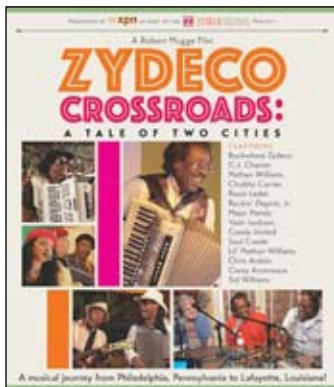


inhardt's lovely "Nuages." Again it sounds like vibes being played (along with piano) on a highly energized performance of Fischer's "Novelho," with a bass solo and trading fours with the drummer followed by some lively piano. The closing medley of Brazilian classics "Carnaval / A Felicidade / Samba De Orpheu" further displays his ability to bring out an emotive quality of each note.

In the notes, Brent Fischer hints at more musical delights from his father. Certainly "out of the Blue" will whet the musical appetite for these. *Ron Weinstock*

DVDs



THE KINGDOM OF ZYDECO AND ZYDECO CROSSROADS: A TALE OF TWO CITIES Robert Mugge Films MVD VISUAL

MVD is in the process of making available a number of classic Music documentaries from Robert Mugge. Mugge has produced documentaries on the likes of Sun Ra, Sonny Rollins, and "Deep Blues" on the Mississippi Hill Country music of the likes of Junior Kimbrough and R.L. Burnside. Among those who have been produced for Blu-Ray are "The Kingdom of Zydeco" and "Zydeco Crossroads." The first film was made around the time of the 'controversy' of crowning Boozoo Chavis as the King of Zydeco while the second was a film that Mugge did in connection with Philadelphia Public Radio

Station WXPB which conducted a series of concerts, dancers and more for over a year over a year. Both add to films by Les Blank, Nick Spitzer, and others documenting the Louisiana-Texas music genre. Both Blu-Ray releases contain extra material that should be of considerable interest.

In one of the bonus features to "The Kingdom of Zydeco," Robert Mugge goes into how "The Kingdom of Zydeco" got to be made. At the time, Mugge was making a video on Bluegrass as well as one for Rounder Records that was similar to "Pride and Joy," a documentary he made about Alligator Records. He quickly came to realize that there was much more to Zydeco than a short portion in the Rounder movie would show, and at the time there was a promoted battle between Boozoo Chavis and Beau Jocque to determine who was the King of Zydeco after the deaths of Clifton Chenier and Rockin' Dopsie.

Mugge uses this "Battle" to organize the film, which has a fair amount of superb performances by both artists as well as interviews with them along with comments from club owners, radio dee jays and fellow zydeco artists Nathan Williams and John Delafosse. This gives insight into the history of the genre and the evolution of the music, including Boozoo's early pioneering role and the contribution of Clifton Chenier who was the undisputed King of Zydeco when he lived.

Delafosse and Williams both indicate that they consider this battle for the crown a bit dubious, and are especially dubious of the claim of a woman from the Louisiana Hall of Fame that she is fulfilling the late Rockin' Dopsie's wish to crown Boozoo, but Dopsie's own proclamation as King after Clifton's passing is not embraced by all. What makes the documentary so enjoyable is the weaving together of the driving dance hall performances with interviews with both artists and the others. There is plenty of humor and life throughout and also Nathan Williams and John Delafosse also get to perform briefly. I had not seen this prior to its present release, but the quality of the video and sound complements the excellent music and storytelling of the film. Another bonus feature with this DVD package is a short documentary on The Iguanas, shown recording at their home made studio and discussing their music and how they came together.

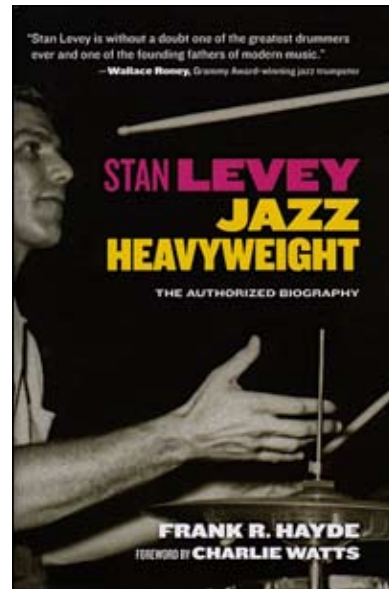
"Zydeco Crossroads" is a more recent documentary and as discussed, was produced in conjunction with Philadelphia Public Radio Station WXPB. It provides a broader group of performers as well as uses WXPB staff to help provide an overview of the zydeco scene today. It opens with the staff talking about the project along with performances by C.J. Chenier and Rosie Ledet in the Philadelphia area before they move down to Lafayette, Louisiana, with the station's General Manager and Assistant General manager explaining the purpose of the station's project and why they went down to Lafayette to help more fully develop the understanding of not simply creole music but its culture. To this end, David Dye, host and producer of the station's

