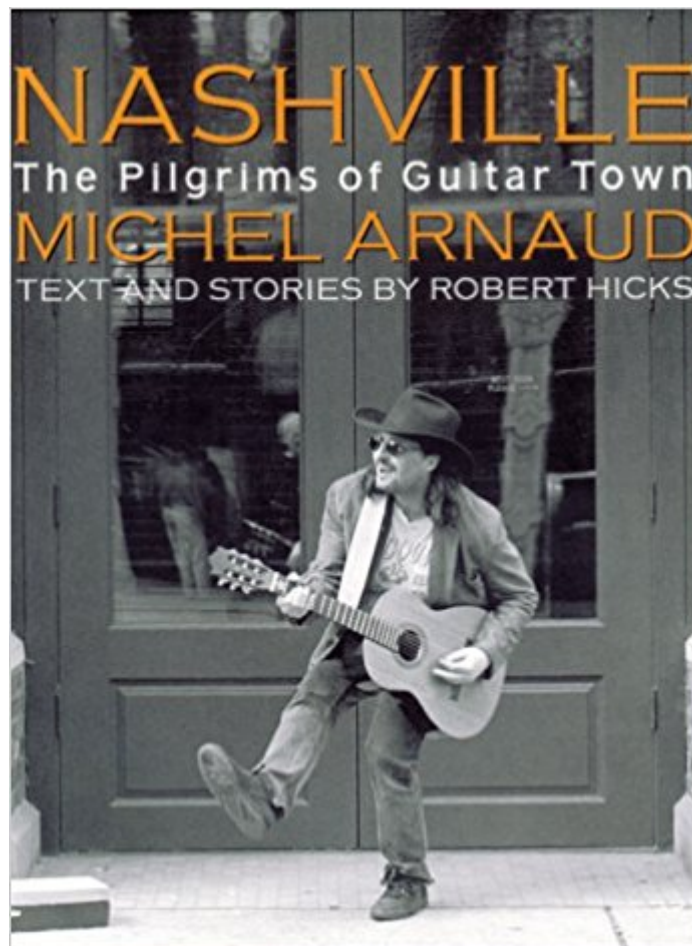


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Nashville: Pilgrims Of Guitar Town



Synopsis

A photographic portrait of Nashville, Tennessee, and of the residents and newcomers who have all been seduced by the promise of 'Music City, USA'. Photographer Michel Arnaud and writer Robert Hicks wander beyond the Grand Ole Opry and Music Row to a place filled with high hopes, hard work, and, more than anything else, guitars. Likening the city to 'Hollywood in the 1920s', Hicks introduced Arnaud to residents famous and infamous, from the struggling pickers still waiting to be discovered to local legends who bask in the spotlight.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Michel Arnaud has chronicled the lives of the rich and famous around the world. His photographic portraits have appeared in such publications as The New York Times, Vogue, Harper's Bazaar, and House & Garden. Robert Hicks is a music producer at Polygram Music in Nashville, and writes a monthly column for Nashville Life.

Everything I expected... interesting stories. I wanted this book probably 15 years ago and didn't have much money so I passed on it. If I could have gotten it back then for what I paid for it now I wouldn't have batted an eye! Anyways... it's cool because now it's like delayed gratification.

Nashville, Pilgrims of Guitar Town is great if you want a book that is mostly pictures and not much content in the text. Definitely a "coffee table" book. I was disappointed to see that it is NOT

published in the USA.

The premise behind this book is excellent,;but it really doesn't make the reader feel like they have gotten an insight into these people who have packed their hopes and dreams in a guitar case and pointed their thumbs towards Music City,USA.The text is very wanting.In many cases there is no text at all accompanying the photographs.In the cast of about a dozen super stars there is some text,but even then nothing that is new or revealing about their struggles.I have been a fan of Country music for over 70 years and many of those shown are unfamiliar to me and although many of them are Songwriters,there is no mention as to what songs they wrote that became hits.As to the many photographs,most are very ordinary,being more quick snapshots than photographs that convey the struggle and dreams that are so much the life of people who want to "make it" in Country Music.Of all the photographs in the book,the only ones that impressed me were the one of Little Jimmy Dickens on page 115 and the rear photograph of Porter Wagoner on page 119.As to the photograph of Dolly Parton,it is a tell nothing ,snapshot that had little no thought input.The picture on the cover,also just a snapshot;but no name or anything in the text about him. Again,as I said,the idea behind this book is great;but the result is quite disappointing.

At first glance I thought this book was going to be just another "picture" book about famous country stars; I was happily and totally mistaken. While Arnaud and Hicks have captured some beautiful images and descriptions of the Nashville scene's legendary greats, the unique quality of this book is the fact that it also depicts the "stars" of Nashville whose lights have yet to shine, or whose lights may never shine. I found this book to be a wonderful tribute, not necessarily to those who have "made it," but more to the "pilgrimage" of those brave souls who journey to Nashville seeking to "make it" in the music business.Although I am not a big fan of country music, nor am I musically inclined, as I gazed at the faces in this book, some recognizable, but many not, I felt a connection with them. That connection being the subject of hope and dreams.The common thread among the people photographed in this book is not only their journey to Nashville, but their hopes and dreams of acquiring success in the music business. Arnaud and Hicks have incredibly captured the visual and written theme of this pursuit of success. I applaud Arnaud and Hicks for not just honoring and capitalizing on the images of those who have "made it," but for honoring the image of the journey and those "pilgrims" still on its path in Nashville.

High marks for Michel Arnaud's photographic tour of Nashville. It seems to me that his (mostly)

black and white portraits capture the essence of a generation - that host of Country and Western aspirants who flocked to Opreyville like the budding movie stars flocking to Hollywood. A few succeeded; many failed. There is less pulchritude in Michel Arnaud's book than if he had chosen to point his camera around Los Angeles, but many more characterful faces. He is a portraitist of the enthusiast, evoking the drink-fuelled abandon of the busking has-beens; the relaxed humanity of the established old-timers; the bounce of the new populists. They all come across as natural and relaxed: Alan Jackson lounging in split jeans on one of the floats of his private seaplane; Ray Wylie Hubbard peering cheerfully at the camera through steel-rimmed specs; wiry Chet Atkins, absorbed in tuning his guitar. The Roots win hands down for me, but there is something for everyone in this evocative album, which shows the Nashville that still retains its vitality underneath the publicised image.

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