

Hugh Hefner's surprising tribute to jazz music



By Jackie Devereaux

PALM DESERT, CA - When you think about Hugh Hefner and the Playboy magazine empire you generally don't think of jazz music. But Author Patty Farmer is hoping to change all that. According to Farmer, the infamous mogul was more than a sexual maverick in the publishing world. Hefner also was one of the biggest promoters of jazz music.

Farmer, who appeared at a book signing at the Barnes & Noble bookstore in Palm Desert last weekend, is acknowledged as the leading expert on all things pertaining to music, entertainment and of Playboy. She's also a businesswoman and former model, and has followed the entertainment industry as an insider, as well as an avid fan and archivist all her life. Her work draws upon a lifetime of friendship and socializing among personalities and celebrities around the world. In her previous book, *The Persian Room Presents*, she transported readers back to the halcyon days of New York City nightlife. Patty splits her time between New York, Southern California, and France.

Since the launch of Playboy

magazine in 1953, two elements have been remarkably consistent: the first is the celebration of the world's most beautiful & desirable women and the second is its involvement with music. The Playboy experience was never just about sex—it was about lifestyle. And music—particularly the finest jazz, a personal passion of Hefner's—has always been an essential component of that lifestyle.

While many books have been written about the Playboy organization and the ultimate playboy himself, Hugh Hefner, no book—until this one—has focused specifically on Playboy and the music scene, its impact on popular entertainment (and vice versa), and the fabulous cadre of performers who took to the stages of the mythic Playboy Clubs and Jazz Festivals. Patty Farmer's *Playboy Swings* is a groundbreaking look at Playboy through a new lens: music.

In addition to its renowned coverage of music in the magazine, Playboy began to sponsor a series of historic jazz festivals, starting with the groundbreaking 1959 Playboy Jazz Festival in Chicago, celebrating the magazine's 5th

Anniversary. Twenty years later in 1979, Hef enlisted George Wein, the world's most famous jazz impresario, to help him revive the Playboy Jazz Festival at perhaps the most famous music venue in the world: The Hollywood Bowl. This annual event continues to this day, attracting legendary stars, tens of thousands of ticket-buyers and employing the talents of thousands of musicians.

It was the success of that inaugural jazz festival that gave birth to the idea of the Playboy Club that opened its first doors in Chicago on February 29, 1960. And once the clubs took hold, it was only natural that they would offer live performances featuring the sort of music the magazine endorsed. As much as anything—including the clubs' iconic Bunnies—the music presented at the clubs set the tone of the organization and kept patrons coming back for more.

From the first issue of the magazine, music enjoyed pride of place, and by 1957, Playboy had launched its "All Star Poll," in which readers were invited to vote for their favorite musicians and acts. This led to what was, at the time, a rather bold step for the young company: Playboy began to produce records. Now, Playboy was doing more than discussing or reviewing music; it was actually presenting it.

Two months after that first Jazz Festival in October 1959, Hefner launched his first TV project, Playboy's *Penthouse*, and all the top-notch performers and musicians dropped by. Comics made the scene as well, including the legendary Lenny Bruce on the very first show. A later foray into television, *Playboy After Dark* (1968), was no less welcoming to the top artists of the day. This time, traditional

pop singers such as Vic Damone and Johnny Mathis shared the bill with the likes of Ike and Tina Turner and Sonny & Cher.

At its peak, Playboy was the largest employer of talent in the country. The Playboy Clubs reached their apogee in the mid-to-late 1960s, and nothing like the wide-ranging Playboy "circuit" for entertainers had been seen since the Golden Age of Vaudeville. By the time the clubs began losing momentum in the late '70s, Playboy had spent several decades shaping American musical taste and cultural values.

While music may not be the first thing you think of when you hear the word Playboy, it should certainly be in the top two—and *Playboy Swings* is meant to insure that. Compiled with the cooperation of hundreds of people who were on the scene throughout Playboy's rise, fall, and renaissance, *Playboy Swings* carries readers on a seductive journey through the history of the empire—all the while focusing on the entertainment that made it unique.

