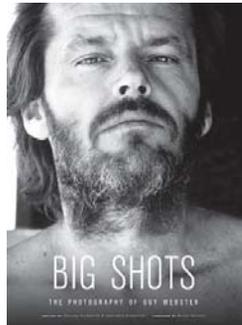


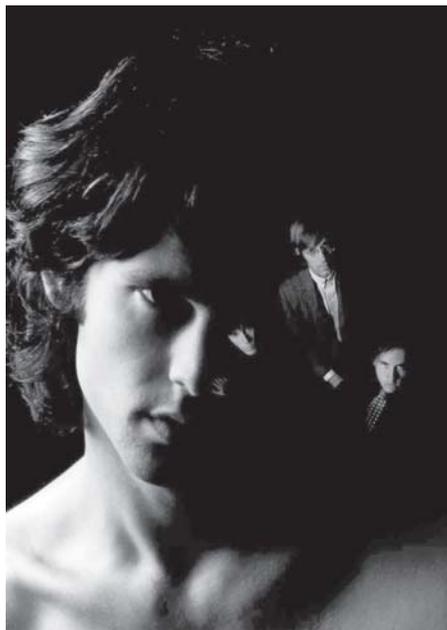
BIG SHOTS: ROCK LEGENDS AND HOLLYWOOD ICONS: The Photography of Guy Webster, by Harvey & Kenneth Kubernik (Insight Editions, San Rafael, California; 2014; 272 pages)

Aptly titled, *Big Shots* is a hefty coffee table hard-cover stuffed with large, eye-pleasing images of some of the biggest names in music and film in the 1960s. Guy Webster is one of the giants of rock & roll photography. His work graced some of the most iconic album covers of the era: Simon & Garfunkel's *Sounds of Silence*, the Byrds' *Turn! Turn! Turn!* and *The Notorious Byrd Brothers*, the Mamas & the Papas' *If You Can Believe Your Eyes and Ears*, the first Doors album, the back cover of Love's *Da Capo*, the US edition of the Rolling Stones' *Big Hits (High Tide & Green Grass)*, Paul Revere & the Raiders' *Midnight Ride*,



Captain Beefheart's *Safe As Milk* and *Strictly Personal*, Nico's *The Marble Index*, and Van Dyke Parks' *Song Cycle*—to name just a few. Each one of these album covers is a masterpiece of color, composition, and character. "My photographs are about creating work of art," explains Webster. "I'm always striving for balance, anything that draws the viewer in." Part of that artistry is its feeling of authenticity. The photographer interacted with his subjects one on one, without the corrupting filter of PR people, handlers and handlers. "I shot alone," says Webster. "I didn't want any help, never had an assistant. No makeup or hair people. I would never invite the record label to come on a shoot. I would go out with these guys and have all this personal contact without any distractions."

Webster shot his subjects in whatever clothes they happened to be wearing. In the case of the Mamas & the Papas' first shoot, "We were in the only clothes that we had," reveals Michelle Phillips, one of sev-



The Doors, 1967. (Photo: Guy Webster)

eral of Guy's subjects interviewed for the book. Webster's photographs resonate because they ring true. They are, in the words of the authors, "uncluttered, unsentimental, unburdened by anything that contravened the artist/subject's quest for authenticity."

On the rare occasion he felt any styling was needed, the photographer did it himself. Like the time the Doors showed up for their first session at his studio. "Jim was wearing a bad hippie shirt he'd probably gotten on the boardwalk in Venice," relates Guy. The shirt had to go, so Morrison was persuaded to be photographed bare-chested. The result was one of the most recognizable and imitated album covers of all-time—the Doors' debut. No Photoshop in those days, the art of photography was hand-crafted and time-consuming: "I took individual shots and put them together mechanically when I was doing my dye transfer," relates Guy, "the headshot of Morrison and the other three in the window area of his eye." The difficult dye transfer process took a hundred hours to complete—longer than it took the band to record the album itself.

Big Shots is full of fascinating revelations like this. Webster relates anecdotes about shooting everyone from Bobby Darin to Captain Beefheart ("We related to each other and he trusted me"); Spirit to Sergio Mendes; Liza Minnelli to Nico ("I noticed her amphetamine lips, and I knew I had to get that into the picture"; Hendrix, the Who, and Janis Joplin at Monterey; and an array of actors and celebrities. "The [movie] studios realized they needed a hip photographer because their stuff was pretty square," explains Webster. "So I started shooting Hollywood in the



Nico, photographed by Guy Webster in 1968: "I noticed her amphetamine lips, and I knew I had to get that into the picture." (Photo: Guy Webster)

same way I shot rock 'n' roll." Jack Nicholson, Dennis Hopper, Jeff Bridges, Joan Collins, Jane Fonda, William Shatner, Leonard Nimoy, and Sean Connery are among the Hollywood actors included in this second-half section, which also includes some of Webster's work from the '70s and '80s.

The accompanying text by Harvey and Kenneth Kubernik is eloquent and informed, and the weighty, large-format book is beautifully presented throughout. Brian Wilson wrote the foreword. (MS)

BATHED IN LIGHTNING: John McLaughlin, the 60s and the Emerald Beyond by Colin Harper (Jawbone Press, UK; 2014; 512 pages)

The title of Colin Harper's penetrating biography of jazz guitarist John McLaughlin lays out the author's brief, and he delivers what's expected: the Yorkshireman's move to America in 1969 on the advice of drummer Tony Williams; working with Miles Davis on foundational fusion albums like *Bitches Brew*, *In A Silent Way*, and the rocking *Jack Johnson*; spiritual tutelage under self-promoting guru Sri Chinmoy; critical and commercial success with the original Mahavishnu Orchestra; and the bruising ego battles with Jan Hammer and Jerry Goodman that would eventually sink the band. But that takes up barely the last third of this densely packed narrative, which focuses mostly on John's formative years in the English music scene.



Who would have known that the man who gave Hendrix a run for his money and scored hit albums with jazz-rock landmarks like *The Inner Mounting Flame* (1971) and *Birds of Fire* (1973) was once a jobbing sideman for any number of major and minor talents in the early Sixties? Harper describes some of John's unexpected collaborations: soul with the Night-Timers and Gino Washington, trad jazz with Mick Eve, a package tour with Dickie Pride (and Rolf Harris!), a substantial musical partnership with the talented but troubled singer Duffy Power, and even a stint in Georgie Fame's Blue Flames—though not with Alexis Korner, as is mistakenly believed. The consummate hired hand, McLaughlin also worked alongside studio guitar legends Joe Moretti and Big Jim Sullivan, backing everyone from Petula Clark to a young David Bowie (for whom John played his last-ever session gig), and the variety of tracks on which he appears would make a wonderful compilation if one could only negotiate the licensing.

We learn that John experienced the rock band cliché of driving the length of England in a battered van, in this case with the Graham Bond Quartet (later Organization) and thus bandmates Ginger Baker and Jack Bruce (RIP). Baker, Pete Brown, Brian Auger, Narada Michael Walden, and even several members of Aerosmith offer recollections and anecdotes about the self-effacing guitarist at work and in his private life. McLaughlin was known for his courtesy and professionalism but also for his absolutist leadership style. He wasn't averse to a joint or a glass of red wine, either. More surprising is his series of marriages (five and counting), a seemingly Hemingway-esque pattern of "Throw her away and get a new one," right down to this classic abandonment scenario: to leave his second wife, he went out