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Playboy's Incredible Influence on the American Music Scene

Insights into Modern American History

- o Hugh Hefner and Playboy, the glossy magazine he published, may best known for introducing an entire generation to the beauty of the female anatomy.

But truth be told, one of the most lasting impressions and important impacts is his role and contributions to music in America.

- o For almost two decades, Playboy was the largest employer of entertainment—singers, musicians and comedians—in the country.

The remarkable and historically accurate book *Playboy Swings: How Hugh Hefner and Playboy Changed the Face of Music*, author Patty Farmer explores the remarkable way Hugh Hefner's efforts resulted in a legacy that continues to influence the American music and entertainment landscape.

"The Playboy phenomenon was not just about sex and glamorous women, it was more about lifestyle and music," Farmer says. "The finest jazz, in particular, was a personal passion of Hefner.

Farmer, who was given access to Hefner's personal archives, created a well-documented and illustrated chronicles of the decades of musical events and performances with musicians and artists and people who became legends in our history.

He supported and promoted jazz musicians from the very beginning in writing, on stage, and even with his own record label. The very first issue of *Playboy*, graced by the stunning Marilyn Monroe, also contained a detailed feature story about Tommy and Jimmy Dorsey. His emphasis on musicians transcended racial divisions and opened up social dialogue and discourse in ground-breaking ways.

To celebrate *Playboy's* fifth anniversary in 1959, Hefner produced the first *Playboy Jazz Festival* in Chicago. His TV show, "*Playboy's Penthouse*" aired nationwide from 1959 to 1961, and "*Playboy After Dark*," from January 16, 1969 to 1970. In the 40 worldwide *Playboy Clubs*, he showcased jazz musicians and provided black entertainers invaluable exposure in a defiance of segregationist laws and attitudes of the time.

In 1962, *Playboy* published the first of the iconic *Playboy* interviews with Miles Davis (conducted by "*Roots*" author Alex Haley).

Aretha Franklin played piano and sang at the Chicago *Playboy Club* when just 18 years old. It was her first professional singing job outside of church.

Playboy's Penthouse broke all the rules with Hef's integration of races. Nat King Cole appearing and sitting on the couch with a white woman- Rona Jaffe--to discuss her new book was scandalous and resulted in both networks and sponsors dropping the show.

Farmer's insights into this amazing chapter of American cultural history is told through interviews with those involved present in the actual events, including Hugh Hefner, and his *Playboy* cohorts, and the cadre of jazz artists, performers, show business legends and entertainers who performed at the *Playboy* venues, and thereafter became well known around the world. Here's a sampling:



John Lennon and wife Cynthia in 1965. This was the evening after the Beatles famous appearance on the Ed Sullivan Show. When asked what he wanted to do to celebrate that night, the only thing he wanted was to visit the Playboy Club!



Hef and Ella Fitzgerald were great friends. Ella appeared at the jazz concerts as well as Playboy's Penthouse.

www.youtube.com/watch?v=vCYXJHQk4og (video of Ella Fitzgerald singing at the Playboys' Penthouse in 1959)



Jerry Lewis, Sammy Davis, Hef and Anthony Newley on Playboy After Dark in 1969.

www.youtube.com/watch?v=zQP0uBV-fvw (Video footage of Tony Newley and Sammy Davis duet on "Once in a Lifetime" on this episode of PLAYBOY AFTER DARK, with Bill Cosby. This remarkable bit of film shows the great friendship of these remarkable artists.



Sharon Tate and Roman Polanski enjoying opening night at the London Playboy Club.

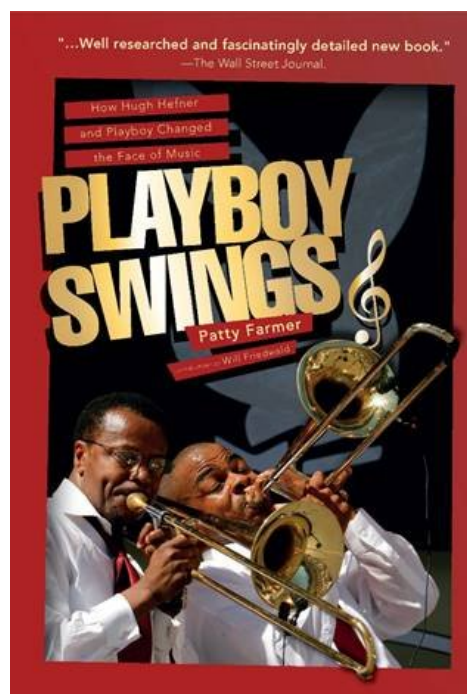
www.youtube.com/watch?v=TqfeAIXuoss (Video containing some very rare footage of a conversation between Hugh Hefner, Roman Polanski and Sharon Tate. Here they discuss sex and nudity in America.

