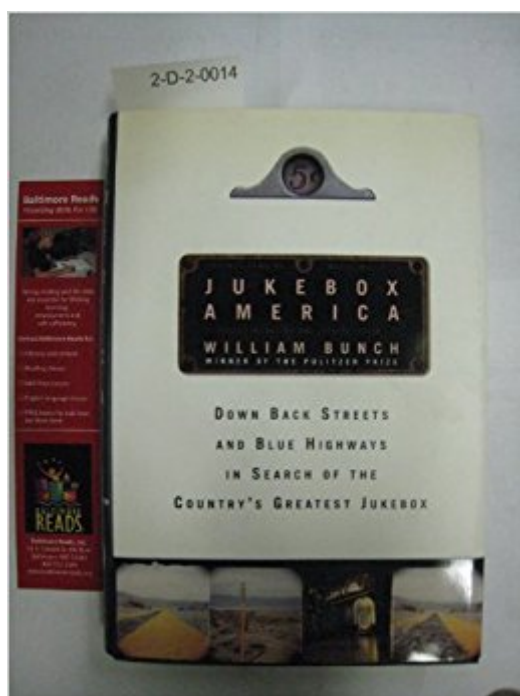


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Jukebox America: Down Back Streets And Blue Highways In Search Of The Country's Greatest Jukebox



Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Bunch recounts his search for America's "best" jukebox, somewhat ambiguously defined as the one whose selection of songs is "in perfect sync with its time and place." The book's subtext, however, is generational angst. Self-classified as a member of "Generation Y," Bunch takes up his mission as an expression of the restless, youthful energy he fears will be suppressed by his recent decision to marry and move to the suburbs. His anxiety about his personal shift in direction translates into concern about cultural changes: the jukebox, a symbol of regional identity and cultural diversity, is threatened by the increasing homogenization of society. While Bunch does find pockets of authenticity in rural Mississippi and in inner-city Chicago and Detroit, he juggles too many thematic balls--jukeboxes, his personal life, the state of American society--to maintain a clear focus. Portraits of individual keepers of the jukebox faith met along the way are memorable; ultimately this volume is more successful as an American travelogue than as a music-lover's journal. Copyright 1994 Reed Business Information, Inc.

Bunch, a Pulitzer Prize-winning reporter for New York Newsday, became hooked on an unusual brand of nostalgia. After a quasimystical experience in a West Side Manhattan bar, he embarked upon a quest for the country's greatest jukebox--or rather for the greatest jukebox collection representing the golden 45s of his youthful recollection. In this account, he tells of visiting bars in Chicago; Hoboken, New Jersey; Greenville, Mississippi; and beyond, recounting conversations and adventures from his somewhat patchwork geographic, as well as personal, journey. Most absorbing

are his talks with the locals as they reminisce about the early roots of the jukebox's greatest stars (Frank Sinatra, Patsy Cline, and more). This breezy quest will appeal to pop and country music fans and their libraries. Carol J. Binkowski, Bloomfield, N.J. Copyright 1994 Reed Business Information, Inc.

If you are a fan of jukeboxes or music recorded on 45's, be aware of this book. I own a jukebox and have about 1,000 45's and didn't particularly like it. If our hero had been my age (60), liked all 50's music, then I might have identified with him and his story. Instead he was a 30's something with a yuppie mentality searching for a holy grail that doesn't exist except in his own mind. I empathized with his sadness about the loss of a bygone era, but that was about it. He threw in a part about searching for the real Elvis and here is where I thought he really missed his mark. It would be like me writing about Rudolph Valentino with no first hand knowledge of the man. Nothing was learned here. I also got tired of his political commentary along the way.

I loved Jukebox America. The author makes prose lyrical. It's a fun trip with the Spirit in the Sky, in search of the Juke of the Covenant. Anyone interested in the American musical journey will know that this is a worthwhile roadtrip. It was over too soon.

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