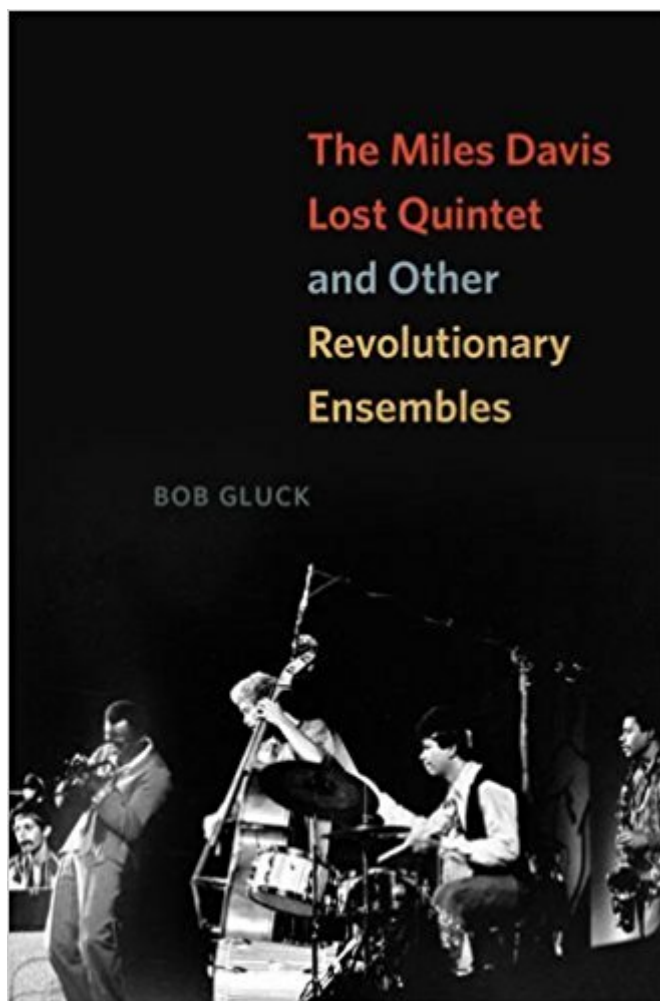


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The Miles Davis Lost Quintet And Other Revolutionary Ensembles



Synopsis

Miles Davis's *Bitches Brew* is one of the most iconic albums in American music, the preeminent landmark and fertile seedbed of jazz-fusion. Fans have been fortunate in the past few years to gain access to Davis's live recordings from this time, when he was working with an ensemble that has come to be known as the Lost Quintet. In this book, jazz historian and musician Bob Gluck explores the performances of this revolutionary group • Davis's first electric band • to illuminate the thinking of one of our rarest geniuses and, by extension, the extraordinary transition in American music that he and his fellow players ushered in.

Gluck listens deeply to the uneasy tension between this group's driving rhythmic groove and the sonic and structural openness, surprise, and experimentation they were always pushing toward. There he hears and outlines a fascinating web of musical interconnection that brings Davis's funk-inflected sensibilities into conversation with the avant-garde worlds that players like Ornette Coleman and John Coltrane were developing. Going on to analyze the little-known experimental groups Circle and the Revolutionary Ensemble, Gluck traces deep resonances across a commercial gap between the celebrity Miles Davis and his less famous but profoundly innovative peers. The result is a deeply attuned look at a pivotal moment when once-disparate worlds of American music came together in explosively creative combinations.

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Customer Reviews

“Locates the music of his electric epoch within a historic continuum of exploratory jazz. Electric Miles is the version who plugged in to the zeitgeist, traded his suits for hipster finery, and opened up his music to distortion and groove-based repetition, either transcending or dramatically repudiating (depending on your perspective) his roots in acoustic jazz. (Atlantic) Gluck’s own expertise as a composer and musician work hand-in-hand with his natural inquisitiveness to uncover the inner creative method in a band that was literally reinventing their music on a gig-by-gig basis. In the process, Gluck perhaps reveals more about Davis’s techniques than previously understood. . . . In his examination of lesser-known groups like the Revolutionary Ensemble, Gluck illustrates both the Davis influence and the tenacious individualism of artists from the trumpeter’s sphere who were determined to follow their own best instincts. Though Gluck is an academician, his writing is accessible even at its most detailed. His insights are solidly supported by historical fact, quotes, and his firm grasp of the subject. As a result, *The Miles Davis Lost Quintet and Other Revolutionary Ensembles* plays out as a compelling narrative of artistic ambitions and human nature. (All About Jazz) “[Gluck] sees Davis as being in conversation with the free jazz of Ornette Coleman and John Coltrane, while creating a music •jazz rock• with much broader commercial appeal. The musical economy is what separates *The Lost Quintet* from groups on the commercial margins like Circle and The Revolutionary Ensemble •to which Gluck devotes separate chapters. . . . His thesis is intriguing, and the book provides much of the material for addressing it. . . . He does show how *The Lost Quintet* was an important band in its own right, not just a transition to better known ensembles. *The Miles Davis Lost Quintet and Other Revolutionary Ensembles* raises tantalizing questions about a career that continues to fascinate. (The Wire) “One of the best things about this book is Gluck’s ability to connect all the dots: the relations between players and movements, between seemingly disparate musicians and the collective music they created, between what is seemingly lost and what deserves further examination. Gluck makes the case that often what should be most valued is also what is most hidden. (New York City Jazz Record) “The scholarship here is excellent. Documenting musical changes is difficult, and Gluck has to rely on a great deal of bootlegged material and also does a forensic recreation of some of Davis’s Live albums •that were actually heavily produced• to understand what he and his quintet were working at. Gluck has scoured interviews •and done his own• to get a sense of the biographical and social issues at play. But unlike many other •most other• all other? •cultural criticism being put

