



Punk Avenue: Inside the New York City Underground, 1972-1982

Phil Marcade , Legs McNeil (Foreword) , Debbie Harry (Preface)

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Finalist, 2017 Indie Book Awards for Autobiography/Memoir, Foreword Reviews

Punk Avenue: The New York City Underground 1972-1982 is an intimate look at author Paris-born Phil Marcade's first ten years in the United States where drifted from Boston to the West Coast and back, before winding up in New York City and becoming immersed in the early punk rock scene. From backrooms of Max's and CBGB's to the Tropicana Hotel in Los Angeles and back, **Punk Avenue** is a tour de force of stories from someone at the heart of the era. With brilliant, often hilarious prose, Marcade relays first-hand tales about spending a Provincetown summer with photographer Nan Goldin and actor-writer Cookie Mueller, having the Ramones play their very first gig at his party, working with Blondie's Debbie Harry on French lyrics for her songs, enjoying Thanksgiving with Johnny Thunders' mother, and starting the beloved NYC punk-blues band The Senders. Along the way, he smokes a joint with Bob Marley, falls down a mountain, gets attacked by Nancy Spungen's junkie cat, become a junkie himself, adopts a dog who eats his pot, opens for The Clash at Bond's Casino, opens a store named Rebot on Seventh Avenue, throws up in some girl's mouth, talks about vacuum cleaners with Sid Vicious, lives thru the Blackout of 1977, gets glue in his eye, gets mugged at knife point, plays drums with Johnny Thunders' band Gang War, sets some guy's attache-case on fire, listens to pre-famous Madonna singing in the rehearsal studio next to his, gets mugged at gun point, O.D.s on heroin, gets saved by a gentle giant named Bill, lives at night... Never sleeps... A very funny book.

Punk Avenue: Inside the New York City Underground, 1972-1982 Details

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From Reader Review Punk Avenue: Inside the New York City Underground, 1972-1982 for online ebook

Nestor Rychtyckyj says

I am somewhat embarrassed to admit that I have not heard of Phil Mercade (or the Senders) when I found this book at my neighborhood B&N (Bookstores are great!). Phillippe Mercade gives us a unique view of the early NYC punk scene. He was there from the beginning and all of the familiar names like Johnny Thunders, Debbie Harry, the Ramones, Dead Boys and others are prominent in the book. However, Phil's secret weapon is his fantastic sense of humor which resonates throughout the book. He manages to describe all sorts of crazy situations in a way that make you feel that you were actually there and somehow wriggles out of many tight spots. The Senders never made it big like some of their contemporaries, but they had so much fun that it didn't really matter. (Check them out on YouTube - they were a great band).

All wasn't fun and games in the scene and Phil has to battle with his own demons to make it through those crazy times. This is a fun read and a great look back at this times where the most influential music in the world was coming from one run-down neighborhood in NYC.

Meagan says

Full disclosure: my last book was also published by Three Rooms Press, and I won an ARC of this book at one of their recent readings. Also, I have a beat-to-shit old copy of *Please Kill Me* on my bookshelf and my first YA novel was about a kid who was obsessed with Blondie. So, it probably goes without saying that I enjoyed the hell out of *Punk Avenue*. Phil Marcade relates tales of his grungy but charmed life on the Lower East Side with a cheerful bonhomie that feels less like some heavy historical account of The Dawn of Punk than it does a late night beer and a smoke down at the local dive, listening to this guy down at the end of the bar tell another one. My only complaint about this book is that I wish it was longer! Quite a few of these anecdotes made me want to lean in closer and ask "and THEN what happened?" Highly recommended for fans and fiends of the 1970s-80s NYC punk/rockabilly era. Also recommended - seek out some Senders albums to be your soundtrack while you read this book!

ZaibatsuRandom says

Wow. What a fantastic book for anyone even remotely interested in the history of the New York punk music scene in the 70s. Hilarious, heartbreaking, fun, frightening, joyous by turns. A poignant picture of the dilapidated state of New York in a bygone era studded with the glorious glam sunshine of the music, art, and creativity of the punk era.

