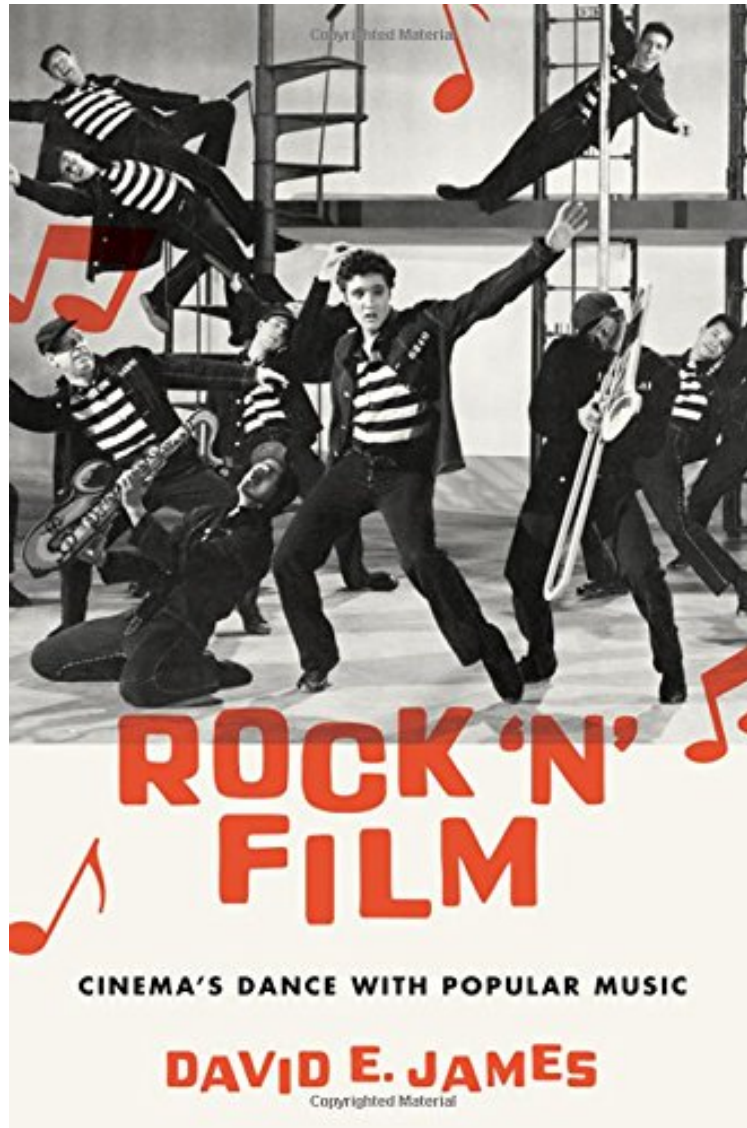


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## Rock 'N' Film: Cinema's Dance With Popular Music

*David E. James*

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**David E. James : Rock 'N' Film: Cinema's Dance With Popular Music** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Rock 'N' Film: Cinema's Dance With Popular Music:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Highly recommended!By MCRA truly remarkable achievement! On a second reading through Rock 'n' Film, I am astonished by the depth of insight into British and American culture that can be gleaned from a careful examination of the coming together of the mid-20th century's two most explosive and influential art forms. As both the music industry and the film industry struggled for dominance, this book guides us

toward understanding the inevitability of their amalgamation, a juncture through which rock and film would incorporate, enhance, and celebrate each other. As the author shows, this juxtaposition of rock and film is most revealing and most interesting in films about rock rather than in those that simply incorporate this music to enhance their own content. This book is a true pleasure to read as it works through this historic juncture from *Rock Around the Clock* in the mid-fifties through thirty-some fabulous and/or troubling Elvis movies through the Beatles, the Stones, Monterey Pop, to the disintegration of the counter culture movement in the 70s. The book is carefully attentive to the racial developments occurring in this historic juncture given the black roots of rock, the intercultural popularity of black musicians, and the inevitable joining and disjoining of black and white musicians themselves. Having read this, I now see why you can't fully understand the cultural influence of film in the mid-20th century, or rock and roll, without understanding their merger in the genre of rock and roll movies. The sophistication of the historical analysis in this book is truly impressive. *Rock 'n' Film* is a monumental achievement in cultural understanding. Highly recommended!

