

# Rock 'n' Roll Scribe

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author



PHOTO BY CHARLES HODGES

On a Wednesday night book signing at Thornton Park bookstore Urban Think, Katie Ball, author of the self-published *Any Cool Music? The Orlando Edition*, introduces singer Sunny. Reading from her book, Ball describes the chanteuse as possessing “a surprising style ... Billie Holiday meets dance hall diva.”

Exceptional artists like this inspired Ball to write and photograph this guide to the Orlando music scene. The 184-page paperback features profiles of 36 Orlando bands and musicians, accompanying CD, venue reviews and smart, black-and-white in-concert photographs.

“The goal of *Any Cool Music?* is to open the eyes of non-residents,” says Ball. “I’ve heard time and again the misconception that boy bands and theme parks are the

only entertainment worth recognizing in this city. That’s crap.”

A native of Fort Myers, Ball sang and acted in community and school theater in her teens, then sang with local bands in the early '90s before moving to Orlando in 1993 for a job. She thought she would soon move again, to a city with a vibrant music scene. Then she discovered she was already there.

In the ensuing decade, gigs included singing in bluegrass band Riverbottom, acting in the independent film *The Essence of Irwin*, and working as publicist for many bands. When her full-time day job with an international airline was downsized in 2002, Ball began studying photography at Crealdé School of Art.

“I wanted to pursue photography as

an art form. While I consider myself a writer, first and foremost, photography and music are incredibly important to me. I broadened my vision to encompass a full-length book.”

Over two years, Ball attended countless shows, interviewed artists and worked to secure 15 bands for the book’s CD, a mix of ska, bluegrass, jazz, country and rock ‘n’ roll. The end result is a comprehensive after-dark tour of Orlando’s coolest nightspots and the bands that play there.

Ball sees *Any Cool Music?*, which is available at local book and record stores, evolving into a series that also covers other cities.

“There is so much wonderful music in Orlando that even covering thirty-six acts, I only scratched the surface.”

— John Collins