A must read!

Thomas Pardo says

Really great view from one of the wallflowers of Punk Rock, Philip Marcade seems to be everywhere at the right time and now everyone who was an influence on NY Punk Rock. The book was hilarious the whole

way through and it really put you at the heart of it all whether it was CBGB's or the heroin houses of 1970s NYC.

Køpper J. says

Very enjoyable read. Marcade's memories are incredible. The stories exciting, amusing, and sometimes very sad. I really enjoyed this book.

Lynx says

Philippe Marcade takes us on a wild ride from his childhood in France to the punk rock streets of New York City. Marcade knew all the major players, The Dolls, The Ramones, Debbie Harry, Cookie Mueller, Sid and Nancy, etc and recounts memorable anecdotes about all of them. He also shares his own musical journey with his band The Senders, details the scenes at both CBGB's and Max's Kansas City and walks us through life in the colourful, often terrifying streets of the Lower East Side.

I zipped through this book. It's a fun, fast, easy read that is so awesome you'll want to stretch it out as long as you can but will find it impossible to put down. Marcade writes as if the reader is a great friend and he is sharing all the crazy fun details of his life over a beer and a joint. Absolute must read for all Punk Rock fans and those looking to be entertained while getting a personal look at the birth of punk rock.

*Thanks to Three Rooms Press and Edelweiss for this review copy.

Amy says

Well, I like Marcade (or at least his persona), who I didn't know of before and now that seems odd considering all he was involved in. He seems to be the sort that goes head first at life without any real agenda. As a result, he was able to recount the goriest of stories with a light touch and very little reflection, so a person like myself, who reacts strongly to horrible things, could read it without any trauma. FWIW this was the least nightmare inducing junkie stories I've ever encountered.

Sarah says

A book about a man who didn't contribute anything to Punk Rock, writing about all of his famous punk friends. Did not give any new insight or unheard stories that can't be heard from actual musicians in dozens of other books about the history of punk. If you know your underground history I wouldn't waste your time.

Janellyn51 says

I loved Phil's book, hahaha! I have known him since the summer of 75, in Provincetown. Philippe has a smile that could melt butter. Hands down, the best looking guy in town. There are two things that I think of

when I think of Philippe....the first would be sitting on the edge of his bed when he had a room upstairs at the A House. I can't remember how I got there, or why he invited me up. He was sitting across from me, with that smile that can only be described as disarming....because that's what it did to me....he was so incredibly good looking, and I think he knew he had me squirming....I had to get up and leave! The only other person I can think of doing that to me was Joe Strummer, although with Joe, it wasn't him smiling, he was staring so intently at me, I thought I saw smoke rising from my shirt, like maybe he was burning holes through me, and I had to get out of there! Like Philippe, me and Joe also became friends for years! My other favorite Philippe story....I met a New York guy while he was playing at the Rat in the battle of the bands. We started dating, and right out the gate he would talk about his buddy Philippe. The only guy in NYC that was whiter than Pete himself was his buddy Philippe, he would just go on and on about his buddy Philippe (I might add, he was right, they were deathly pale). Pete WAS crazy about me. I was a model of sorts, and he did drip cool, even though I was beginning to see he was a fucking lunatic. He thought I was pretty, but he as much as said, pretty girls were a dime a dozen, and he was from NY, and I was, for all intents and purposes, a twinkie from Boston. How he deigned to go out with me, much less marry me.....our twins will be 35 next month. So, Pete says one night, oh, the Senders are playing at the RAT, you'll finally get to meet my buddy Philippe, and I was actually almost nervous, I'd heard so much about the guy.....So we come up out of the T in Kenmore Square, and there's these 4 guys walking towards us on Comm Ave. They looked like they'd left the rest of the Magnificent 7 on the film set, and thought let's go to the RAT! They were getting closer and Pete says, oh here he is my buddy....and at that moment, Philippe yells oh baby, I haven't seen you in years, and he's hugging me, and we're twirling around on the sidewalk, such a lovely reunion! Pete's there humita humita....in the words of Phil, hahaha! It was priceless.

