

## Hardcover: US

# Marc Rich meets Che, bribes thugs, regrets nothing

BY A. CRAIG COPETAS  
BLOOMBERG

Long ago, in the courtrooms of ancient Athens, hubris was a crime and judges weren't shy about convicting. Sometimes the penalty was left in the hands of a higher authority.

"After hubris," the saying went, "comes Nemesis," the goddess of justice Zeus appointed to visit Earth in the form of a goose. Not even King Croesus was able to buy Nemesis off.

*The King of Oil*, by Daniel Ammann, is the mostly familiar tale of how the infamous American, Israeli and Spanish multimillionaire commodity trader Marc Rich — the inventor of the spot-oil market and for nearly two decades the most-wanted white-collar fugitive in America — did what Croesus could not and cooked the goose.

Ammann's biography, written with Rich's cooperation, is a briskly paced primer on how to get off the hook, a must-read for any businessman facing federal indictment and a guaranteed tear-jerker for the US white-collar prison population.

We learn how Rich persuaded former US president Bill Clinton to pardon him on criminal charges that included 51 counts of fraud, racketeering, trading with the enemy during the Iranian hostage crisis and evading more than US\$48 million in income taxes stemming from a series of illegal crude-oil deals that roiled global markets in the early 1980s.

The lubricants, Ammann points out, were money and connections.

And that's just the appetizer to a stomach-churning tale of avarice and woe. Ammann, business editor of the Swiss magazine *Die Weltwoche*, mixes in all the usual suspects: duplicitous Washington politicians; Hollywood hustlers; Israeli spies; apartheid boosters; assorted African despots; bounty hunters and a US marshal known as the Riddler. Che Guevara, whom Rich recalls as "energetic and lively," makes a cameo appearance.

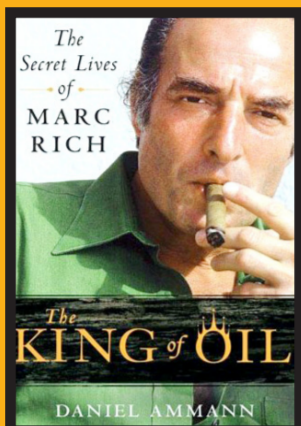
Rich realized early in his career that serving cash instead of cocktails was the best way to mollify a Marxist, a mullah or the Mossad. "Eats first, morals after" was Bertolt Brecht's escape clause. Does *The King of Oil* do anything to change the "Threppenny Opera" tune?

"I was painted as the biggest devil," Rich said to me without the least bit of self-pity, Ammann writes from his 30-plus hours of exclusive interviews with Rich. "Those who are familiar with Rich's matter-of-fact style know that he is not prone to exaggeration."

"He may have his strengths," Ammann continues, "but volubility is not one of them." Neither is repentance.

"Whatever we did, we did legally," Rich says. "We were doing business with Iran, Cuba, and South Africa as a Swiss company. These businesses were completely legal according to Swiss law."

## PUBLICATION NOTES



THE KING OF OIL: THE SECRET LIVES OF MARC RICH

BY DANIEL AMMANN  
302 PAGES  
ST MARTIN'S PRESS

Rich tells Ammann it's "naïve" for anyone to think otherwise and that he has "no, no" remorse for brokering deals with thugs and rogues sweetened with multimillion-US dollar bribes.

"Rich does not deny that he had authorized them in the past," Ammann says. "The bribes were paid in order to be able to do the business at the same price as other people were willing to do the business," is how Rich rationalizes the cash incentives (code-named "chocolates") he passed out to businessmen and politicians throughout Africa and the Middle East.

Although much of *The King of Oil* echoes events previously chronicled elsewhere (including, I should mention, in my own 1985 book about Rich, *Metal Men*), Ammann's adroit recasting confirms the profitable tragedy of Rich in the commodity trader's own words.

It's a psychological thriller, each page percolating with the triumphant darkness that is Marc David Rich. There's no time for melancholy in the soul of a character Ammann describes as the modern and laudable Dr Faustus.

"Faust stands for the scientist who breaks conventions in order to discover 'what holds the world together in its innermost,'" Ammann writes. Rich "perfected trading methods precisely because he was willing to push the boundaries and break taboos. His power also came from trading with the 'devils' of the world."

It's the view Upton Sinclair would have focused on had *Oil!* been a billionaire's take on the commodity business. *The King of Oil* is a gleeful celebration of asocial justice and why the sound application of money will always beat the odds and embarrass the gods.



