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Everybody Was Kung-Fu Dancing: Chronicles Of The Lionized And The Notorious



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Customer Reviews

In these 32 varied and enlightening capsules of '70s and '80s pop culture, most still relevant today, Flippo (*It's Only Rock 'N' Roll*) defends the mercurial John Lennon against unsympathetic biographer Albert Goldman, schmoozes with gregarious crooner Tony Bennett and addresses his fellow transplanted Texans in New York (who go by the acronym TINY). All but three essays here were previously published, often in *Rolling Stone* ; people and events are grouped according to virtues such as prudence, temperance and fortitude or less admirable, equally entertaining qualities including lust, anger and gluttony. Illustrating the book are 15 mediocre, folk-artey linocut portraits of interviewees, among them *Night of the Living Dead* director George Romero, poet Jim Carroll and a Jerry Lee Lewis haunted by the "Elvis demon" that perpetually steals his Memphis spotlight. Interesting, if familiar, trivia abounds: Flippo tells how animal rights advocate Paul McCartney transported his chickens to Scotland via taxi and reminds us that country star Waylon Jennings, a former member of Buddy Holly's band, gave up his plane seat to the Big Bopper one fateful day. Even a fishing excursion in Tennessee seems hip thanks collection's knowledgeable and observant author. Copyright 1991 Reed Business Information, Inc.

This is an assemblage of 32 dated journalistic pieces and interviews, many of which were previously published in the early 1980s in New York magazine and *Rolling Stone* (without, however, the benefit of the original photographs) on popular music/culture, the bailiwick of former *Rolling Stone* editor

Flippo. Among the lionized are Jack Henry Abbott, David Allen Coe, Tony Bennett, Al Green, Tom Wolfe, and Les Paul, while the notorious include mogul David Geffen, Jerry Lee Lewis, Elvis, Mick Jagger, and playwright Christopher Durang. The book invites comparison with Kurt Loder's recent *Bat Chain Puller* (LJ 10/15/90); Flippo and Loder both cut their rock incisors at *Rolling Stone*, the formats and scopes are similar, and each has a fondness for quirky-song-as-book-titles. Though the material is predominantly recycled and somewhat dated, Flippo is an astute observer and commentator. Large popular music collections should consider this; a discretionary purchase for others.- Barry Miller, Austin P.L., Tex. Copyright 1991 Reed Business Information, Inc.

Like another reviewer, I came upon this book in a thrift store and am happy that I did. I remember Chet Flippo from his *Rolling Stone* days in the 70's and early 80's (who can forget the name Flippo?) and was surprised to learn that he had gone on to write for a variety of other publications. Some of the pieces are dated or concern celebrities who have not weathered the test of time. Other pieces are worth the price of admission by themselves, like the Jerry Lee Lewis encounter, the memories of John Lennon, the accounts of various country artists from Chet Atkins to Waylon Jennings to Bobby Bare. Phil Ochs receives a fine memorial and Mick Jagger is portrayed as a dick. Dylan shows up in Mexico recording the soundtrack for Pat Garrett and Billy the Kid. A very fine profile of Al Green as preacher and a harrowing account of the Who concert in Cincinnati where concert goers were trampled. I could go on. Suffice to say, it is worth seeking out this collection. You will find many hours of absorbing reading. Highly recommended.

Recently I read something that stated that while many good books were being written today few of them would be around and read 20 years from now. Everybody was *Kung-Fu Dancing* by Chet Flippo is a book that I believe has survived that test of time. Published in 1991 and sitting on my shelf after having been purchased off of a clearance shelf who-knows-how-many-years-ago I found great delight in reading it. Flippo is a journalist who has primarily covered the music industry, with occasional dabbling into other aspects of entertainment, such as movies and literature. He has written extensively for *Rolling Stone*, where he worked for a number of years and his articles have also been published in many other magazines. This book is a collection of diverse pieces he wrote for those publications, primarily from the late 70's and into the mid 80's. The book is arranged in a thematic fashion, structured around the four cardinal virtues and the seven deadly sins. For each of the virtues and sins there are 3-4 pieces of Flippo's writing where that particular virtue or sin is on display. I was somewhat familiar with several people who are written about and only barely aware of

others but I found the entire collection of essays to be both fascinating and engaging. As a journalist Flippo is adept at finding out what drives a person internally and he excels at bringing that out in ways I found to be compelling. Everybody Was Kung-Fu Dancing was a good book to read once and my copy is now headed for the thrift store. Perhaps it will be a thrift store near you, where you'll find that you got much more than your money's worth.

These stories about the music business were fun to read.

Chet Flippo is an excellent writer--I am not a musician, but I found his interviews with Les Paul and Chet Atkins fascinating. You will learn much about the history of the electric guitar. You will also find some lesser known chapters in rock history--an insider's glimpse of the Rolling Stone's efforts to win permission to tour China, what it was like to hang out with John Lennon, life with Jerry Lee Lewis and more.

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