

NOVEMBER 2016 | TISHREI • CHESHVAN 5777

● SAN DIEGO

jewish

JOURNAL

BOOK FAIR IS
GROOVY BABY

+
**BOB DYLAN
AND THE
SUMMER OF '57**

Yiddish folklore
returns to San Diego
in a new adaptation

Why Judaism at
Jewish camp?



Fueling Fandom

Rich Cohen writes an irresistible tome on the world's most influential rock band

INTRO BY NATALIE JACOBS, EXCERPT BY RICH COHEN

Maybe it's the subject matter, or maybe Rich Cohen is just that good, but *"The Sun & The Moon & The Rolling Stones"* is hard to get out of your head. Music journalism is clearly a sweet spot for the nonfiction writer who counts *"Sun & Moon"* as his 12th book to date. That's probably not news since Cohen has been writing for *Rolling Stone* in various capacities since 1994 and was co-creator of the heavily publicized though short-lived rock 'n roll series "Vinyl." It is worth noting though, because music is a subject that Cohen keeps coming back to, amidst a resume that boasts a book on sweet and low (his grandfather invented it), time travel, and a gangly capitalist who redefined fruit for America.

As with much of his nonfiction writing, this one comes from a personal perspective with just enough fanboy elements to make the narration relatable, revealing and fun. It is a rock history with an "Almost Famous" feel that exposes the irresistible world of wildly unpredictable musicians. Included here for San Diego Jewish Journal readers is an excerpt from the book. Rich Cohen will be in San Diego at the JCC on Oct. 29 at 7 p.m. Plan to stick around after the talk for a tribute concert by *The Ultimate Stones*. Tickets and details at sdjcc.org/sdjbf.

"VICAR APPALLED"

A few months ago, I went for a walk in Soho, London. I wanted to look into some of the places where the Stones got started. I stopped by the building that once housed Regent Sound, where the band cut its first sides, a slapdash establishment that once teemed with life. I stood before the Marquee Club and the Roundhouse, then wandered through London's Tin Pan Alley, where, in the fifties and sixties, the coffee bars were jammed with songsmiths. In an alley off Denmark Street, I studied a bulletin board plastered with wanted ads and audition notices. A few caught my eye, especially this one:

Bassist and Guitarist

Looking for Singer and Drummer to Start a Stoner Rock/Grunge Band
We're two young guys (20-22) looking for a rough filthy pissed off singer/songwriter with a negative approach to life and a drummer with a powerful approach to the drums that hits hard as a beast, between 19 & 23 years old, to start a full-time kickass project.

Our influences are bands like Kyuss, Nirvana, QOTSA, early Incubus, Snakapit, Korn, Snot and RATM and RHCP as well.
NO assholes, No excessively religious, NO moralists, Dirty hair required

It hit me, this notice, because yes and wow, but also because it expressed a truth about the Einsteinian nature of rock 'n roll. Simply put, there is no time. Rock 'n roll is quantum. The beginning is tangled up with the end, the exits are entrances, every moment is present in every other moment and it's always now. How else can you explain the Rolling Stones filling stadiums decades after all the important stuff happened? Or the records released by long-dead stars? There is no progress – it never really got better than Elvis in 1956. Every band has to rediscover what's already been discovered and forgotten. It's a cycle: Elvis to Sedaka; Stones to Bee Gees; innocence to decadence.

Which accounts for the similarity between the notice above and the notice Brian Jones put in *Jazz News* in 1962, his call for musicians to form a rhythm-and-blues band. He'd already recruited Geoff Bradford to play guitar and Brian Knight to play harmonica. Brian asked Paul Jones to sing, but Paul Jones said no, which, over time, turned him into the man who could have been Jagger.