Pete and I did get married, Wild Bill was at our wedding party I remember.....Billy came to stay with us up here after his nervous breakdown for a bit. I fucking love Billy, and he sincerely is one of the greatest guitar players you'll ever hear. Even Billy would tell you he was the best guitar player in NY, by default, because the rest of them are dead! The Senders were indeed the best bar band goin. Philippe's stage presence, would just blow you away. Steve Shevlin, one of the nicest guys in the world, but don't fuck with him. I felt so bad hearing about him going deaf, but I did think it was cool that he wound up doing drug counselling at the Randolph School For the Deaf, where my Auntie Louise used to volunteer or something, I don't really know why, but she used to take me there when I was a kid, there is a photo I have of me with the deaf kids there. I was at Tony Machine's wedding on the roof of the Gramercy Park Hotel when the Clash were staying there. It was a wild wedding, although, I really wish I'd been a fly on the wall for Tony's bachelor party, at least the part where he walked to Tramps tied to a chair naked, or some such foolishness....I've heard it said that if you remembered being at Tony's bachelor party, then you weren't there! I got my info from Pete who was there. I never had a problem with Mick, but don't doubt he could be a wicked prima donna!

I worked at Trash, so would see the Senders on the stoop next door all the time. I only lived in NY for a year, we left town and moved back to Boston after I got pregnant, and Pete thought the band he was in in Boston would make it, not the Irish band he was in in NY, which became Black 47. While I was in NY, I was in the weird position of working in the coolest shop on St. Marks, getting asked out by everyone from Bruce Springsteen, to Rat Scabies, but I was married, and more often than not, Pete was in Boston with that band, and I was by myself in NYC, so I didn't do much going out. On the one hand I missed a lot, on the other hand, I'm not dead. I honestly think that me being married, kept me out of the fray, otherwise, I would have been front and center. I only ever snorted heroin and threw up after, so I wasn't worth wasting drugs on, which also kept me up and running. I knew a lot of the people Phil talks about in his book. I fucking loved Cookie and it broke my heart to hear about her dying. Nan and David were friends in PTown. Phil was right, she was into girls when she lived in PTown, often I'd turn around and she'd be right behind my shoulder! She had a 50s circle skirt a big wool athletic jacket with leather sleeves, and these really high heels all strappy with her baby toe sticking out the side! When I got to NY she was bartending at Tin Pan Alley, and roomates with Trish one of the Irish girls that hung out with the Irish guys Pete played with. I've long been fascinated with her rise to fame, well deserved to be sure. And David, so gentle and sweet he died a few years ago, fabulous photographer. My boyfriend of the last 26 years, Simon Ritt, used to play with Johnny Thunders, John dying was a hard pill to swallow. I didn't really know Johnny, I only saw him play once, I don't remember much about it except Vinnie Matland from the BMT's was playing drums that night, Johnny

knocked some girl in the mouth with the Mike stand, I think she thought he would kiss it better! Hahaha, Johnny could be so nasty, but funny nasty. We often wonder what he would be like in this politically correct world we live in now, frankly, I hope he would never have changed, but he's been dead since, what, 1991 now. Actually one of the funniest things that happened when I worked at Trash, Johnny came in the back to where we sold shoes, creepers, and Cuban heeled beatle boots and stuff, he wanted a new pair of converse high tops....so we got em for him, he put them on and headed up front, undoubtedly right out the front door in his new kicks....me Ron, and I think it was Billy Pigeon, who also had worked at Rebop, stood in a circle around these rancid holy high tops that Johnny had left behind, just staring at them, nobody wanted to pick them up! We debated how much we could get for them on the street for a bit, and finally, one of the guys went and got a shovel!