## Hug of Love: Farewell to 18 (愛的抱抱：告別18歲)

Yaoyao (瑤瑤)  
Seed Music

Observing the entertainment world has never been this much fun. Yaoyao (瑤瑤) — real name Kuo Shu-yao (郭書瑤) — the curvaceous babe who shot to fame overnight thanks to an advertisement for *Kill Online* (殺Online) in which she shouted "Sha hen da! (殺很大!)" while straddling an undulating exercise machine, breasts swaying, has parlayed her sex kitten status into a record contract. Seed Music is looking to milk even more NT dollars out of this year's "It" Girl, and Yaoyao is out to prove that she has real talent.

*Hug of Love: Farewell to 18* (愛的抱抱：告別18歲) comes with a 52-page book of cheesecake photographs and debuted at No. 1 on the major charts last week. Surprisingly, the music is not a disaster. Yaoyao delivers a polished, albeit calculated entertainment product on this EP, which has wisely been edited down to three songs and one remix.

Title track *Hug of Love* is a campy but contagious dance number that revels in its disco-era ethos with kitschy synthesizer riffs. Trading on Yaoyao's pseudo-pornographic persona, this hip-shaker features plenty of female moaning and groaning. With lyrics like "the hug of love melts the troubles," she blithely trumpets the kind of simplistic adolescent romantic love envisioned by her *otaku* (宅男) fanbase. To raise the fun quotient, the track ends with the eye-raising English phrase "that's right."

In the EP's two slow-tempo Mando-pop ballads, *Giving You Up* (放棄你), penned by singer-songwriter Kenji Wu (吳克群), and *Not Enough Time to Say Goodbye* (來不及再見), Yaoyao sheds her childlike squeak and sings convincingly about unrequited love in a firm, emotive voice. With a simple piano accompaniment, she croons "giving you up is like giving myself up" and warbles "the day you left, I didn't have enough time to say goodbye." Granted, Yaoyao doesn't have much of a high register. With her limited vocal range, she nevertheless conveys the fleeting joy and pain of love with subtle emotional coloring and phrasing.

All in all, this album is a slickly packaged guilty pleasure that's reminiscent of the Spice Girls — not bad for a woman whose previous claim to fame was being a "big-breasted bodacious baby face" (前顏巨乳).

— ANDREW C.C. HUANG, CONTRIBUTING REPORTER

## Summer Fever (夏·狂熱)

Sodagreen (蘇打綠)  
Universal

With last year's *Incomparable Beauty* (無與倫比的美麗), Sodagreen (蘇打綠) firmly established itself in the pop mainstream with one of the most innovative albums of the year. This has been followed, perhaps a little too quickly, with *Summer Fever* (夏·狂熱). The new album was produced in the UK to much fanfare and is technically proficient, with no shortage of clever riffs and skillful shifts between a vast array of styles. But it lacks sparkle.

Brit-pop sounds and a jazzy Broadway mood stand out as themes throughout *Summer Fever*, and lead singer Wu Ching-feng (吳青峰) throws himself into the music with a kind of frantic desperation. One of the album's best songs, *Cicada Thoughts* (蟬想), is a solid, guitar-led rocker with poetic themes of tainted love and regret. On this track, Wu's voice does a good job of evoking the sweet agony of remembrance of love past. Other songs, such as the opener *Claps Falling* (掌聲落下) and *Private Garden* (御花園), show off the band's versatility with different stylistic departures. Unfortunately, throughout the album there seems to be a consistent push to put a hard edge on the sound, and this comes off as artificial and affected. The track *Peter and the Wolf*, for example, tries to mix bubblegum pop and Talking Heads, and ends up becoming utterly schizophrenic.

One gets the feeling that the band wants to be taken seriously, and that this trying too hard has made them slightly unhinged. The inclusion of very some peculiar, if not exactly illiterate, English verses about Dionysian pain and ecstasy scattered throughout the album certainly does not help.

— ANDREW C.C. HUANG, CONTRIBUTING REPORTER

## Sizhukong (絲竹空)

Paper Eagle (紙鷲)  
www.sizhukong.com

The old is new again for Sizhukong (絲竹空), a troupe devoted to recasting traditional Chinese music in a jazz setting. Their second release, *Paper Eagle* (紙鷲), brings together ancient-sounding melodies and modern grooves.

If China and Brazil were neighbors, this would be music you hear at the border. On the title track, congas and bongos provide light, buoyant rhythms. Chinese flutes, the *erhu* and the *zhongruan* (中阮) serve as voices for a slightly wistful yet joyful bossa nova melody. *Rainbow Dress Rhapsody* rides a samba groove and contains a boisterous and funky interlude featuring the noisy cymbals and bells used in *beiguan* (北管) music.

The fusion ethos has always played a large role in the work of bandleader, pianist and composer Peng Yu-wen (彭郁雯), a Berklee College of Music graduate. She was a founding member of Metamorphosis, a group known for arranging Taiwanese folk songs in modern jazz styles, including Latin jazz, be-bop and post-bop.

