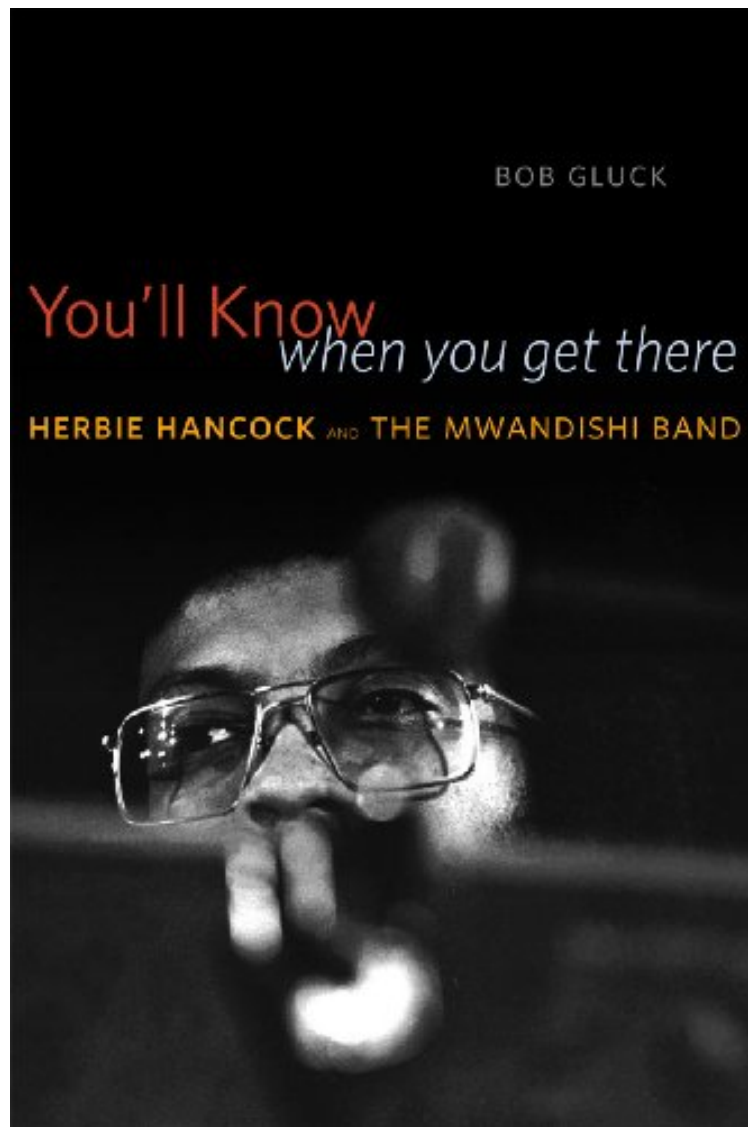


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You'll Know When You Get There: Herbie Hancock and the Mwandishi Band

Bob Gluck

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Bob Gluck : You'll Know When You Get There: Herbie Hancock and the Mwandishi Band before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised You'll Know When You Get There: Herbie Hancock and the Mwandishi Band:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Finally. By Superintendent X From the moment I heard the Herbie Hancock Mwandishi Band albums Mwandishi and Crossings I was amazed with these recordings and equally amazed with the lack of information about them. This book is a great read that discusses the development of Herbie through

this period, breaks down the music, the live touring of the sextet, and includes a detailed discography of about 100 recordings that are relevant to the music of the Mwandishi band. 0 of 1 people found the following review helpful. I recommend it highly

By Danny L. Anderson Very little has been written about one of the most creative phases of Herbie Hancock's career - the Mwandishi band. This book is very thorough and is a must read from start to finish. I recommend it highly!

