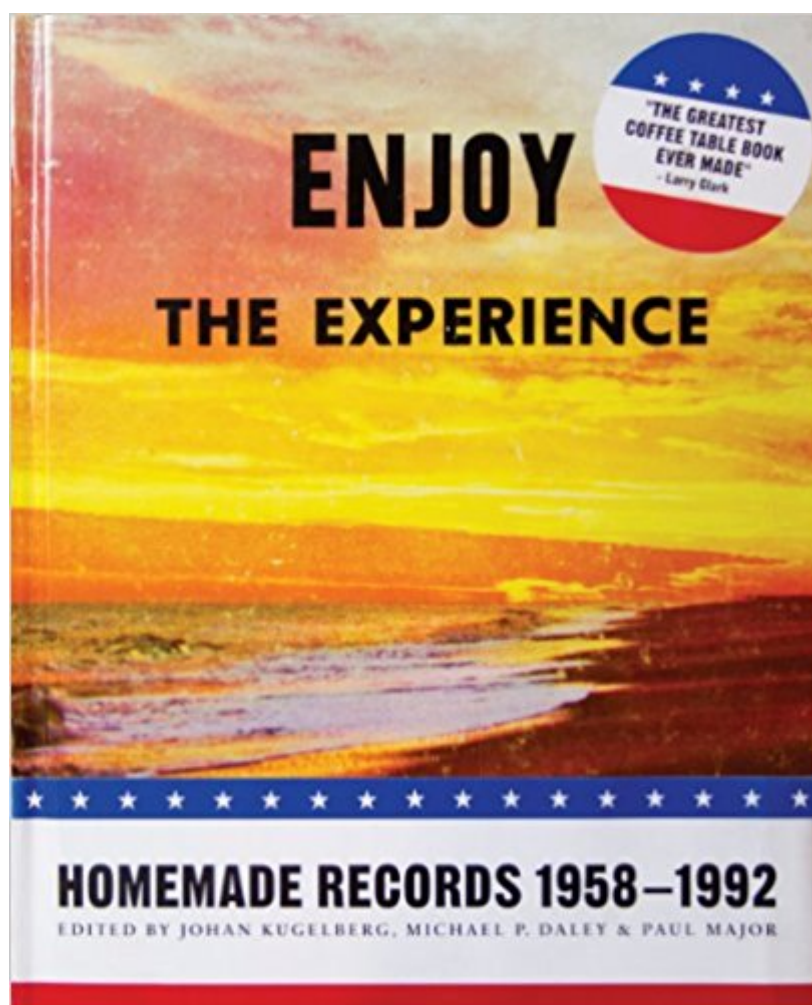


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Enjoy The Experience: Homemade Records 1958-1992



Synopsis

Enjoy the Experience is the largest collection of American private-press vinyl ever amassed and presented, featuring more than 1,000 cover reproductions from 1958–1992. The musicians here range from awkward teen pop combos to pizza-parlor organists; religious cult leaders to Sinatra imitators. But this is not a novelty show: also profiled and discussed are some of the most highly regarded rock, soul, jazz, funk and singer/songwriter albums from the latter half of the twentieth century. Enjoy the Experience begins when the custom-pressed American record plant came into existence and ends, largely, with the birth of the CD. As such, it is a snapshot of America in the second half of the twentieth century and collates a bevy of tales and albums released by the brave souls who took the plunge and committed their musical vision to wax. Enjoy the Experience details a forceful American cultural experience that stands in juxtaposition to the mainstream even as its creators attempted to infiltrate it. With a wealth of full-color reproductions, an introduction by editor Johan Kugelberg, an overview by legendary record dealer Paul Major, along with commentaries, reviews and 50 biographies by noted enthusiasts and collectors, Enjoy the Experience also includes a download card for dozens of the greatest songs culled from the book.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

A private-press LP at the thrift store is a curio, a personal find, but the same LP featured in a coffee-table book is a collector's item. Whatever you might have made of the original, it wasn't by definition salable. After being included in this stylish art book

though, that scarcity becomes value. And it's unmistakable that many of the album covers in *Enjoy the Experience* have the novelty, mystery, and visual appeal that translate into consumer desirability. Indeed, that desirability underlies much of the book's *raison d'être*. Like galleries or fine-art collectors, the editors of *Enjoy the Experience*, have, in cataloguing their passion, marketed it as well. [] The album art in this volume stretches the genre because we haven't seen it before. But once we have, the real surprise may be how comfortably it fits inside. •Damon Krukowski

