



## Play: Images of Music

### Rankin

Rizzoli (Nov 3, 2020)

Softcover \$45.00 (208pp)

978-0-8478-6881-0

British filmmaker, photographer, and magazine founder Rankin opens his vast archives to reflect on some of the best musician portraits from his three-decade career. *Play* is the operative word here: musicians play music, and play with the camera, in these creative, innovative shots, often piercing cultivated public identities to show their less guarded sides.

Pithy notes describe Rankin's challenges in securing images that fit the various shoot concepts to view musicians in new ways, all while balancing his successful photographic formula of "6/10 science, 3/10 problem solving, and 1/10 creativity." Further, working with musical icons like Björk, U2, and Bryan Ferry can be most difficult: legends must remain recognizable, and the photographer must balance that requirement with achieving a distinct view of their iconic faces. Shots of David Bowie shrouded in an arty mask, and of serene, still Deborah Harry with her eyes closed, evoke this ethos.

Obscured faces, expressive hands, contorted poses, and other unexpected portraits characterize the most arresting photographs: Evan Dando's wire-wrapped head; Alanis Morissette's hint of a smile contrasting with her arms angled backward and face curtained by hair; Michael Stipe's huge stare belying the writhing cap of pleather scraps and tribal tattoos springing off of his scalp.

Many photographs are gleaned from the pages of *Dazed and Confused* and *Hunger*, two magazines Rankin helped found. His commentary includes behind-the-scenes insights into the craft, science, and business of photography and publicity. Despite some overwrought typography, the book is a visual treat, of interest to music fans, celebrity watchers, and fashionistas alike.

*Play* is a visual romp through popular music from the 1990s to the present day. Entertaining and edifying, it documents Rankin's special fondness for photographing musicians, who already share bits of their soul with their music and "always come ready to play."

RACHEL JAGARESKI (November / December 2020)

*Disclosure: This article is not an endorsement, but a review. The author of this book provided free copies of the book to have their book reviewed by a professional reviewer. No fee was paid by the author for this review. Foreword Reviews only recommends books that we love. Foreword Magazine, Inc. is disclosing this in accordance with the Federal Trade Commission's 16 CFR, Part 255.*