



# LIBRARY JOURNAL

## ereviews

### Mix and Match



By Gail Golderman & Bruce Connolly

**AFTER WRITING** several columns organized around specific themes, we decided to mix it up. Evaluated here are resources that we’re fond of and that may be useful to students and other library users but don’t fit neatly into the subject categories we typically review, or don’t have enough counterparts around which to base a full column. Read more to learn about geography, rock and roll, comics history, engineering failures, and scientific successes.

**Rock’s Backpages**  
Rock’s Backpages;  
rocksbackpages.com  
Free trial available

## rock’sbackpages



<b>individuals</b> <a href="#">Login</a> <a href="#">Subscribe Now!</a> <a href="#">Your Account</a> <a href="#">Get Newsletter</a> <a href="#">Contact</a>	The online library of pop music journalism... <i>OVER 32,000 CLASSIC ARTICLES</i> on artists from Aaliyah to ZZ Top, on all genres from rockabilly to hip hop, by the finest music writers of the last 50 years. <a href="#">Enter library HERE...</a>	
<b>institutions</b> <a href="#">Login</a> <a href="#">Your Account</a> <a href="#">Academic Subs</a> <a href="#">Librarians' Info</a>	<b>Free on RBP</b>  <b>WITH OR WITHOUT THEM</b> — U2’s blockbusting <i>Joshua Tree</i> at 30: <i>The Observer’s</i> Robin Eggar assesses the band’s unforgettable rise and <i>Spin’s</i> Colin Irwin meets them in their native Dublin in June ‘87. Plus <i>Simon Reynolds</i> reviews the album for <i>Melody</i>	<b>New for Subscribers this week</b> <i>“The odds of electronic delivery of music being a reality in the next five or ten years are... well, it ain’t going to happen.”</i> — Tower Records boss <i>Russ Solomon</i> to Michael Goldberg ( <i>Details</i> , 1994)  <b>PLUS pieces on...</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Connie Francis</i> (1963)</li><li>• <i>Supremes et al. live</i> (1965)</li><li>• <i>Paul Revere &amp; Raiders</i> (1965)</li><li>• <i>Sleepy John Estes</i> (1965)</li><li>• <i>Jacques Brel</i> (1966)</li><li>• <i>Tim Buckley et al.</i> (1967)</li><li>• <i>Peter Green</i> (1968)</li><li>• <i>Neil Young</i> (1969)</li><li>• <i>James Burton</i> (1970)</li><li>• <i>The J. Geils Band</i> (1971)</li><li>• <i>Hank Snow et al.</i> (1972)</li></ul>
<b>site content</b> <a href="#">Library</a> <a href="#">Free on RBP</a> <a href="#">Artists</a> <a href="#">Audio</a> <a href="#">Genres</a> <a href="#">Publications</a>	<b>Audio</b>  <b>GONE GIRL</b> — Gerrie Lim talks miniature pigs and more with Go-Go-gone-solo <i>Belinda Carlisle</i> (1986).  Jimi Hendrix to Kate Bush: the complete RBP Audio library	

**CONTENT** It can be easy to forget when any scrap of information about music and musicians was a precious commodity. Rock’s Backpages gives music fans and researchers access to some

32,000 articles, concert and album reviews, interviews, memoirs, and letters as well as more than 500 audio interviews.

Sources include magazines such as *Crawdaddy*, the first American magazine devoted to rock music criticism; *Creem*, dubbed “America’s Only Rock ‘n’ Roll Magazine;” *Trouser Press*, a rock and roll magazine which ran from 1974 to 1984; and *Rolling Stone*, among others. There are also British-based publications such as the popular weekly *New Musical Express* or *NME*; *Melody Maker*, published between 1926 and 2000; *MOJO*, focusing on classic rock, and its competitor *Q*.

Included are a handful of articles from the 1950s, almost 2,500 pieces from the 1960s, and more than 10,000 items from the 1970s. All material is available in full text. There is currently more archival than current content, but about 50 new documents are added each week.

**USABILITY** The clean and attractive homepage encourages users to jump right into the content, view the most recent additions to the library, listen to interviews, or explore material using Genre Quicklinks. Helpful links to the site content—Library, Free on RBP, Artists, Audio, Genres, Publications, and Writers—appear on the left side of the page. Prominently displayed in the center of the page is an invitation to enter the library.

Taking this route leads to search options and pull-down menus for artists, writers, associates, subjects or genres, and publications. Alternatively, one may browse the full A-Z listing for each of these indexes. The top ten articles of the day are displayed, along with freely available and newly added content. An advanced search lets users combine a term or phrase (entered in the search box) with a subject or musical genre, writer, or publication (using the pulldown menus). Results may be limited to a date range, type of piece (column, interview, live review, retrospective, etc.), and arranged by relevance or date.

Audio interviews may be selected via the format pull-down menu. We selected Krautrock from the genre list and received 126 hits, with an “artist” facet to the right of the list indicating that 37 dealt with German rock band Can and another 31 were on German band Kraftwerk. There is no specific indication that RBP supports Boolean searching or truncation, although we did see more inclusive results by placing an asterisk after keywords. If there is a downside of *Rock’s Backpages*, it would be that it is easy to get distracted and meander through article after article. A search for “Chelsea Hotel” led to punk rocker Sid Vicious; and then to an article on the suicide of Vicious’s mother (who allegedly helped him overdose while celebrating his release from Riker’s Island); and then, via some untraceable path, to a review of Lana Del Rey’s 2014 album *Ultraviolence*.

**PRICING** The cost of *Rock’s Backpages* is based on FTE and institution type. All subscriptions offer unlimited simultaneous users and remote access. Prices start at \$1,417 annually for academic libraries under 1,000 FTE and for public libraries serving fewer than 50,000. Consortia partners receive a 20 percent discount off the standard pricing; RBP also offers a Perpetual Access Purchase option. Personal subscriptions start at \$90 for three months.

**VERDICT** A highly affordable product with unique content. “An essential acquisition for large public and academic libraries serving serious students of a wide range of music, from blues and country to jazz, reggae, and, of course, rock and roll,” read the review in *LJ* 4/1/14.

**WWW.LIBRARYJOURNAL.COM** REVIEWS, NEWS, AND MORE