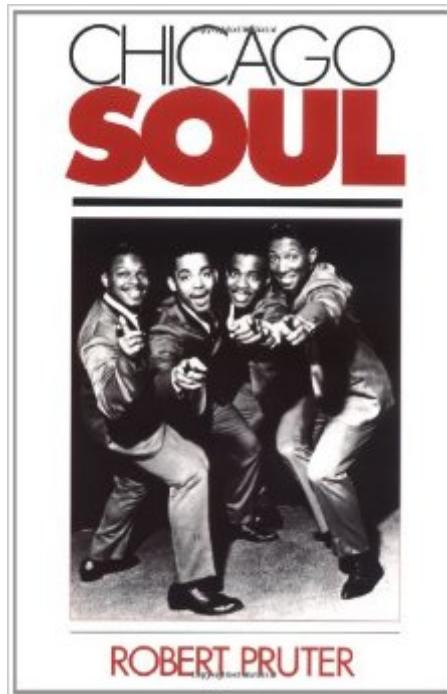


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Chicago Soul (Music In American Life)



Synopsis

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Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Robert Pruter has done an outstanding job researching and compiling, covering every aspect of the beautiful music that was produced by the african-americans in Chicago, the best part being created in the 60's. A must for every music enthusiast. He virtually left no stone unturned, and this book has become the source to turn to whenever you want to check out a particular fact about a band a singer or a label, or if you just want to go back to that era. Back then music wasn't standardized and didn't sound the same wherever you went. Every big town had it's own sound and Chicago's surely was one of the most important together with not far away Detroit.

I agree with all other reviewers. Of course, I love Motown, Stax-Volt, Philadelphia sound & others, but Chicago Soul often gets overlooked or lumped in with Motown. How refreshing to read a book just about the music & not all of the tabloid trash of many Motown books. Sure, the Chicago artists had their problems, which the author mentions when they are relevant to the story, but he doesn't dwell on them. In one book you get to read about Curtis Mayfield/Impressions; Major Lance; Dells; Gene Chandler; Dee Clark; Chi-lites & countless others. Pruter is not afraid to criticise the music, especially stuff from the Disco era. He is meticulous in his details about recordings, etc. He spends a

couple of pages discussing Soul Radio in the 60s which is much too brief. I only hope someone will write a book about that subject sometime. Also, he devotes a chapter to Dance records which is very interesting. My other favorite parts of the book are some of the stories about the artists, especially ones who aren't too well known like Jan Bradley who did "Mama Didn't Lie." Pruter tells a wonderful story about Bradley working with Robert Talty, an older white record producer who really believed in her talent. And sorry, there are no sleazy details about an affair or anything. Just two people working together on music that they loved! In fact, Talty worked mostly out of his home & involved his wife & daughters in his music endeavors. It is also fun to read the stories behind the songs, like how Fontella Bass' classic "Rescue Me" was produced or how guitarist Phil Upchurch & Dee Clark hashed out the details of Clark's big hit "Raindrops" while driving in a rainstorm. Probably the reason that Chicago Soul isn't better known is that there wasn't one label over all the music like Motown or Atlantic. Sure there were labels like Vee Jay & Chess, but there were a whole host of smaller labels too & well as distribution deals with larger labels. It is kind of sad to read about the demise of Chess records. I would have loved to have been in the storeroom & grabbed some of those leftover Chess albums that were thrown out when the label went out of business & a new owner took over the building. Anyway, stories like that make this a wonderful read for any Soul Music fan.

"Chicago Soul" is an excellent history of rhythm and blues in Chicago--the singers, songwriters, producers, record companies, and other major players. It is the definitive work on the subject by the author considered to be "the" authority on Chicago soul music. If you want to know Chicago soul music's antecedents, "Dooowop: The Chicago Scene" by the same author is a must.

This book is really great with great rare photos of singers from the different Chicago Label. This book explains how important, influential the Chicago sound was, but its overlooked, even some of the well-known rock critics and so-called "music historian" don't even know. Probably only a few had crossover success, but so-what, The Chicago sound was for Black people, maybe whites can't understand maybe that's why they don't talk about The Chicago Sound much, but they love to talk about the Motown Sound because most of their music was easy for whites to understand. Major Lance, Gene Chandler, Jerry Butler, Billy Stewart, Barbara Acklin, Otis Leavill, Walter Jackson, Etta James, The Five Stairsteps, Patti Drew, The Dells, and many other were very popular and had a strong black sound. The great producers, A&R Directors, and songwriters like Billy Davis, Carl Davis, Ewert Abner, Clarence Carter, and the labels who made it possible like Chess, Okeh,

One-derful, Constellation, Mercury, Capitol, Chance, ABC-Paramount, and many others, and the great DJs. This books tells about everything. I think we need more black music historians if we want this great soul artist, producers, and songwriters to be remembered, no one can tell about our music better then Blacks, whites can write about it, but their not "of" the music. Too many great Blacks been forgotten, we don't want anymore forgotten, so I'm telling you if you wanna know what real "soul" is, you'll buy some Chicago Soul cd and read this book, and look for the documentary done on the Chicago Sound called Record Row, and hopefully we can all remember these great soul singers again. This book tells about everything from The A&R Directors=DJs-Labels-Producers-Singers-Songwriters.

If you thrill to soul or rhythm'n'blues then get a good sip of it here. Robert Pruter covers a dreadful gap in the knowing of how soul developed in chicago. For many reasons shown in his work. Sad to say, most of the black people mentioned are now passed away. But photos and memories and some recordings remain. Too few of all of these. But Pruter did a valiant job finding what was left and giving it back to the rest of us in his book.

This is a dangerous book if you're trying to curb your record buying. By the time I was only about 1/3 done I had already populated several new wishlists of CDs based on my reading so far. For being the center of the electric blues universe, Chicago gets comparatively little attention as a Soul center. Turns out, there was a lot of good music going on that just got overshadowed by Memphis, Detroit and Philly. Pruter is clearly a researcher and not some run of the mill journalist enamored by the sound of his own voice.

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