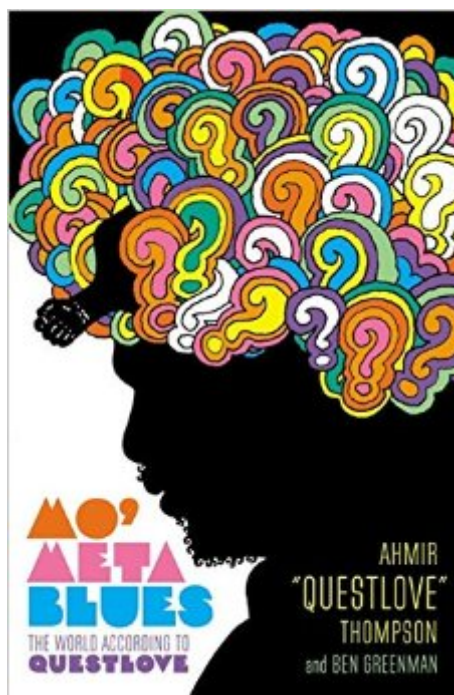


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# Mo' Meta Blues: The World According To Questlove



## Synopsis

"You have to bear in mind that [Questlove] is one of the smartest motherf\*\*\*\*\*s on the planet. His musical knowledge, for all practical purposes, is limitless." --Robert Christgau

**MO' META BLUES**

The World According to Questlove

Mo' Meta Blues is a punch-drunk memoir in which Everyone's Favorite Questlove tells his own story while tackling some of the lates, the greats, the fakes, the philosophers, the heavyweights, and the true originals of the music world. He digs deep into the album cuts of his life and unearths some pivotal moments in black art, hip hop, and pop culture.

Ahmir "Questlove" Thompson is many things: virtuoso drummer, producer, arranger, Late Night with Jimmy Fallon bandleader, DJ, composer, and tireless Tweeter. He is one of our most ubiquitous cultural tastemakers, and in this, his first book, he reveals his own formative experiences--from growing up in 1970s West Philly as the son of a 1950s doo-wop singer, to finding his own way through the music world and ultimately co-founding and rising up with the Roots, a.k.a., the last hip hop band on Earth. Mo' Meta Blues also has some (many) random (or not) musings about the state of hip hop, the state of music criticism, the state of statements, as well as a plethora of run-ins with celebrities, idols, and fellow artists, from Stevie Wonder to KISS to D'Angelo to Jay-Z to Dave Chappelle to...you ever seen Prince roller-skate?!? But Mo' Meta Blues isn't just a memoir. It's a dialogue about the nature of memory and the idea of a post-modern black man saddled with some post-modern blues. It's a book that questions what a book like Mo' Meta Blues really is. It's the side wind of a one-of-a-kind mind. It's a rare gift that gives as well as takes. It's a record that keeps going around and around.

## Book Information

Paperback: 288 pages

Publisher: Grand Central Publishing; Reprint edition (May 12, 2015)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1455501379

ISBN-13: 978-1455501373

Product Dimensions: 5.2 x 0.9 x 8 inches

Shipping Weight: 9.1 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.6 out of 5 stars Â Â See all reviews Â (183 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #60,490 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #22 in Â Books > Arts & Photography > Music > Biographies > Rap & Hip-Hop #98 in Â Books > Arts & Photography > Music > History & Criticism #176 in Â Books > Biographies & Memoirs > Ethnic & National > African-American &

## Customer Reviews

The title of this review is taken from a line in this memoir, and is delivered by Questlove's manager Rich, who appears throughout the book as somewhat of a music "Sensei" to the prolific drummer. Applying this proverbial phrase to Hip-Hop really struck a chord with me. It fits perfectly: Hip-Hop is the culmination of so many musical genres before it, it spearheads the future of popular music, samples (borrows) from great songs and styles, and lyrically continues the tradition of the 'blues' with expression of struggle and doubt. I was indecisive on rating this book three or four stars, but ultimately "rounded up" because I feel it's more difficult to write about a modern musician than one from decades ago, say, a Carole King (whose auto-biography is a "must-read" for any music fan: *A Natural Woman: A Memoir*). Also, rock star Marilyn Manson once said in an interview, "I try not to explain my music, I let my music explain me". I think that wisdom applies here as well -- while the writing is interesting, I believe Mr. Thompson's music is the true 'World According to Questlove'. What I like about this memoir is he covers a lot of ground by moving quickly. It's evident that if permitted, he could write an Epic about music that has inspired him over the years. Instead, it seems that he is forced to select one album per year of his life in a recurring segment called "Quest Loves Records". Additionally, he discusses in great depth both the artistry and political sides of the music industry (e.g.

"Music has the power to stop time but music also keeps time." *Mo' Meta Blues* was a delightful musical journey. Sure Thompson shared the details of his life but it was more like the soundtrack of his life. I appreciated the fact that this book was not structured like a chronological biography. There were memos from the publisher, footnotes from The Roots comanager, and extended playlists spread throughout the text. "When you live your life through records, the records are a record of your life." There was not a time when music was not apart of Thompson's life. His parents had a band and Thompson likened them to Johnny Cash and June Carter. Thompson was tapping out patterns at eight months old which blossomed into a drumming career. He obsessed over album reviews and covers. The small details and obscure facts that he shared throughout the book about certain pieces of music, groups, and individuals kept the book interesting. It is no secret that Thompson is a Prince fan and his affinity for the artist is as prominent in the book as is his presence in The Roots band. The Roots individually and as a band come together and take shape in the text but those experiences do not overshadow or dominate. It's quite obvious that Ahmir and Tariq "Black

Thought" are total opposites but make for a great balance within the band. Only a few weeks prior to reading this book I found out that Scott Storch was an original member of The Roots. Thompson mentioned Storch but considering his rise and fall in hip-hop I expected and wanted more details in regards to their relationship. This would not be a legit hip-hop memoir unless the Source Music Awards of 1995 were mentioned. Thompson referred to the show as hip-hop's funeral.

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