

Davis ("All Blues") and others.

Coffey is far from retired.

Today — at age 78 — he plays every Tuesday night at Detroit's Northern Lights Lounge.

— Bill Kopp

## VARIOUS ARTISTS NEW WAVE: DARE TO BE DIFFERENT

MVDvisual (DVD)

★★★★

Directed by Ellen Goldfarb, this film tells the story of the "New Music" years (1982 to 1987) of Long Island, New York radio station WLIR-FM. The station was a 3,000-watt, fairly low-budget operation, but was quite influential in the growth in popularity of New Wave music in the 1980s. They would often play imports on the air months before their domestic release, much to the consternation of the U.S.-based record companies. A WLIR staffer would sometimes go to JFK airport in Queens, New York to meet the plane that was bringing the imports from the U.K. WLIR Program Director and DJ Denis McNamara is given a lot of credit in the film for the direction of the station, and interview clips with McNamara are featured frequently in the film. McNamara states in an interview segment that he insisted on WLIR being known as "New Music" and not "New Wave" because he believed that the latter term could soon become dated, as "groovy" had. And McNamara cites the July 1985 Live Aid concerts as a high point for the station, stating, "Artists that we championed were doing something good for the world."

Interesting interview segments with Dave Wakeling of The English Beat, Cy Curnin of The Fixx, Debbie Harry and Chris Stein of Blondie, Vince Clarke of Erasure, Jim Kerr of Simple Minds, Nick Rhodes of Duran Duran, Annabella Lwin of Bow Wow Wow, Thomas Dolby, Billy Idol and Joan Jett are the highlight of the film. Idol states in an interview segment that WLIR fueled



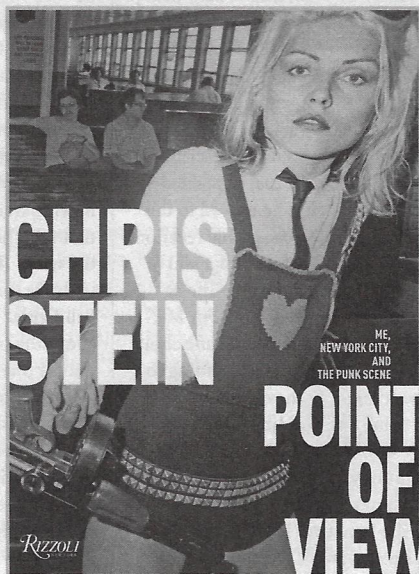
the change away from 1970s rock and set the pace for the music of the 1980s. Longtime U2 manager Paul McGuinness praises WLIR for playing U2 early on while the larger Manhattan-based rock stations WNEW-FM and WPLJ-FM wouldn't, and McGuinness criticizes the Manhattan stations as "conservative."

There are a few inaccuracies in the film. Many of the artists that the film claims received their first American airplay on WLIR actually had been played elsewhere first. And the claim that WLIR played many of the New Wave artists before MTV did is simply untrue. MTV debuted on August 1, 1981, a year and a day before

WLIR's switch to the "New Music" format, and MTV aired videos by bands such as The Human League very early on. In addition, it is odd that the film never mentions the Long Island-based new music station WDRE-FM at all. WDRE, which went on the air after WLIR lost its license in a battle with the FCC, had the same format as WLIR and employed many of WLIR's on-air staff.

But those things aside, it is a fun film to view. It's a nice step back in time to a big revolution in the music industry and in pop culture. And it's a good laugh that a copy of REO Speedwagon's "Roll With The Changes" was broken on the air to mark WLIR's shift from progressive rock to new music in August 1982.

— John Curley



## CHRIS STEIN POINT OF VIEW: ME, NEW YORK CITY, AND THE PUNK SCENE

Rizzoli (Hardcover)

★★★★

This, the second collection of photos by the Blondie guitarist following 2014's *Negative: Me, Blondie, and the Advent of Punk*, largely showcases a 1970s New York City that doesn't exist anymore. There is a strange beauty in the urban decay shown in many of the photos in the book, from a stripped-down Volkswagen Beetle on the street that is missing its tires and doors

to the seediness of Times Square of the era. And the photos in the collection range from everyday people on the streets of the city to big rock stars such as David Bowie, Iggy Pop, and Ray Davies to the writer William Burroughs to artist and scenester Andy Warhol to Stein's peers The Ramones. And, of course, Debbie Harry, Stein's Blondie bandmate and then-girlfriend, is featured prominently.

Stein's comments in the book are as interesting as the photos. He writes of his disdain for Facebook. But then, he writes that linking his Instagram account to Facebook led to two girls in a photo from the early 1970s that he had posted identifying themselves. Writing about a photo of Harry on the roof of their apartment building on 17th Street, Stein reveals that rooftop was where they both first heard a Blondie song on the radio. And Stein's story about how his friend, Warhol star Eric Emerson, drove the wrong way through the Holland Tunnel while clad in a glitter suit and angel wings is laugh-out-loud funny.

The music-related photos in the book are great, in particular shots from the 1975 Blondie show that marked the debut of both Clem Burke and Gary Valentine with the band. And shots of the original lineup of The Ramones, both in posed photos and outside CBGB, including one of Johnny Ramone loading his amp into the trunk of a car, are terrific.

The book concludes with some shots taken on September 11, 2001 of the World Trade Center burning, a dust-covered Con Edison truck and NYPD officers on the street. These images are in stark contrast to photos presented earlier in the book of an outing that Stein and Harry took to an art event at the World Trade Center in the mid-1970s that include a fantastic shot of Harry on the observation deck of the South Tower. Writing about the 9/11 photos, Stein states that the event was a turning point for the city in that it soon became a "vast corporate world center." And looking back on the city of his past, Stein writes that he never thought he would miss "the decay and the danger."

Anyone that remembers the New York City of the 1970s will find this book of great interest.

— John Curley