



# Too Hot to Handle: An Illustrated Encyclopedia of American Recording Studios of the 20th Century

*Randy McNutt*

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## **Too Hot to Handle: An Illustrated Encyclopedia of American Recording Studios of the 20th Century**

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Throughout the 20th century, American recording studios turned out some of the world's greatest hits. Now Randy McNutt, an award-winning journalist and record producer, lists more than 500 of them while recalling their unusual stories. "Too Hot" is the first book to list many of America's smaller but successful regional studios as well as the larger national ones. As Marc Bristol, editor-publisher of Blue Suede News, says of the book: "The stories of the places where the records were made are just as interesting as those of the bands and artists." For the author, heaven is finding another old two-track studio and a veteran recording engineer who's willing to talk about its heyday. McNutt interviews dozens of recording engineers, studio owners, label executives, musicians, singers, songwriters, music publishers, and other talented people who personally provided much of the information about their historic studios. In this indispensable reference work aimed at music fans, historians, and recording enthusiasts, McNutt interviews studio owners from Maine to California to learn about their rooms, hits, innovative recording techniques, and, of course, their challenges. (The story about crickets living in the old echo chamber of Cinderella Sound is worth the price of the book.) McNutt also details the types of recording equipment, studio addresses, kinds of echo chambers, studio quirks, and whatever other important information he can find. A strength of the book is its large listing of studios from the 1950s to the 1970s, including the hit factories ABC Recording (later Lion Share) in Los Angeles, American Recording in Memphis, Amigo in L.A., Electric Lady in New York, Motown in Detroit, Sun in Memphis, and other seminal recording sites. But readers particularly enjoy reading about the many smaller, unsung studios, including the Music Factory in Miami, Jewel and King in Cincinnati, Accurate Sound in San Angelo, Tx., Royal in Memphis, Sambo Sound in Louisville, Ruby in Hamilton, Ohio, Norman Petty Studios in Clovis, N.M., Original Sound in L.A., Norfolk Sound, Norala Sound in Sheffield, Ala., Kin-Tel in Atlanta, Cliff Herring Sound in Fort Worth, Counterpart in Cincinnati, Cinderella in Madison, Tn., Jim Beck Studio in Dallas, Beautiful Sounds in Memphis, J.D. Miller Recording in Crowley, La., Sea-Saint in New Orleans, Suma in Painesville, Ohio, Link Wray's Shack Three-Track in Maryland, Fred Foster Sound in Nashville, Associated Recording in New York, Studio By The Pond in Hendersonville, Tenn., and others in out-of-the-way places that have cut their grooves into recording history. McNutt talks to more than 150 people involved with historic studios, including: recording engineer Lee Hazen ("Then You Can Tell Me Goodbye,") singers such as Billy Joe Royal, Roy Head, Malcomb Yelvington, Ray Scott, and Dickey Lee; King Records engineer Chuck Seitz, legendary New Orleans engineer Cosimo Matassa, Cleveland DJ Bill Randall, Ace Record chief John Vincent, engineer-musician Jimmy Johnson of Muscle Shoals; the engineers Bill Halverson (L.A.), Ken Hamann (Cleveland Recording), Robin "Hood" Brians (Tyler, Tx.), mastering engineer Larry Boden, Ron Newdoll (engineer of "Last Kiss" at Accurate Sound), and Phil Kaye (ABC). This thorough and detailed book consists of 224 pages, 8.5-x-11 inches, softbound, with a tough cover and about 20 pages of photos, ads, and illustrations relating to the original studios. Made in the United States by Thomson-Shore, one of America's finest book printers, "Too Hot to Handle" is built to last and will remain a collector's item for anyone who cares about America's recording history.

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