The opening night crowd for the London Playboy Club, in 1966, was as famous and attractive, as one could imagine. A short list of the attendees included: Julie Christie, Ursula Andress, Roman Polanski, Michelangelo Antonioni, Sidney Poitier, Laurence Harvey, Peter Sellers, David Frost, Peter Cook, Kenneth Tynan, Rudolf Nureyev, Woody Allen, Lee Radziwill, and many, many others.



Tony Bennett with Hugh Hefner on Playboy After Dark. Tony Bennett was a great friend of Hugh Hefner and Playboy appearing at the clubs (at the height of his popularity for little pay), the festival and on the TV shows. In his debut performance at the 1996 Playboy Jazz Festival, internationally acclaimed singing legend Tony Bennett proved he has not only bridged the generation gap, but as the New York Times put it, "He has demolished it."

www.youtube.com/watch?v=8QfDHfANPjY (Video of Tony Bennett singing 'Blue Velvet' with Mitch Miller playing clarinet on Playboy After Hours Nov 20 1969.



Playboy Swings: How Hugh Hefner and Playboy Changed the Face of Music
Patty Farmer
With contributions from Will Friedwald

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Compiled through interviews with hundreds of people who were on the scene throughout Playboy's rise, fall, and on-going renaissance, *Playboy Swings* carries readers on a seductive journey through the history of the empire—all the while focusing on the musical entertainment that made it unique. Hef's personal passion for music—and his belief in it as a cornerstone of the Playboy ethos—has expressed itself in a wide range of media over Playboy's 60-year history, and all of it comes alive in these pages.

Famer takes the reader from the inception of the Playboy empire through the 1959 jazz festival, to the opening of club after club.

With approximately 60 black and white photos, and a complete Playboy music reference guide, readers will think of music, not just Bunnies, when thinking about Playboy.

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.

For more information visit <http://patty-farmer.com/>

About the Authors



Patty Farmer is acknowledged as the leading expert on all things pertaining to music, entertainment—and the entertainers—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, Texas, and France.

Will Friedwald writes about jazz and popular music for *The Wall Street Journal*, where he has written the weekly column *The Jazz Scene* since 2010. He is the author of eight books on music and popular culture, has received ten Grammy Award nominations for album notes and production, and is internationally recognized as a leading authority on jazz and adult pop music, as well as Broadway shows, jazz and pop vocalists, big bands, and classic American pop.

What People Are Saying

"I command your attention to "Playboy Swings: How Hugh Hefner and Playboy Changed the Face of Music," a well-researched, fascinatingly detailed new book by Patty Farmer."

- **Terry Teachout**, WALL STREET JOURNAL

"For anyone interested in the good old days of jazz, rye old-fashions and life after dark, this book brings the music, rough glamour and excitement of the Playboy Empire in all their exhilarating, ground-breaking glory. Playboy Swings is well-researched, breezily written, incredibly informative, and a lot of fun."

- **REX REED**, film critic and television host

"Playboy was, in its prime, less a magazine than a kit of tools to make men feel worthy of the perfect women in its pages, and sophisticated taste in music—a taste for jazz—was the best tool it provided. Patty Farmer does full justice to this largely forgotten, essential; story in American cultural history."

- **DAVID HADJU**, Professor of Arts and Culture, Columbia University

"Patty Farmer tells the story of Hugh Hefner's intermingling of Playboy and jazz over the past 60+ years. Farmer hasn't missed a thing in her voluminous research. Playboy Swings is an endlessly entertaining look at when jazz—and Playboy—was king."

- **RICKY RICCARDI**, Author of What a Wonderful World: The Magic of Louis Armstrong's Later Years.

"The Bunnies weren't sluts! They were pretty, wholesome young women, and good company."

- **JOAN RIVERS**

"Mirroring Hugh Hefner's penultimate passion, Playboy has demonstrated an avid interest in jazz since the magazine's debut issue in 1953. And in this lively anecdotal survey, author and former model Patty Farmer offers a behind the scene glimpse of how Playboy's jazz festivals, key clubs, and magazine enthusiastically celebrated America's only original art form. Farmer combines the voices of Playboy execs, managers, Bunnies, and scores of celebrity musicians and performers to shape an entertaining oral history that attests to Playboy's role as a major proponent in the resurgent popularity of jazz during the mid and late twentieth century."

- **MEL WATKINS**, Author of On the Real Side: A History of African-American Comedy and Stepin Fetchit: The Life and Times of Lincoln Perry.

"Hugh Hefner didn't care if you were black, white or purple, only if you were funny or could sing."

- **DICK GREGORY**

"PLAYBOY SWINGS is an intimate look at what went on in the clubs, the racial barriers they helped to eliminate, and the careers that skyrocketed from the Playboy Club stages. This is as entertaining as an evening at a club itself. Four "Bunny Tails" for the effort."

- **BILL BOGGS** Television Host and producer.

"Hugh Hefner...His Playboy Clubs promoted laughter and music. Comedians and hot little jazz combos and singers were the staples of his supper clubs. His festivals brought the legends of jazz to the world. His impact was huge. Music and laughter—healing stuff. The BALM. And Playboy Swings tells the story.

- **AI JARREAU**