

GREIL MARCUS: Mystery Train (Omnibus Press)
BILL FLANAGAN: Written In My Soul (Omnibus Press)

Marcus' tome (subtitled *Images Of America In Rock'n'Roll Music*) makes it into its third revised edition and continues to stand as a definitive work. Revisions are slight and marginal (however pertinent - and they are!), adding a couple of references to, say, Sex Pistols, to sustain the veritable contemporaneity of what has become an all-time contemporary classic exposition and investigation of Anglo popular culture, in particular the New World Order of same. The interrogative, informed essays on his selected totems - Harmonica Frank, Robert Johnson, The Band, Sly Stone (itself a seminal segment), plus even Randy Newman (well, forgiveness is all) and (natch) Elvis The Pelvis stand the (proverbial) test of time, unassailed in their relevance and sexiness. Let's face it, it is the narrative (even if in song) of Western pop'n'rock which has been dominant lo! these many decades, and in its very language and articulation are to be found the common constraints of cultural history and consequence. Marcus moves succinctly and realistically from the Alchemical formula of "As above, so below" to an exposition of cultural resonance and history. The mythos of the 'outsider', 'the outlaw', *undsoweitwer*, as particular to Western (American) culture - hence, popular - neatly paraphrased and paradigmmed. A wealth of enthusiastic and critical experience well worth discovering (or re-reading). Yup, the song (or its impulse) remains the same. One dreads that the fourth revision will be charitable towards the 80s - where the song counted for less than zero, but consumption counted above all..