World Cafe program, who is seen interviewing C.J. and Rosie, then travels down to interview performers, dee jays, club owners and others to link the filmed musical performances and the role of family in zydeco as well as provide a wide range of musical examples from performers like Buckwheat Zydeco, Nathan Williams, Chubby Carrier, Lil' Nathan Williams, Chris Ardoin, Corey Arceneaux, Creole United and others.

Dye is a good interviewer and helps get a sense of the music's history, links to the blues and its present direction. We are introduced to a number of important historical creole musicians going back to Amadee Ardoin, while also learning how contemporary musical trends are being integrated into zydeco to keep the music alive and vibrant. Some of the background material might have been better provided by text overlays over the film than listening to the GM discuss it. Other than that, this is another wonderfully entertaining, and enlightening film.

Accompanying this "Zydeco Crossroads" is a bonus video "Rosie's in the House." A clip from this is in the main documentary, but here we have a full set of Rosie Ledet performing to zydeco dancers in Philadelphia with David Dye's interview segments weaved with the nearly an hour of her lively music. Standing on its own, it is an exceptional documentary of her, and paired with the main documentary, provides added value to the main film.

Thanks to MVD Visual for making these available which fans of zydeco and American roots music certainly should investigate. *Ron Weinstock*



Hayde, whose previous books include involving organized crime, weaves together in the narrative of Levey's life quotes from interviews of Levey with others, taking us from growing up and becoming a boxer as well as musician. Hayde's background in researching organized crime helps the reader understand the fight game of the time, including the throwing of fights when directed to.

At the same time he was becoming a drummer with his self-taught style and engaging in both at the same time for a while. Both Dizzy Gillespie (with whom he plays with in Philadelphia) and Max Roach mentor him as he develops as a musician (and he recounts playing with Benny Goodman for a week) that eventually leads him to move to New York where he is at ground zero of the bebop revolution. Dizzy introduces him to Specs Powell, Ben Webster's drummer, and Oscar Pettiford, who was then needing a drummer and took him to Boston

Levey recounts the influence of Monk and Coleman Hawkins, but especially Max Roach who was instrumental in developing Stan's concept of music and they even shared an apartment for a period while also working with Art Tatum and Errol Garner. A fair amount of space is given to his relationship with Charlie Parker, who in fact he lived with for a period and how Bird who introduced him to heroin, which led him to getting hooked and into various legal troubles including incarceration. Stan was also in Bird's first band. There is very little recorded evidence of Levey's time with Parker (which included going out to California) because at the time of Parker's early recordings he was touring with Herman. He did record one rehearsal track for Dial with Gillespie and Parker when they went out to Billy Berg's.

The book chronicles his life as he gets married, his first wife gets addicted, they have a son, but eventually they get divorced. Levey's habit leads him to being arrested and incarcerated because Sonny Stitt

books

STAN LEVEY JAZZ HEAVYWEIGHT: HE AUTHORIZED BIOGRAPHY

Frank R. Hayde

SANTA MONICA PRESS 2016; 288 PAGES
PLUS 32 PAGE COLOR PHOTO INSERT

Stan Levey was a significant figure during the dawn of bebop who played with the likes of Dizzy Gillespie and Charlie Parker, and befriended and mentored by Max Roach, yet his career has fallen into the shadows of the music's history. "Stan Levey Jazz Heavyweight" is an authorized biography produced with the cooperation and support of his widow Angela Levey and son Bob.

The title has a double meaning as it refers to not simply Levey's stature as a jazz drummer, but also the fact that he was at one time a boxer, being the son of a boxing promoter and manager with ties to the mob. How this North Philadelphia child became drummer with Bird on 52nd Street and at Billy Berg's in California, toured with Woody Herman and became house drummer at the Lighthouse is a fascinating story weaved together by Hayde.