Anyway, this took me all of a day to read, you really don't want it to end. I think whether you have any familiarity with the NY scene, or not, you can't help but enjoy Phil's writing, hahaha! It's easy, he doesn't wax all philosophical, he's not trying to sound erudite, he's just himself, for my money, completely honest. I haven't seen him, god, must be 20 years now. The Senders played at Bunrattys. Billy stayed with my friend Beverly, who he'd met at my wedding, Richie, Joe Rizzo, and Philippe stayed at my house. Simon was playing maybe at Geno's in Portland so he wasn't around that night, and there was Phil in my living room, with that smile, I'm telling you, it's killer....the kids were at Pete's, and the guys, all of them, slept in the kids room! The next day we had fun visiting Mort, who had been a roadie for Johnny when Simon and Joe played with him, I guess he and Richie, Walter's brother were friends, it was so much fun. Richie called me one day, we had a great conversation, he was telling me I wouldn't believe how wild he looked now, and about the band he was in, and the next thing I know, he was found dead.

I think the bottom line is, nothing is free. We had a ball in the 70's free love, do what you want, do it the way you want to do it, but it catches up with you in the end. I spent years being worried about having lived in Ptown and been a bit of a sailor....about my husband getting strung out on heroin and leaving us flat, even though he didn't shoot heroin, I was scared shitless about whether I'd already gotten AIDS, but I'm 65 now, I raised two kids on 6 bucks an hour, and they're good kids too!

I'd give anything to be going to Phil's event in NY on May 2nd, but I just can't pull it off. If you can go, go, if not buy Punk Avenue, it's a fun fast fact filled read, you want to know what it was like living in NYC back then and the music scene, this is the definitive book right here, hahaha!

Mark Rubenstein says

Even without rose-tinted shades, it ain't much of a stretch to slot 1970s downtown NYC alongside Weimar Berlin of the 1920s or the Parisian Left Bank of the 1930s. The socio-political and economic climates of each combined to fertilize an environment that was sympathetic towards creative misfits of every variety; where rules were discarded in the worlds of art, film, literature and music, and bold new ideas were bashed into shape -- their true merits and vitality only validated by the masses decades after the fact.

Marcadé stumbled stateside in the early 1970s, quickly winding his way to NYC, where his world would collide not only with the nascent art [Nan Goldin] and film [Waters' Dreamlanders] worlds, but also with the earliest rumblings of countless bands and musicians whom the laziest critics would lump together under the label of punk. Armed with a deep and sincere passion for righteous forefathers like Bo Diddley and Wynonie Harris, Marcadé left his own indelible mark on the music scene through forming The Senders -- a superb band not miles away from Mink DeVille and Dr Feelgood, but without being a cheap secondhand copy of either.

His world was gritty and greasy and seldom dull, and he went beyond participation and observance by embracing it throughout the ups and the downs. And while Marcadé was absolutely an avid and eager collector of experiences, Punk Avenue would be a very different book without his natural gifts as a first-class raconteur of the highest order.

It's a fitting legacy: the book is Flip, and Flip is the book -- class, grace, style, humor, wit and, as anyone who knows him will add, charm.

Irene Mallory says

Those were the times

This book is a perfect read for a 70s aficionado. A light and quick read, but very enlightening. Recreates the atmosphere far better than any movie. And it made me laugh so hard at times.

Kevin Scott says

A great in sight into the punk/ new wave era of the 70's in New York. It was a hard way of living being in a band on the circuit and living in amongst it all, as it all was unfolding and happening at the time, with moments of fun & chaos at every corner. The bands, the venues, the attitude, the creativity, the feelings are all here plus all the people of the time wandering in and out of everyday life.

Phil Marcade takes you on journey that was his life and he writes it in a way where you get to feel and see it like you was actually there yourself. A great read about a great time, experience and a way of living.

patty says

A refreshing read about this time and place by a new voice (to me).

Stevie D says

Totally enjoyed it! Was a quick, fun and easy read. I'm a fellow musician and grew up in the same times as the author. Even had a junk habit. From the first page to the end, the humor shone! Thanks for sharing your story with us!

Steve

Doug Stanton says

A fun read that is mostly anecdotes of experiences from the lead singer of the Senders, a bluesy punk band from the late '70s and early '80s. While it's not high literature, it is an enjoyable look at the NYC punk scene during its heyday. I recommend this for anyone interested in a light read.