6 of 6 people found the following review helpful. jazzman

By James K. Stewart If you're a fan of the great jazz pianist/composer Herbie Hancock and especially, the fabulous cosmic/jazz group the Mwandishi Band that he led back in the early 70's, then this marvelous book by jazz historian, pianist, and music professor Bob Gluck is for you. I have waited for years for an in-depth, comprehensive study of Herbie's Mwandishi band (of which I'm a rabid fan), and his book PERFECTLY does this. Gluck does a masterful job in covering the early roots of the band, how it evolved over time, the musicians involved, their philosophy and goals, the daring chances they took with the music, how they created it, and so much more. The Mwandishi band made three studio albums, "Mwandishi" (1971), "Crossings" (1972), and their final swan song, "Sextant" (1973), all of them highly electronic, revolutionary, cosmic, improvisational excursions into uncharted territory. "Mwandishi" was Herbie's Swahili name for the "Composer". The other members of the band, which was a sextet, adapted Swahili names, as well. This was done "for the unifying effect in that when everyone adopted those names it had the effect on each individual joining. They became a unit. It was like we became a family, you know?" Trombonist Julian Priester became Pepo Mtoto which meant "Spirit Child", bassist Buster Williams was "Mchezaji" meaning the "Player of the Art". Drummer Billy Hart was "Jabali" which meant "Energy", trumpeter Dr. Eddie Henderson became "Mgan-ga", the "Doctor of Good Health", and reedman Bennie Maupin was "Mwile At Akya", the "Body of Good Health", as he was the vegetarian in the group. In mid 1972, synthesizer wizard Dr. Patrick Gleeson joined the sextet adding even more sound and texture to the group's studio music and touring performances. Author Gluck goes into well-researched, great detail in his examination of how the band formed their identity and the personalities involved from production to creation. Hancock described the inevitable end of such a revolutionary, progressive band saying, "At a certain point, my feeling was we had gone as far as we could. I just didn't feel there was any more development that I was capable of producing." He also wanted more smoothness and dependability than an experimental band provided: "The problem with intuition is that as soon as the vibrations aren't happening, nothing works any more." Money was also a contributing factor: "The sextet disbanded because I ran out of money. I could get gigs, but they wouldn't pay enough for the expenses. I always lost money." Producer David Rubinson related just before the recording of "Sextant", "What paid their way was every dime Herbie Hancock had, every single sweat-dollar Pillsbury cake mix commercials and European sales of 'Watermelon Man,' and what happened was that Herbie, and those from whom he borrowed, ran out of money." Even a business collective with the band was suggested, but it wasn't a model upon which everyone could agree. Trumpeter Henderson stated, "As far as I'm concerned, it was Herbie's band, even though we wanted to call it our band." As such, the inevitable happened. Hancock was also wanting to take the synthesizer and electronics in a new direction; the mega-selling 1973 album "Head Hunters" was the result, with Herbie keeping reedman Bennie Maupin from the Mwandishi sextet. There was actually a FOURTH studio recording released by the Mwandishi band which was a very limited distribution 1973 vinyl album on the UAR label (7370) scored for the soundtrack to a 1973 black militancy film, "The Spook Who Sat By The Door", based on Sam Greenlee's 1969 novel, set in Chicago, and directed by Ivan Dixon. The film was pulled from theaters soon after its release, as it was deemed too politically controversial, but the rare soundtrack can still be found with some looking. It contains thirteen tracks by the band and has a much more funky vibe to it than the other Mwandishi recordings. Gluck compared it to Herbie's 1974 album "Thrust" by his Headhunter's band. I have a mint condition copy I guard with my life. If you love the brilliant, mind-bending Mwandishi records, then "You'll Know When You Get There" is required and rewarding reading. One of the best books on jazz I've ever read. A triumph!

As the 1960s ended, Herbie Hancock embarked on a grand creative experiment. Having just been dismissed from the celebrated Miles Davis Quintet, he set out on the road, playing with his first touring group as a leader until he eventually formed what would become a revolutionary band. Taking the Swahili name Mwandishi, the group would go on to play some of the most innovative music of the 1970s, fusing an assortment of musical genres, American and African cultures, and acoustic and electronic sounds into groundbreaking experiments that helped shape the American popular music that followed. In "You'll Know When You Get There", Bob Gluck offers the first comprehensive study of this influential group, mapping the musical, technological, political, and cultural changes that they not only lived in but also effected.

In the forty years that have passed since I saw the Mwandishi band in Kansas City as a teenager, I have heard and even been able to participate in a lot of great music. But nothing I have experienced since has had more of an effect on my life than what those guys brought to the bandstand on those KC nights. To me, that band was the epitome of everything that jazz has ever promised to be. Collectively and individually, they brought together a sound that was so deeply in and of that moment in time that it became thus transcendent and timeless. They inspired me and a generation to aspire to their level of creativity and commitment. Herbie has always been one of my major heroes and

still is. He has been great every step of the way from the beginning, but there was something really special with this band and the way it intersected with the culture that was unique and important. This book takes an in depth look at every detail of what made that amazing collection of musicians what it was. With his exhaustive research and detailed interviews, Bob Gluck brings the nature and workings of this amazing and influential ensemble to life.™