

to save through the work of four decades. The wealth of detail in the photography and essays makes it a worthwhile book to examine closely.

—Ruth Sundheim
Seattle, WA

Gerri Hirshey. *Nowhere to Run: The Story of Soul Music.* (New York: Penguin Books, 1985) xvi, 384 pp., \$6.95 paper.

Gerri Hirshey's book was conceived, according to her preface, as a series of literary spotlights, illuminating the world of "Soul Music" and the musicians whose performances and recordings created it. In its final form, the book became a collection of semi-biographical sketches combining loosely connected narrative with quotations from the stars themselves, transcribed from Hirshey's many interviews. Her expressed intent was to create "a book of voices" speaking of their music, their lives, their hopes, fears and expectations. The title is taken from the song made famous by Martha Reeves and the Vandellas (1965) and reflects emotions expressed by many of the singers interviewed: impatience with the fickleness of the public and record companies, frustration with the relentless pace forced upon them by their careers, and, often, despair at their inability to control the careers that both enthrall and entrap them. "Soul music," Hirshey suggests, "... for a few years ... gave many of us somewhere to run—to get out of ourselves, to *feel* free, if only for 2½ minutes a side."

The anecdotes and dialogue transcriptions have been well-chosen and provide unique perspectives of the musicians behind the "voices," revealing them as fully dimensional people as well as entertainers. The dominant figure throughout is James Brown who provided the original inspiration for Hirshey's book. Other notables discussed (and quoted) are Aretha Franklin, Diana Ross, Isaac Hayes, Ben E. King, Wilson Pickett, Solomon Burke, and Sam King, to name only a few.

Hirshey's style is casual, her prose a light patter of slang and colorful descriptions. While this informal "chatty" style may have been appropriate to the interviews, her indifference to context and syntax poses creates unnecessary difficulties for the reader. The continual flashbacks, for example, which serve as touchstones throughout the book, are disorganized, disjointed and create an illogical chronology.

The book is represented to be history of "Soul Music," yet one looks in vain for a clear definition of the performance style and musical characteristics Hirshey refers to or considers "Soul Music" to be. Also lacking are coherent descriptions of the other musical styles referred to throughout the book: Gospel Rhythm and Blues, the sources of Soul, or

Rock and Roll, which borrowed elements from all the other (contemporary) idioms. Except for her few remarks on the Motown sound (186-187), the only references to the music itself are Wilson Pickett's comments on Rhythm and Blues' musical roots (in the 12-bar phrase structure of Blues' tunes (46), and producer Artie Ertegun's description of Soul as a backlash against musical snobbery (76).

Hirshey also assumes, apparently, that her readers share a common understanding of all aspects of the musical styles she refers to and, further, all are familiar with the many song titles tossed about through the text—as a substitute for discussion of the music itself. The titles are legion and appear in endless sequence interlaced with names of singers, places, concerts, recording studios and producers. At best, the stream of names and titles creates a kind of retrospective review of intimate shared reminiscences. The end result, however, is a disjointed collection of superficial commentary, flippant remarks and slick prose, thinly disguising its author's self-complacency at being one of the "in" group, on first-name basis with the stars and privy to their personal lives.

Hirshey presumably had many opportunities to question her subjects about the music they and their contemporaries performed and to engage them in discussions of their performances and techniques. Unfortunately, she seems not to have taken advantage of them or chose not to include the answers or ensuing discussions in her text. Definition and description of Soul music is complicated by the simultaneous appearance of Gospel, Blues, Rhythm and Blues, Soul, Rock and Roll in popular music of the 1960s and 1970s. Nevertheless, clarity and coherency are not impossible, as Peter Guralnick (*Sweet Soul Music: Rhythm and Blues and the Southern Dream of Freedom*, 1986); Irwin Stambler (*Encyclopedia of Pop, Rock and Soul*, 1977); Robert Witmer and Paul Oliver (*The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 1980); and many others have demonstrated. One can only regret that this author did not fulfill the responsibility she assumed or the promise made in undertaking a "Story of Soul Music."

—Gloria Eive
El Cerrito, California

Jerrold Asao Hiura, ed. *The Hawk's Well: A Collection of Japanese American Art and Literature*. (San Jose: Asian American Art Projects, 1986) 200 pp., \$9.95 paper. Distributed by University of Hawaii Press.

Given the paucity of Japanese-American art and literature in print, one can only welcome this collection of poetry, short fiction, black-and-