



Ludicrously over-praised? New book airs Stones myths

Mick Jagger never considered a sex change, much less actually had the operation as reported by columnist William Hickey in the late 70s. His fellow band members were said to be annoyed because they didn't want to tour with a girl singer, but it was all down to a flippant remark made by the Stones' PR man at the time.

Nor did Mick, now 63, ever share a Mars bar in an unusual way with Marianne Faithfull – that story emerged from a lewd lunchtime drinking session involving police officers and reporters during the drugs trial of Mick Jagger and Keith Richards in 1967.

Richards himself, now 62, says he never had a complete blood transfusion to clear his system of heroin – a fallacious “remedy” for drug addiction that has no scientific credibility – and yet credible rumours persist that a Swiss clinic may have performed the procedure anyway.

The new Rough Guide to the Rolling Stones gives a fresh airing to these and other great stories about the band, who start the British leg of their Bigger Bang tour at Twickenham Stadium on 20th August. The band also perform shows in Glasgow, Sheffield and Cardiff.

The Rough Guide is trenchant in its comments about some of the Stones' output and style, declaring their most recent album, A Bigger Bang, “ludicrously over-praised” and “a mockery of the Stones' tradition of never sacrificing good tunes for rock roar.” Rough Guide author Sean Egan describes their current appearance as “a sad spectacle. . .not vital recording artists, but a gargantuan version of acts like The Searchers and The Hollies, who play their old hits to the nostalgia circuit.”

He also points out that the Rolling Stones brand name is being used “to put out solo material that would not sell under their individual identities.”

But the Rough Guide is unequivocal in its enthusiasm for the position of the Stones' in the rock pantheon – “they will always be the Greatest Rock 'n' Roll Band in the World. . .with the richest back catalogue in the history of post-Elvis popular music. It is inconceivable their star will wane.”

Notes for editors

Rough Guides publish 18 music titles, from Hip-Hop to Elvis, with more in preparation.

The Rough Guide to the Rolling Stones, by Sean Egan, priced £9.99, is out now. Sean Egan is a journalist specialising in popular culture and sport who writes for *Billboard*, *Classic Rock*, *Record Collector* and *Vox*, among others.

Also published in August by Rough Guides:

The Rough Guide to Punk (£15.99) by Al Spicer – funny, insightful and amazingly detailed, this is the essential punk companion covering the genre from The Adverts to Zounds. Also available: **Punk: The Whole Story** (Dorling Kindersley).

The Rough Guide to Soul and R&B (£15.99) by Peter Shapiro – the definitive guide to the greatest singers, musicians, songwriters and labels.

The Rough Guide to Pink Floyd (£9.99) by Toby Manning – the complete story of the band that changed the scale of pop forever.

The Rough Guide to The Beatles (2nd edition, £9.99) by Chris Ingham – a revised and updated edition of the incisive guide to the most popular and influential band of all time.

The Rough Guide to Bob Dylan (2nd edition, £9.99) by Nigel Williamson – a revised and updated edition of the book described by *Uncut* as “the most comprehensive Bob tome ever.”

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