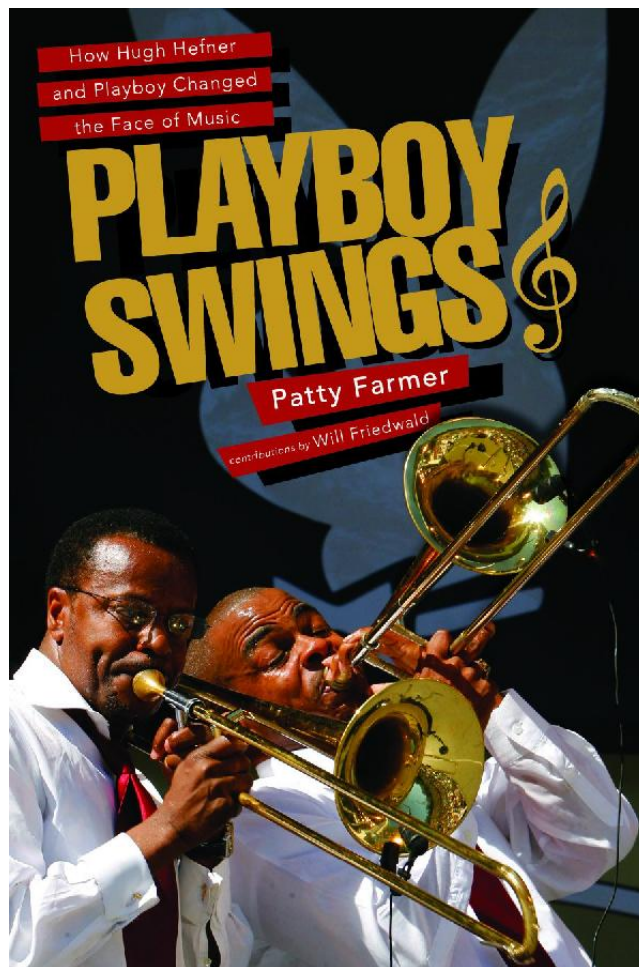


BREAKING NEWS: Pope Francis Visiting School

New Book Details How Playboy/Hugh Hefner Changed Music, Influenced Integration

Sep 23, 15 by Don Saint-James [Leave a comment](#)



*Mention the name [Hugh Hefner](#), and for the most part, thoughts of his iconic Playboy magazine, featuring photographs of women wearing nothing, comes to mind.

For some, the name Hugh Hefner is synonymous with his Playboy mansion in Los Angeles, or his Playboy clubs that once stretched coast-to-coast and to international locales.

For others, the name Hugh Hefner signifies the historic Playboy Jazz Festivals which began in 1959 in Chicago, and continues to this day in Los Angeles. Maybe some remember his groundbreaking TV shows in the late 1950s- early '60s.

While there's no doubt that Hefner has branded Playboy into a multi-dimensional world-wide entertainment conglomerate over the past six decades, author **Patty Farmer**, in her new book "Playboy Swings: How Hugh Hefner and Playboy Changed the Face of Music," reveals a much different side of Hefner.

"People will be surprised to learn about all of Hugh Hefner's' accomplishments to the advancement of jazz and other art forms," Farmer told EURweb's Lee Bailey during a recent interview. "This advancement was through his Playboy magazines, jazz festivals, jazz polls, television shows, Playboy clubs and even his record label. People will enjoy the book, because these things have never been addressed before."

Farmer writes that Hefner was a strong advocate of civil rights for African Americans and their right to perform in front of white audiences, something that was not widely accepted in America during the 1960s, which were turbulent times, punctuated by racial strife and division.

"Dick Gregory was the first African American performer to perform in front of white audiences at the Playboy club, beginning in 1961," Farmer said. "Even today, Gregory still credits Hef with breaking the color barrier at Playboy clubs. We're talking about a time when the United States still had segregation laws, but such laws were against everything that Hef believed in."

Farmer added:

"When the Playboy Jazz Festival debuted in 1959, the lineup had such African American artists as Dizzy Gillespie, Count Basie, Ella Fitzgerald, Miles Davis with Cannonball

Adderley, and many more,” Farmer said.

“Hef earmarked the gross receipts of the two-day festival to go to the NAACP and Chicago Urban League.”

Farmer writes that Hefner had the same mindset about integration for his vaulted television shows in the late 1950s and early 1960s, which were met with strong opposition leading to their demise.

“For white viewers to see Nat King Cole sitting on a couch next to a white woman was too much for many viewers to take,” said Farmer. “Advertisers threatened and pulled ads, but Hef never backed down. He was committed to integration on his television programs as they were ending.”

Growing up in Chicago, Hefner, according to Farmer, had an immense respect for all people. He also loved jazz, even writing about it in his high school newspaper. His writing skills were also utilized while serving in the U.S. Army. He later earned a bachelor’s degree in psychology, with a minor in creative writing from the University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign. Hefner worked as copywriter for a Chicago department store and Esquire magazine before publishing his first Playboy magazine in 1953 from the Windy City; Marilyn Monroe graced the cover.

Staying true to his love for jazz and desire to push for integration, Hefner made sure that Playboy magazine reflected his philosophy. Thus, Playboy’s first ever editorial written was about jazz legends and brothers, Tommie and Jimmy Dorsey. In 1962, when Playboy interviews were instituted, Hefner, “who could have interviewed anyone,” said Farmer, chose to debut with jazz great Mile Davis. Alex Haley conducted the historic interview. Haley would subsequently interview such luminaries as Martin Luther King, Jr., Malcolm X, and Muhammad Ali for Playboy.

Farmer, a former model, revealed that the content of her book was based on information discovered during a three-year period of research and conducting dozens of in-depth interviews, including many with Hefner. She was also given permission by Hefner to research his personal and professional Playboy archives, something

that he rarely permits. Some of Hefner's personal archives, said Farmer, date back to his grade school years that lend some insight to what was to come for the young visionary.

Now, Farmer, who is also the author of "The Persian Room Presents," a book that chronicles the electrifying days of New York City's nightlife, is excited about sharing what she has found about Playboy's electrifying mastermind.

"Through the years, many books have been written about Playboy, Hugh Hefner and all of his girlfriends, bunnies and playmates," said Texas-based Farmer. "However, there has never been a book about how Hugh Hefner and Playboy advanced music and fought for integration, women rights and gay rights. I'm glad to be the one to present these facts to people. I'm shocked and surprised that the rich stories have not been told until now."

For more information about the book, how to purchase it, or on Patty Farmer, log on to www.patty-farmer.com.

Check out some pics from the Playboy photo library:



Hugh Hefner and Louis Armstrong



Hugh Hefner and Ella Fitzgerald



Sarah Vaughn at Chicago Playboy club (1961)



Rick James is all smiles with a Playboy Bunny

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