

It Came From Memphis

By Robert Gordon

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Robert Gordon begins where most chroniclers of the music world end and spins a magical fairy tale peopled with Delta bluesmen, a peanut vendor, a matinee cowboy, a professional wrestler, and a manic deejay. *It Came From Memphis* doesn't focus on Elvis, Al Green, or the Sun/Stax studios. Instead it creeps into the shadows cast by those institutions, concentrating on artists like Jim Dickinson and Alex Chilton, and bands like the MarKeys and Big Star. Gordon limns, with respect and the fascination born of true devotion, the story of white teenagers caught in the middle of an extraordinary confluence of music, entrepreneurship, to usher in an exciting new musical form. The result is a rock 'n' roll and Memphis -- its alma mater.

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review
Perhaps no other city in America has provided more grist for the music sociology mill than Memphis, Tennessee. While Memphis has been the muse for some truly classic books (Peter Guralnick's Sweet Soul Music, to name just one), the rhetoric surrounding "The Birthplace of Rock & Roll"--also "The Home of the Blues"--can be as daunting as a walk down the ravenously gentrified blues theme park that is Beale Street.

Enter Robert Gordon, a Memphis native and keen chronicler of the city's secret history. Gordon's *It Came from Memphis* all but ignores the Bluff City's oft-cited musical hierarchy--B.B. King, Elvis, Al Green et al.--in favor of its great unheralded eccentrics. You might not be familiar with the Insect Trust or Mudboy and the Neutrons, but Gordon argues--with empathy and wit--that you should be.

But music is only part of the story here. Whether it's Memphis's wrestling legend Sputnik Monroe, or the city's esoteric patron saint, artist-professor John McIntire, Gordon's shrewd eye sees the mojo in them all. In a way, Gordon's book is even more vital than the classic volumes on Memphis music that predate it. Where Guralnick interprets a musical tradition that is already firmly embedded in the American psyche, Gordon gives voice to a clandestine tradition that otherwise might go forgotten. *--Matt Hanks*

Review
The New York Times Superb...

The New Yorker An affectionate rumination.

About the Author
Robert Gordon has written for major music publications in the United States and England, and has contributed to several books. He produced the Al Green CD box set *Anthology*, and his liner notes were nominatied for a Grammy&@174;. As a filmmaker, he directed the award-winning blues documentary *All Day and All Night*, and his music video work has appeared on MTV, BET, and CMT. He is the author of a forthcoming biography of Muddy Waters and director of the companion documentary. He lives in Memphis with his wife and two daughters.

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