

---

From CoolCleveland.com

## Main: Janet Macoska Jews Rock

---

Reads

### *Janet Macoska's Jews Rock!*

#### A New Book of Rock Photos with Cleveland Connections



**You know one thing that these people** have in common: Lou Reed, Gene Simmons and Paul Stanley (of Kiss), Neil Diamond, Paula Abdul, Vanessa Carlton, Michael Bolton, Perry Ferrell (of Jane's Addiction), Mick Jones (of the Clash), Slash, Peter Wolf (of the J. Geils Band), Mark Knopfler (of the Dire Straits) and George Michael. They're all pop music stars.

But what's the other thing they all have in common? You won't guess, so I'll tell you: They're all Jewish.

Simon and Garfunkel, Bob Dylan, Billy Joel, Barry Manilow ... you knew they were Jewish. But Lou Reed? Slash? Well, maybe Slash changed his name.

Those are just a dozen of the 68 artists whose photos appear in a brand-new book called *Jews Rock! A Celebration of Rock and Roll's Jewish Heritage* by Cleveland rock photojournalist Janet Macoska.

The 128-page coffee table book contains more than 100 black-&-white and color photos from the archives of Macoska, who has been photographing rock concerts and other events since 1974.

Her photos have appeared in national publications, including *Rolling Stone*, *People*, *US*, *Vogue*, *American Photo*, *Creem*, *16*, *Teen Beat*, *The New York Times* and *The London Times*.

VH1 regularly uses photos from her archives in their "rockumentaries." Her work is in the permanent collection of the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame & Museum, the National Portrait Gallery in London and in Hard Rock Cafés all around the world. David Bowie, Led Zeppelin, AC/DC and the Kinks are among the artists who have used her work on their CDs.

Macoska and Rabbi Brian Leiken, who wrote the book's foreword, will give a short talk and conduct a book signing at the Maltz Museum of Jewish Heritage (2929 Richmond Road, Beachwood) this Friday, November 28 from 2 - 3:30PM. Admission to the presentation and book signing is free.

How did Macoska, who is not Jewish, get the idea to do this book? It started when she got an order for a couple of her rock-and-roll prints from someone she'd never met, a Jewish businessman. She delivered the photos to him and as they talked, he asked if she'd ever thought about doing an exhibition of Jewish rock stars.

"I made the inane comment: 'Well, how many could there be?'," she says, "and he Googled it and started

reading me names and I thought: I have photographed all these people.

“By the time I got to the parking lot, I thought that this could be a really cool, fun exhibition. It was just going to be a photo exhibition, though I wasn’t sure where it would go. So I started doing research on the topic.”

She then found a woman in Florida who runs Art Vision Exhibitions, which produces touring exhibitions. She advised Macoska to put together a book first, because exhibitions take a long time – sometimes two or three years – to get off the ground, mainly because museums have to plan that far out. Plus, she said, exhibitions are costly to tour and the book might help fund that effort. Art Vision Exhibitions financed publishing the book, the proceeds of which will go into doing a touring exhibition.

And in the exhibition, Macoska says, “We’ll be able to tell some larger stories, the stories of Jewish songwriters, and people like Leo Mintz and Alan Freed [the Clevelanders who are credited with coining the term “rock and roll” and, more significantly – in short – introducing white radio audiences to black music]. I’m really intrigued by the whole subject matter – but the book will start it off.”

Art Visions Exhibitions has done photography shows on Elvis Presley and others, including the one on photos of the Beatles from their very first trip to America to appear on the Ed Sullivan show for three consecutive weeks in February 1964. That exhibition wound up on display in the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C. “So, I’m now in there with the Beatles,” Macoska says, “as one of the books she has published.”

Early in the process of putting the photos together for the book, Macoska read an article that had appeared in Connecticut’s statewide weekly Jewish newspaper, the Jewish Ledger, about a young rabbi in Norwalk named Brian Leiken, who was teaching about the connections between Judaism and rock ‘n’ roll, so she located him. “I got on the phone with him and he was so knowledgeable and so enthusiastic – plus he was an ex-Clevelanders [he’s the son of Shaker Heights Mayor Earl Leiken], so that was perfect. He’s brilliant. He wrote the foreword for the book.”

So, once again – as always – Cleveland rocks.

You can buy a copy of *Jews Rock!* at the book signing on Friday, and for more information on where it’s available, visit <http://www.jewsrock.net>.

**From *Cool Cleveland* contributor David Budin [popcyclesATsbcglobal.net](http://www.popcyclesATsbcglobal.net)**

---

Retrieved from /index.php?n=Main.JanetMacoskaJewsRock  
Page last modified on November 25, 2008, at 06:35 PM