Featuring candid, in-depth interviews with a multitude of musicians and singers, as well as those involved behind the scenes, the book moves from the inception of the Playboy Empire through the 1959 jazz festival, to the opening of club after club. Throughout the book, it is the artists who do most of the talking—and they have a lot to say about the golden era of Playboy entertainment. The result is a fresh take on one of the great social and cultural institutions of our time, as well as a unique first-person history of American popular performance in the second half of the 20th century.

Defense admits teen killed teacher, cites mental illness

By Denise Lavoie

SALEM, Mass. (AP) - A teenager killed his math teacher and did "unspeakable things" to her body, but he was driven by severe mental illness, his defense attorney told jurors at his murder trial Monday.

Philip Chism, 16, is charged with murder, rape and robbery in the October 2013 slaying of Colleen Ritzer. The body of the 24-year-old Danvers High School teacher was found near the school. She had been raped twice and her throat had been slit.

Chism, who was 14 at the time, has pleaded not guilty and is being tried as an adult in Salem.

Chism, who had moved to Massachusetts from Clarksville, Tennessee, shortly before starting high school, should not be held criminally responsible, his attorney, Denise Regan, told the jury. The teenager was "severely mentally ill" and had suffered from a psychotic

disorder since the age of 10, she said.

Prosecutor Kate MacDougall said Ritzer went to school on Oct. 22, 2013, like it was any other day.

"She was doing the job she always dreamed of - teaching math," she said.

But Chism went to school that day with a "terrible purpose," MacDougall said. Inside his backpack, he had a box cutter, a mask, gloves and a hooded sweatshirt.

In gruesome detail, MacDougall traced Chism's steps during Ritzer's algebra class at the end of the day, then after class. Citing surveillance video from some of the 140 cameras at the school, MacDougall said Ritzer was seen going into a bathroom, followed soon thereafter by Chism. She said Chism came out of the bathroom 11 minutes later, but Ritzer did not.

MacDougall said a student who also stayed after class that

day will testify that she saw Chism become visibly upset after Ritzer asked him how Danvers was different from where he lived in Tennessee.

"She sensed that he was irritated with that line of questioning," MacDougall said.

MacDougall said Chism strangled Ritzer and used the box cutter to slice her throat. She said he raped her inside the bathroom and a second time outside, with a tree branch.

Hours after Chism's mother reported him missing, police in nearby Topsfield spotted him walking along a busy two-lane roadway.

Officer Neal Hovey said he was initially relieved because he believed police had found the missing teen and would be able to bring him home safely to his parents.

But when police asked Chism if he had anything dangerous in his backpack, he said yes. When they searched it, they found a woman's wallet with the bloody

box cutter inside. Hovey said he asked Chism whose blood it was and he responded, "It's the girl's."

Topsfield police officer Joseph DeBernardo said he asked Chism if he knew where the girl was.

"He stated that she was buried in the woods," DeBernardo said.

Chism initially appeared to make some friends and fit in at the high school, but several students had noticed changes in him, his lawyer said. He went from "being very friendly to being very quiet and alone," Regan said. One of his soccer teammates notices he was "emotionless" and did not celebrate when he scored a goal.

Regan said that another student who stayed after class with Ritzer the day she was killed noticed that at one point Chism was "looking out the window and mumbling."

Testimony is scheduled to resume Tuesday, when Ritzer's mother is expected to testify. Source: KMIR/AP

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Elks Charity Bingo 2 Sessions every Tuesday: Doors open 4pm Each session \$10 buy in. 64878 Pierson Blvd-open to public (760) 329-6444

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Mahjong an ancient title game: Every Monday from 10 am -12 pm. For info, call Christina 760-321-1548 or Tim 760-321-2598

Compiled by Clarissa Ayala