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. This is an amazing book, the first full analytical look at the ...By Dale Wright This is an amazing book, the first full analytical look at the inevitable coming together of Rock and Roll with the Hollywood film industry. David James offers a brilliant analysis of the historically shifting relations between the newly emerging power of rock music and the already established dominance of film. From *Rock Around the Clock* to *Gimme Shelter*, and all of the historic films in between, this hard-driving book puts it all in comprehensive perspective. An essential and exciting read for anyone interested in the historic juxtaposition of Rock and Film. Highly recommended!

For two decades after the mid-1950s, biracial popular music played a fundamental role in progressive social movements on both sides of the Atlantic. Balancing rock's capacity for utopian popular cultural empowerment with its usefulness for the capitalist media industries, *Rock 'N' Film* explores how the music's contradictory potentials were reproduced in various kinds of cinema, including major studio productions, minor studios' exploitation projects, independent documentaries, and the avant-garde. These include *Rock Around the Clock* and other 1950s jukebox musicals; the films Elvis made before being drafted, especially *King Creole*, as well as the formulaic comedies in which Hollywood abused his genius in the 1960s; early documentaries such as *The T.A.M.I. Show* that presented James Brown and the Rolling Stones as the core of a black-white, US-UK cultural commonality; *A Hard Day's Night* that marked the British Invasion; *Dont Look Back*, *Monterey Pop*, *Woodstock*, and other Direct Cinema documentaries about the music of the counterculture; and avant-garde films about the Rolling Stones by Jean-Luc Godard, Kenneth Anger, and Robert Frank. After the turn of the decade, notably *Gimme Shelter*, in which the Stones appeared to be complicit in the Hells Angels' murder of a young black man, 1960s' music-and films about it-reverted to separate black and white traditions based respectively on soul and country. These produced blaxploitation and *Lady Sings the Blues* on the one hand, and bigoted representations of Southern culture in Nashville on the other. Ending with the deaths of their stars, both films implied that rock 'n' roll had died or even, as David Bowie proclaimed, that it had committed suicide. But in his documentary about Bowie, *Ziggy Stardust and the Spiders from Mars*, D.A. Pennebaker triumphantly re-affirmed the community of musicians and fans in glam rock. In analyzing this history, David E. James adapts the methodology of histories of the classic film musical to show how the rock 'n' roll film both displaced and recreated it.

"I love this book right from the opening sentence, with its fresh yet entirely proper reference to Elvis Presley's first (and timeless) record; the attention paid to the music--not least the black music--in that bizarre film *The Girl Can't Help It*; and the affection everywhere (including the relish of absurdities like the *Teen Age Music International* documentary that had Gerry the Pacemakers take over from Chuck Berry in mid song). Dip into it, or read it straight through. Either way, you'll value it." --Michael Gray, author of *Song Dance Man III: The Art of Bob Dylan* "This is a first-rate book: well-researched, well-organized, well-written, and on a topic that is of wide interest yet poorly represented in print. James' work will substantially raise the level of discourse on the relationship between rock music and cinema." --Rick Altman, author of *The American Film Musical* "In *Rock 'N' Film*, David E. James provides a complete overview of rock music in the movies, from the teenage exploitation flicks of the mid-fifties to Elvis Presley's decidedly lightweight years in Hollywood and the Beatles' forays into absurdism. Written with a director's eye for detail and a songwriter's understanding of the milieu, *Rock 'N' Film* is a comprehensive and invaluable guide to the on-again, off-again romance between rock and the silver screen." --Bruce Pegg, author of *Brown Eyed Handsome Man: The Life and Hard Times of Chuck Berry* "David E. James' *Rock 'N' Film* is a valuable, capacious resource, tracing the intersection of popular music and motion pictures from Bill Haley to David Bowie, through exploitation films, documentaries, and every genre in between, on both sides of the Atlantic. Like *Hendrix at Monterey*, it leaves us wishing there were even more." --Marc Dolan, author of *Bruce Springsteen and the Promise of Rock 'n' Roll* "Covering rock 'n' roll filmmaking in its entirety, this accomplished volume is readily accessible and written (as James himself notes) without the jargon that often mars film studies... Illustrated with a host of frame blowups, this informed, sharp, inviting, and absolutely authoritative book will be the source to beat on the subject of rock 'n' roll movies for quite

some time...Summing Up: Essential. All readers." -- CHOICE About the Author David E. James is Professor of Cinematic Arts at the University of Southern California. He is the author of *Written Within and Without: A Study of Blake's Milton*, *Allegories of Cinema: American Film in the Sixties*, *Power Misses: Essays Across (Un)Popular Culture*, *The Most Typical Avant-Garde: History and Geography of Minor Cinemas in Los Angeles*, and more.