The private-press LPs documented in this spectacularly fun coffee-table book routinely cross those boundaries - sometimes with an eye toward the slick, other times toward the sick, but rarely with hopes for anything like popular approval. Although many of the elements found here - stock images, clichéd photoops, idiosyncratic philosophies, and a distorted sense of self - played their role in commercial album art, the homemade versions extend these strategies into the realm of outsider art. A private-press LP at the thrift store is a curio, a personal find, but the same LP featured in a coffee-table book is a collector's item. Whatever you might have made of the original, it wasn't - by definition - salable. (Damon Krukowski *Bookforum*) Coming in at a whopping 512 pages with over 1,000 illustrations, this book is a Herculean feat of cultural musicology, graphic design, and collectorship siphoned through the rich history of private-press recordings - vinyl record albums produced and paid for by the musicians themselves, mainly in the 1960s and '70s in the U.S. (Sarah E. Fensom *Art & Antiques*) An affectionate overview of the musically-inclined but record-label-declined. (Editors *Esquire UK*) "Sumptuous" editors Johan Kugelberg, Michael P. Daley, and Paul Major have collected more than 1,000 of the wildest, weirdest, sweetest, and coolest vanity vinyl covers. (Editors *Spin.com*) A collective aura of strangeness. (Editors *The Guardian*) The albums memorialized here aren't from a better time or a more passionate place - the internet is full of evidence that the beautiful, iterative spirit of humans is hardly dead. But there is a specific light shining through the detritus of all the missions noted here: Once upon a time, it was really difficult to release your own album. The time and focus necessary to make one of these things was part of a ritual act. Reaching even the most distant shore of the mainstream was about devotion as much as ambition. Salute the sweat. (Sasha Ferra-Jones *The New Yorker*) Plumbing the depths of many obsessed collectors' archives (including their own), editors Michael P. Daley and Johan Kugelberg pulled the best of the very best records. (Storm Christian *Vice.com*)

This book, in 505 pages, contains around 1,000 of the oddest, weirdest, DIY album covers you'll ever see from the years 1958-1992. This is the world of the privately pressed record album. And that includes the album jacket. This handsome large format hardcover book is filled with "artists" who never had a prayer of being picked up by a large record label. So they went the do-it-yourself-route, including the album artwork. In fact, the artwork for this book's cover is taken from an album cover photo which has been used more than once. Image size ranges from several to a page to larger (some one to a page) reproductions. Personally I dislike small images because I'm from the 12" vinyl album era. The same with books that collect music posters-the bigger the reproduction the better. But I know that size is related to price and the physical size of the book. To put it simply-this is the best book yet on oddball album covers that's been published. The combination of graphics, biographies and interviews make this the book to have in your library. The book (which comes sealed in plastic) has a removable OBI strip, and the 7" clear record is inside a plastic sleeve on the back of the book. The paper stock is a matte finish. The reproductions are crisp and clean-no fuzzy graphics here. At the bottom of each page is listed the title, artist, date (if known), recording company (if known), and the Catalog number. There's also biographies on a number of people whose albums are included in the book. These add both depth and interest to the collection. Finally there's an "A-to-Z of our favorite tunes" at the back of the book. You also have a chance to hear some of this music on the companion set-released on both vinyl and CD. A number of genres are here, including some that are difficult to categorize. And that's what makes this book so fascinating. It's not that this is inherently terrible artwork-though some is-but rather it's a fascinating look into how people see their music (or whatever, in some cases), and how they want it represented. Check out Fab Company, "...Our Songs, For You". Or right across the page is Ethel Delaney with "Heeere's 'Ethel'" (sic) with the Buckeye Strings. Or ("The Man Of Many Voices") Bob Harrison-with his album "Yellow Moon". Or Lee Wyatt's album "Candlelight". Another great cover is by The Outlaws, whose album, "Big Mac" shows a photo of the band in prison garb in front of the Oklahoma State Penitentiary. And right next to it is an album titled "Contraceptive Put You On" (sic), with a lot of naked women on the cover. Or a slightly disturbing album cover by Roy Waldrop, "Heart of a Clown", check it out and I think you'll agree. And one of my real favorites is here, Mistress Mary-housewife (sic). She's billed as a "wife, mother, civic leader, etc., artiste". There's some great song titles including "Smooth Talking Con-man", "Dirt Will Be Yer Name" (sic), and "I Don't Wanna Love Ya Now" (sic). Included on the (undated) album jacket is a sexy photo (in color!) of Mistress Mary lying on some pillows, and some b&w photos of Mistress Mary, apparently at home rustling up some grub, sweeping the kitchen floor and relaxing on some pillows watching TV. The notes tell us

