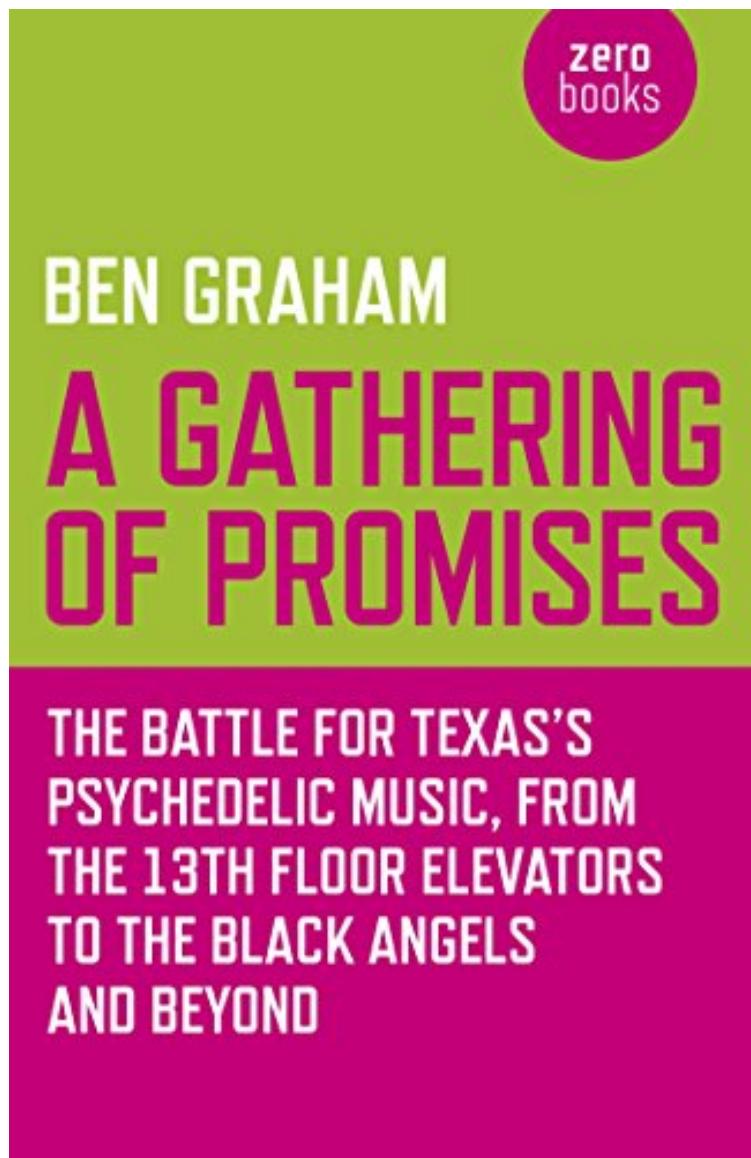


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## **A Gathering of Promises: The Battle for Texas's Psychedelic Music, from The 13th Floor Elevators to The Black Angels and Beyond**

*Ben Graham*

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**Ben Graham : A Gathering of Promises: The Battle for Texas's Psychedelic Music, from The 13th Floor Elevators to The Black Angels and Beyond** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised A Gathering of Promises: The Battle for Texas's Psychedelic Music, from The 13th Floor Elevators to The Black Angels and Beyond:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Review from Texas Ground ZeroBy Greg ForestI've been on the fringe of the Elevators my whole life. I still play gigs with Ronnie Leatherman all the time and chatted with John Ike Walton today at the grocery store. Told him to buy this book - already gave Ronnie a copy. I have to say, having known the players in many of these bands since I was old enough to sneak into the Living Eye (had to be 14 to get in), Graham has done an exemplary job in summarizing the vibe and players in Texas at the time. I also was happy to find that he gave credit to Paul Drummond for his massive tome about the Elevators. Ben appears to know as much about Texas psychedelia as any Texan. A fine read.6 of 7 people found the following review helpful. "IF YOU HAVE A CONSERVATIVE CULTURE YOU WILL HAVE A LIBERAL UNDERGROUND."By Stuart JeffersonIf you've ever wondered about the beginnings of the Texas psychedelic rock era, this book will give you some insight into that exciting era when bands like the 13th Floor Elevators, Red Krayola, Bubble Puppy, Fever Tree (a personal favorite from the vinyl days), the Moving Sidewalks, and others pushed themselves and rock music into a different shape, attitude, and sound that was totally new. The book focuses primarily on late '60s/early '70s bands due to space limitations, but a line had to be drawn somewhere. Left out are bands formed in the mid '70s and beyond and the many garage bands (like Mouse and The Traps--another personal favorite) that were seemingly popping up all over Texas. The book has no photos and (sadly) no index, but included is a bibliography and various sources used in the book. The author, Ben Graham (an Englishman) begins with the premise that these bands were not part of some vaguely united movement, but did share a belief in the possibilities of psychedelics and rock music. So the book isn't a strict, encompassing look at Texas r'n'r, but rather a broader picture of the music and the times, using a number of bands to flesh out the scene during these few years. Graham has interviewed or corresponded with a number of people who were there at the time like Stu Cook, Clementine Hall, Powell St. John, Rod Prince, Roky Erickson, and others--whose quotes run through the book. Graham places the free-thinking/liberal/drugs/psychedelic experience in relation to many people's conservative Christian values found in Texas--people who saw no value in individualism and free expression espoused by these band's music and personal outlook. He goes into some detail about the beginnings of several bands (most who revolved around the Elevators) and performers like Janis Joplin and bands like Mother Earth, and the forces that brought them together under the psychedelic banner as examples of this "degenerate" new music. But Graham also weaves in the Berkeley Folk Festival, John Fahey, the International artists (IA) label (so important to Texas bands), plus the local club scenes and the local bands that helped keep the music alive, and other pertinent pieces of the puzzle--and how they relate to Texas bands, some who were beginning to become more well known outside of Texas. While certainly not definitive (which Graham says wasn't the idea anyway) this book does give a good look back at the Texas scene beginning in the late '60s when a number of bands were stepping up to play their own music to a wider audience. If you're a fan of that period of Texas r'n'r you need to check out this book--especially since Graham has never set foot in Texas and has never experienced these bands during their prime. Even if you disagree with him about a particular song or band, Graham's writing will cause you to go back and listen again to albums by these seminal bands--and that's a good thing. This book can sit next to "Mind's Eye" (an in depth look at the Elevators/Roky Erickson) as something worth adding to your library of books on music/musicians.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Psychedelic Band BookBy ZekeCHaving grown up in Texas during the psychedelic era, I've always been interested in the back stories of the bands and their music (60s and 70s). There were many interesting bands to come out of Texas at that time, so I'm glad to be able to read their stories.

A Gathering of Promises is a history of acid rock and psychedelic music in and from the state of Texas, focusing largely on its mid-1960s origins with the 13th Floor Elevators and contemporaries such as the Golden Dawn, the Red Crayola and Bubble Puppy, and following its development to the present day and the popularity of the annual Austin Psych Fest. Grounded in a strong social, cultural and historical context, the book asks how Texas produced some of the most extreme and influential psych of any era despite a prevailing social ethos of Christian conservatism and the strictest drug laws of any American state. It looks at how this environment shaped and affected the music, alongside the Texan frontier spirit and its championing of expansion, freedom and individualism.

About the AuthorBen Graham is a freelance music journalist, writer and poet based in Brighton.