out today, he never reduces the art of the music to psychology and sociology. He understands the aesthetics, the music, as a thing unto itself, and tries hard to explain it. . . . Davis's position as a famous bandleader allowed his musicians to experiment while still getting gigs, still producing albums. Circle and the Revolutionary Ensemble were in very different situations. . . . Gluck's research and insight really pays off. . . . The research he did was small-scale and exacting, sketching networks of influence and explaining the development of a musical form that is too easily dismissed. And he left me wanting more. (Allmusic Books) "Gluck's analyses of the differences among the three groups, and of the underlying similarities that nevertheless made them commensurate, are astute and make accessible a music that can place great demands on the listener . . . Helps to situate these three groups precisely within a time that, in retrospect, was uniquely fecund. (Avant Music News) "In discussion informed by interviews with many of the principals and by his own detailed analysis of recordings, Gluck examines each group and its music in depth. (Choice) "A look at the profoundly influential but hazily remembered period in the 1970s, after Miles went electric, when pretty much everything was possible, and pretty much everything happened. (Brooklyn Rail) "Replete with anecdotes, published quotes, reviews, plus documentation, this is a very readable, honest, informed even scholarly effort by Gluck in chronicling the influences, motives, and participants circa 1960 through early 1975 of Miles Davis and Other Revolutionary Bands. This will be an important contribution to music literature and study. (Stanley Cowell, pianist and composer) "Gluck's The Miles Davis Lost Quintet and Other Revolutionary Ensembles goes the distance to dispel the simplistic notion that the 1970s was the decade of fusion and funk. Focusing on three ensembles whose innovations and influence exceeded their popularity is a brilliant move. While I could quibble with a few conclusions, Gluck expertly analyzes the music without ignoring the all-important political, cultural, social, and economic contexts in which the music was created making this book invaluable. (Michael Cuscuna, cofounder of Mosaic Records) "This book presents a radical challenge to accepted portrayals of the networks that animated experimental music-making in the crucial decade of the 1970s. Moving beyond stereotypes of genre, Gluck lays out a compelling, cosmopolitan, yet intimate vision of the relationships among a set of highly innovative musicians who shaped the future of music itself. (George E. Lewis, author of A Power Stronger Than Itself: The AACM and American Experimental Music) "Gluck's new work is written with much heart, warmth, and intelligence. I hope this starts a new wave of academic

books that focus on good narrative, new concepts, and sophistication without having to fall into the academic jargon charade. Gluck explores cultural, sociological, and philosophical elements of some of the late sixties and early seventies most cutting edge groups, but in a way that is most essential: from a musical perspective. I am flattered to see a mention of my Listen to This: Miles Davis and Bitches Brew in the text, for I feel this new volume is a perfect complement, exploring many of Davis's outlooks and sociological surroundings with a fresh and well developed perspective. I must admit, I know very little of some of the more avant-garde bands Gluck writes passionately about, but I enjoyed learning about them, and the whole New York loft scene of the seventies. Some of Gluck's conclusions are new takes on matters, especially with the relationship with the avant-garde and Davis, which offer much to ponder and debate.

(Victor Svorinich, Listen to This: Miles Davis and Bitches Brew)

Bob Gluck is a pianist, composer, jazz historian, and rabbi, as well as professor of music at the State University of New York, Albany. He is the author of You'll Know When You Get There: Herbie Hancock and the Mwandishi Band, also published by the University of Chicago Press.

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3 stars for miles, 4 for the others, as most of them were new to me. For me it's miles forever and I know I must have read all what is available.

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