written with the collaboration of a renowned poet,

journalist, teacher, and winner of American Book Award for poetry in 1980, Miles Davis holds back very little this time. The book details in length the extraordinary but often controversial persona of the celebrated jazz artist.

More than four decades on the American musical scene, Miles Davis, through numerous innovations, has enriched the American jazz form. He was only in his teens when he embarked on a professional career with the great Charlie "Bird" Parker and another great, Dizzy Gillespie. In the book's Prologue, he writes:

"Listen. The greatest feeling I ever had in my life—with my clothes on—was when I first heard Diz and Bird together in St. Louis, Missouri, back in 1944. I was eighteen years old and had just graduated from Lincoln High School. It was just across the Mississippi River in East St. Louis, Illinois.

"When I heard Diz and Bird in B's band, I said, 'What? What is this?' Man, that shit was so terrible it was scary. I mean, Dizzy Gillespie, Charlie "Yardbird" Parker, Buddy Anderson, Gene Ammons, Lucky Thompson, Art Blakey all together in one band and not to mention B: Billy Eckstine himself. . . . The way that band was playing music—that was *all* I wanted to hear. It was something. And me up there playing with them." □



The Invisible Medium: *Public, Commercial and Community Radio*, by Peter M. Lewis and Jerry Booth, Howard University Press, Washington, D.C., 245 pages.

This is a communications trade book, specifically, as the title suggests, the place of radio in a world increasingly being dominated by television.

The authors take on the task of examining radio's viability in an age where the public's appetite is geared for visual communications. And they write:

"Radio, as we approach the last

decade of the century, enjoys a peculiar, not to say paradoxical position—at once present, and absent. The first of the broadcast media to be developed, it created precedents for domestic consumption and institutional exploitation that were followed by the more powerful medium of television and which lasted for most of the century. . . ."

Lewis and Booth, in this book, attempt "to uncover the myths and try to give equal status to alternative interpretations—of history, of current policies and of an alternative practice of radio. . . ." And the answer, as the authors indicate, may be found in "community radio." □



Split Image: *African Americans in the Mass Media*, edited by Jannette L. Dates and William Barlow, Howard University Press, Washington, D.C. 493 pages.

This work, which focuses on the dual images—the stereotypical and the real—in the treatment of African Americans in the mass media, represents a collection of essays by communications scholars and professionals. In all, six key areas are studied, along with the ongoing struggle to balance negativity with positivity. The industry themes covered are: music, film, radio, television, print/broadcast news and advertising.

The editors, both professors at the Howard University School of Communications, contribute a good portion of the essays, in collaboration with two other contributors, one of them at Howard. A gallery of positive black and white photographs, covering a dozen pages, enhances the visual presentation.

"This study is first and foremost a historical and comparative analysis of African American portrayal and participation in the mass media in the United States. It develops the theme 'the war of images' to foster some understanding of how and why the mass media have evolved as they have with respect to African American imagery and participation," write the editors in the Introduction. □

Bookfile appears from time to time.

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