(among other things) that she sings "some country-western", "some soft-soul", and "some whatever". Apparently a solo album, Mary is responsible for "Songs, Sing, Strum". She's also "...the exploding celestial cosmo in the heavenly housewives firmament of the entertainment field..." (sic). She seems to reside in Hacienda Heights, Ca. Hmmmm. And then there's Robbie The Werewolf (Robison). A folk singer who spoofed other folkies and their music of the day-sometimes by dressing up as a werewolf. Robison was married to Barbara Robison-better known as Sandi Peanut Butter, of The Peanut Butter Conspiracy. Fans of late 60's L.A. music will remember their two albums originally on the Columbia label. He also played with Dallas Taylor and Bob Seal and a few others in a band that would morph from the Garnersfield Sanitarium into Brain Train, and then into Clear Light, known for their lone album on the Elektra label. Robison's album "At The Waleback" was recorded at the same venue that the pre-Peanut Butter Conspiracy group, The Ashes (who also recorded), also played. And I really like the two-part cover painting by The Gospel Rhythm-Aires, "I'll Never Be Afraid", with cut-outs of the family singers "standing" in a painted forest with a hazy impression of Jesus, with arms outstretched, above them. The other half of the cover is a painting of a city in smoke and flames. And then there's the many albums by singers/musicians/ oddballs that you've never heard of-and I have to wonder-whatever happened to all these people? All are good examples of DIY album artwork. To help shed some light into what we're looking at (if that's possible) there's an interview (among other pieces regarding this music) with Paul Major (also known as Top Dollar to fans) on rare/private pressed records. Also included are excerpts of record reviews from Major's "Catalogs 1986-2000". Some of the many biographies of these people are pretty interesting, and really give good depth to the album art. The essays give those interested a good look into the musical lives of a number of these "artists". But the main reason for purchasing this book is the extensive look at a small but vital part of the record industry who cater to privately pressed albums. The only factor that would make fans stop and think about purchasing this cool book is the high price. It's a beautiful book, with thick front and back covers, there's a 7" single on how to get your own album out, and a cardboard download card with a printed code which can be used to listen to some of this music. There's also a collection of recordings available from some of these "artists". But this is pretty esoteric going here, so fans into album artwork (like me) who like off-beat artwork are the only ones who will be interested. But if you've ever rummaged through stacks of albums at The Salvation Army, used vinyl record stores, or a pile of albums at a garage sale, and come up with some oddball album with a strange cover, and thought "I've got to have this", then this book is for you.

A photographic document of private press record covers. If you've ever enjoyed browsing through the cheapo shelves underneath the "good" records-- laughing at the cheesy covers or appreciating a naive or strange illustration-- you'll enjoy this book. The text often leaves something to be desired, though. Many artist profiles fail to convey what exactly is noteworthy or unique about a given artist, and are instead clunky rundowns of biographical details without context. Sometimes the authors seem hamstrung by an inability to poke fun at their subjects, which is crippling if said artist was picked precisely because their music is actually funny-- odd, or off-kilter or cracked. It's the opposite approach of Irwin Chusid's all-too-often derisive approach in *Songs in the Key of Z*, a kind of tossed-off, workmanlike vagueness in the prose. The accompanying music is good-- a few tracks are wonderful-- although perhaps the range of the music leaves something to be desired. Overall, an unusual and fun coffee table book with muddled prose but some great recommendations for further listening.

I bought this as a gift for my boyfriend, the vinylphile. My knowledge on the subject of vanity presses began and ended with The Shaggs, and I know the facts on their story are debated. That said, I think I've enjoyed this as a coffee table book, possibly more than he has. The cover art is the focus, but through browsing, you'll also learn about the culture and economics that brought these kind of recordings into being. I'll always treasure the story behind Jr. and his Soulettes, a child band managed by the eponymous Jr's dad, who ruined all their LPs by shrink wrapping them in a butcher shop to save money and hired prostitutes to dance with a puppet while he filmed it. This will be on our coffee table as long as we have one.

What a fun, weird, amazing book. One of the things that's awesome about it is that you don't just get to see the art work, you get to sample some of the actual music as well with a free download that comes with the book. These records range from the amateuristic to the wacky to the pretentious to the amusing to the quirky to the cheesy. It's like a great list of anti-heroes; all those musicians who tried but never 'made it'; musicians who just made music for their own obscure ends; people who thought they could be musicians, but never really were in the first place. It's a rich experience to enjoy, especially for people who enjoy the unusual. Very entertaining.

Just a wonderful book, filled with pictures and information, for anyone who likes to delve into the nether-regions of pop-culture. Beautifully presented, this is a classy title that lovingly looks at a hidden layer of American culture.

This was pretty cool, but probably something my husband (it was a gift) will only look through once.

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