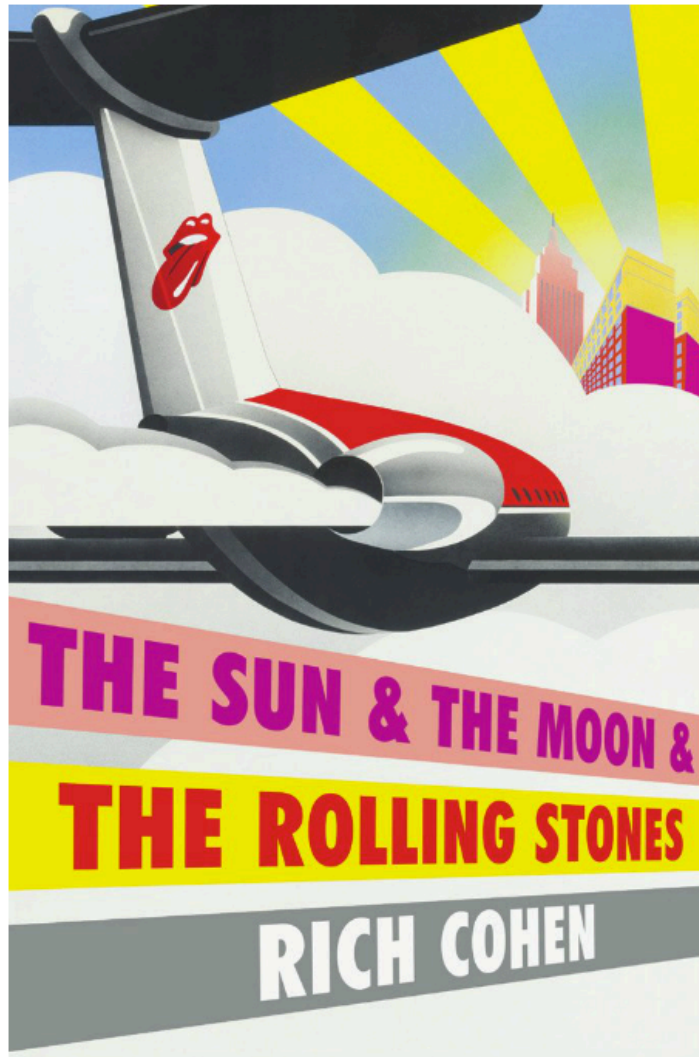
"I had two reasons for saying no," he told me, "the main reason being that I thought it ridiculously optimistic to think we could make a living playing blues. The other is that I had a good job with a dance band, singing the hits of the day. It was a mistake, but life is nothing but a series of mistakes. At least mine have been colorful."

Auditions were held in the Bricklayers Arms, a pub off Wardour Street. Arriving early, Keith stood in the doorway watching a young man play boogie-woogie piano. This was Ian Stewart, a Scottish truck driver who rattled the keys like Professor Longhair on a swampy Delta night. He was barrel-chested and lantern-jawed, with big arms and bulging eyes. His lips were twisted, a lock of hair swung across his face. He looked less like a bluesman than a stevedore. From 1963 till his death in 1985, Ian Stewart – Stu! – was a crucial part of the band, the so-called sixth Stone,



Author Rich Cohen

"I HAD TWO REASONS FOR SAYING NO, THE MAIN REASON BEING THAT I THOUGHT IT RIDICULOUSLY OPTIMISTIC TO THINK WE COULD MAKE A LIVING PLAYING BLUES. THE OTHER IS THAT I HAD A GOOD JOB WITH A DANCE BAND, SINGING THE HITS OF THE DAY. IT WAS A MISTAKE, BUT LIFE IS NOTHING BUT A SERIES OF MISTAKES. AT LEAST MINE HAVE BEEN COLORFUL."



yet, for reasons that will become clear, he remains largely unknown. A shadowy figure, a forgotten man.

Keith entered the room quietly, strapped on his guitar, began to play. Stu looked up, smiling. Jagger turned up a short time later.

"Jones said he didn't think Jagger was a particularly good singer but had something," Norman Jopling, a journalist who covered the scene for *New Musical Express*, told me. "And he did. Jagger could always front."

Brian asked Mick to join the group. Mick said he'd come in only if Keith was included. The other members didn't want

Keith because Keith was a devotee of Chuck Berry, whom aficionados dismissed as pop, near beer. There was an argument. Geoff Bradford and Brian Knight stormed out, exiting history. As the band was now understaffed, Mick asked if he could also bring in Dick Taylor.

"When I met Brian, he asked, 'Can you play bass?'" Taylor told me. "I told him maybe, but I didn't have a bass. He said, 'Fix that.' So I went out and bought a bass guitar, then learned by doing it."

The musicians rehearsed all summer. Brian ran these sessions, setting the schedule,

choosing the songs. It was his project, a second family to ease his loneliness. In the early days, the Stones were driven less by Mick's ambition or Keith's love than by Brian's need. His life was a sickness that he believed could be cured by the blues. ☼

Excerpted from the Book "The Sun & the Moon & the Rolling Stones" by Rich Cohen. Copyright © 2016 by Rich Cohen. Published by Spiegel & Grau, an imprint of Random House, a division of Penguin Random House LLC. All rights reserved.