



Listen to This: Miles Davis and *Bitches Brew* (American Made Music Series)

By Victor Svorinich



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Listen to This stands out as the first book exclusively dedicated to Davis's watershed 1969 album, *Bitches Brew*. Victor Svorinich traces its incarnations and inspirations for ten-plus years before its release. The album arrived as the jazz scene waned beneath the rise of rock and roll and as Davis (1926–1991) faced large changes in social conditions affecting the African-American consciousness. This new climate served as a catalyst for an experiment that many considered a major departure. Davis's new music projected rock and roll sensibilities, the experimental essence of 1960s' counterculture, yet also harsh dissonances of African-American reality. Many listeners embraced it, while others misunderstood and rejected the concoction.

Listen to This is not just the story of *Bitches Brew*. It reveals much of the legend of Miles Davis—his attitude and will, his grace under pressure, his bands, his relationship to the masses, his business and personal etiquette, and his response to extraordinary social conditions seemingly aligned to bring him down. Svorinich revisits the mystery and skepticism surrounding the album, and places it into both a historical and musical context using new interviews, original analysis, recently found recordings, unearthed session data sheets, memoranda, letters, musical transcriptions, scores, and a wealth of other material. Additionally, *Listen to This* encompasses a thorough examination of producer Teo Macero's archives and *Bitches Brew*'s original session reels in order to provide the only complete day-to-day account of the sessions.



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Editorial Review

Review

“No fan of Davis or student of contemporary jazz should skip this penetrating and fast-reading take on an album that still, forty-five years after its release, gives us much to contemplate.”

?Matt Lohr, *JazzTimes*

“The book is peppered with interesting facts. . . . Many pages are devoted to the impact of *Bitches Brew* on Miles Davis’s subsequent career (right up to his final decade) and on the musicians involved, including Wayne Shorter, Chick Corea, John McLaughlin, Joe Zawinul, and Bennie Maupin. Also included are many photographs and transcriptions, plus reproductions of letters, memos, adverts, and session logs that make for fascinating reading. This is a strong contender for jazz book of the year.”

?George Cole, *Jazzwise*

“Svorinich’s well-written, balanced account of Davis’s journey up to and beyond *Bitches Brew* will appeal not only to Davis converts but to any serious music fan interested in the development of twentieth-century popular music.”

?Ian Patterson, AllAboutJazz.com

“With precision, laser-like focus, writer Victor Svorinich zooms in on the events leading up to the recording of a jazz-fusion landmark in *Listen to This: Miles Davis and “Bitches Brew”*. Incorporating revealing testimony from pinnacle players culled from liner notes, previously published magazine articles, and interviews he conducted for this project, Svorinich runs down (in excruciating detail) the three days of recording that culminated in Davis’s first gold record while providing insightful annotation of each individual track.”

?Bill Milkowski, *DownBeat*

About the Author

Victor Svorinich (D.Litt, Drew), Whippany, New Jersey, is a music faculty member at Kean University in Union, New Jersey, and owner of The Guitar Academy. His published work includes *Electric Miles: A Look at the “In a Silent Way” and “On the Corner” Sessions*.

Users Review

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