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[Review of] Shake, Rattle & Roll: The Golden Age of American Rock 'n Roll. v.1: 1952-1955

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Cotten, Lee. **Shake, rattle & roll: the golden age of American rock 'n roll. v.1: 1952-1955.** Pierian, 1989. 355p bibl ISBN 087650246X, \$39.50

Cotten (author of *All Shook Up*, CH, Nov '85) begins this reference series by detailing the years 1952-1955, the years of rhythm and blues and the independent label. Coverage is to continue through 1963. Each year is summarized in a brief introductory essay, followed with day-by-day listings of events chronicling the musical scene (primarily providing a catalog of performers at the various venues), weekly listings of new releases (including performers and labels), biographical sidebars (accompanied by occasional black-and-white photographs), and monthly top-10 lists. Additional essays highlight "Artists of the Month." Excellent indexes provide access to the calendar entries for nearly 1,000 performers, almost 2,000 song titles, and more than 100 record labels, as well as industry personnel and broadcast media. An appendix listing addresses of the rhythm and blues record companies provides a nice survey of the geographic bases as this music began making commercial headway. The solid bibliography of 95 books, 37 magazines, and a dozen newspapers is disappointingly lacking in full bibliographic data. Although the predominance of touring information limits the value of this work, its unique, detailed coverage of the transition from rhythm and blues to rock 'n' roll and its clear evidence of the importance of the independent label make this an essential purchase for collections that cover the historical and social aspects of popular culture.

--R. A. Aken, *University of Kentucky*

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