



DIGI-ZINES

Until recently, the idea of putting out a fanzine on floppy disc was just a figment of a hacker's imagination; now it looks like digital 'zines may be the next wave in DIY publishing. Jaime Levy, 26-year-old editor of *Cyber Rag* and *Electronic Hollywood*, can lay claim to being the first to publish an electronic 'zine, having conceived *Cyber Rag I* as part of her 1990 master's thesis in Interactive Telecommunications. Since, she's produced two subsequent issues of the *Rag* and two of *E.H.* on a Mac in either HyperCard or MacroMind Director (the lat-



est issues work well only on Macs with at least three megs of RAM). Both titles feature animation, industrial-music sound effects, editorials that literally jump out at you, trade show reviews and articles on topics ranging from L.A. raves to the L.A.

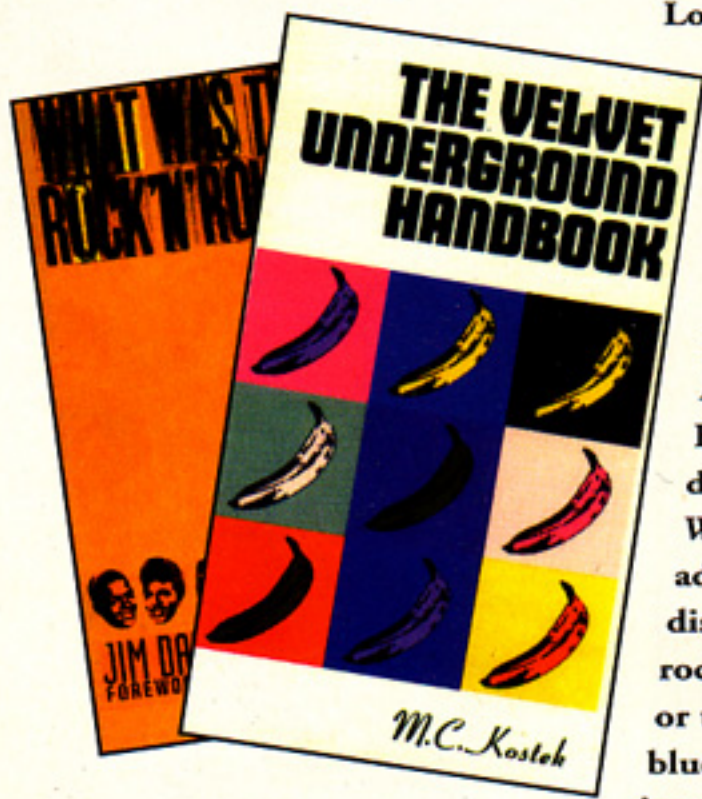
riot. Rather crude at first, each issue has gotten bigger and better, with color, improved sound and slicker graphics. "I guess I'm getting more clever — and getting more out of a kilobyte," says Levy. "My whole goal is that, 50 years from now, instead of having 100 books fill up a shelf on your wall, you'll have 100,000 of them on disc taking up a very small amount of space."

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BOOKS

Proving either the acceptance or the trivialization of pop music scholarship, three offbeat rock reference volumes turned up recently. *The Velvet Underground Handbook*, by V.U. Appreciation Society president M.C. Kostek, was just published in

London by Black Spring Press. The 221-page paperback is largely comprised of exhaustive lists of every VU-related factoid: discographies, cover versions, magazine articles and so on. The rare photos in the introductory "Timeline" are tiny but edifying. It shouldn't come as a surprise that a similar, 128-pager called *R.E.M.: File Under Water*, also just came out of London from Imaginary Books. More readable than those, however, and worthy of pointless debates way into the night, is Jim Dawson and Steve Propes's *What Was the First Rock'n'Roll Record?* (Faber & Faber). The authors freely admit that the question has no answer, but have a good time anyway, dissecting 50 crucial recordings which figure prominently in the birth of rock'n'roll. It's frustrating not to be able to jump in on the discussion — or to hear each song — but tracing the evolution of jazz, rhythm'n'blues, blues, country and pop as they converge toward rock is almost like reading a good detective novel.



DOCUMENTATION

Over two decades ago, photographer Cavalliere Ketchum and songwriter James Talley began working on material finally compiled as *The Road To Torreón*. The project encompasses a hefty, LP-sized book of Ketchum's photos, augmented with writings, lyrics and poetry by Talley. Dating from the Vietnam War era, the black and white plates chronicle the hopes, lives and faces of poor Hispanic people living in mountain villages of New Mexico, while the text illuminates — rather than explains — the stark, poignant images. Accompanying the book is a CD of related, country-tinged songs that Talley had written at the time. Having finally recorded these spare tales of survival and aspiration, Talley has been able to complete the work with the assistance of Germany's Bear Family Records. While the results are a success for the artists, they seem to be a real triumph for the subjects, one of whom told Ketchum, "Even if I am poverty, you've made me realize I am somebody important to myself."