One of Peng's more interesting compositions is *I Remember Formosa* (想想想想), which according to the liner is about "homesickness." It has a dreamy, impressionistic feel, drawing inspiration from the classic Hengchun folk song *Remembering* (想起思) and a Chinese melody from the 3rd century. Peng remarks how surprising it is to find how "an ancient song could sound so modern," and rightly so.

Sizhukong also offers an abstract treatment of *Remembering*, which will feel like a stretch to those familiar with folk legend Chen Da's (陳達) version. Chinese flutes are the prominent voices in this short track.

A sense of folk romanticism about Taiwan runs through much of the album. The coastal town of Lugang (鹿港) inspires *Deer Harbor*, an uplifting piece written by bassist Martijn Vanbuel. *Marketplace* is an ode to the night market, with subtle grooves provided by South African percussionist and singer Mogauwane Mahloelo. He also adds an interesting vocal touch to the group's rendition of *Hakka Mountain Song*.

Sizhukong does an impressive job of drawing out the more accessible elements of classical Chinese music. While this may displease the more traditionally minded, it offers a refreshing new sound for jazz fans.

— DAVID CHEN, STAFF REPORTER

## Hardcover: UK

# No sex please, we're Irish

A groundbreaking analysis of sex in the Republic of Ireland lays bare the cruel and devastating consequences of more than a century of oppression

BY FINTAN O'TOOLE  
THE OBSERVER, LONDON

Around the same time that Philip Larkin claimed, in an ironic tone, that sexual intercourse began in 1963, the ultra-Catholic Irish politician Oliver J Flanagan insisted, in all seriousness, that there had been no sex in Ireland before television. Flanagan's claim was idiotic but not entirely nonsensical. It all depends, as former US president Bill Clinton and many others could explain, what you mean by sex. If sex is a physical function, it is a reasonable assumption that it had been up and running for some time before the arrival of the goggle box. If, though, sex is a publicly acknowledged source of mutual pleasure, there is some truth in the notion that it was largely absent from the Irish state between its foundation in 1922 and the gradual process of liberalization that began in the 1960s.

There is a word that crops up twice in Diarmaid Ferriter's groundbreaking study of the control of sexuality by church and state in 20th-century Ireland: badness. The first time, it is in a quote from the statement of a domestic servant raped by two men in Dublin in

1900: "He got hold of me by the arm and asked me was there any chance of something, which I understood to mean badness." The second is from a 1928 novel in which an Irish servant in England has had consensual sex: "But, of course, it was badness and she was bad..."

That the same word should cover a violent assault and an episode of pleasure reveals the essence of the Irish problem with sex. When all sex is badness, the difference between rape and consent, between mutual affection and cruel exploitation, is blurred. This in turn means, as Ferriter shows, that a society in which sex is identified with shame becomes neither innocent nor moral. It becomes, rather, both deeply cruel and extravagantly hypocritical.

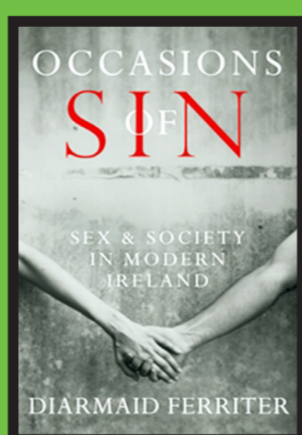
Before the mid-19th century, the Irish were not more notably neurotic about sex than anybody else. The traumatic famine of the 1840s, however, had huge and long-lasting effects. The perception that the famine had been caused by overpopulation caused a shift in the nature of the rural economy. Land must no longer be subdivided. The eldest son would not marry until he

could inherit the farm. The other children would be condemned to celibacy or emigration. By the end of the World War II, Ireland had one of the lowest marriage rates in the world: 65 percent of the population were single.

This was the context in which Ireland received a double whammy of Puritanism: Victorian respectability from England and a particularly rigid form of Catholicism from Rome. These mutually reinforcing ideologies were strengthened by the rise of nationalism. Irish purity and chastity were contrasted to a supposed English decadence. While none of these elements was unique to Ireland, the combination produced a particularly toxic combination of class snobbery, misogyny, hysteria and self-delusion.

The great achievement of Ferriter's sober but riveting account is to destroy this self-delusion once and for all. There are still social conservatives who believe that there really was a time of innocence before economic modernity and liberalism opened the door to permissiveness, pornography and perversion. The

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OCCASIONS OF SIN: SEX AND SOCIETY IN MODERN IRELAND  
BY DIARMAID FERRITER  
640 PAGES  
PROFILE

truth, undeniable after a reading of *Occasions of Sin*, is that long before the door was opened there were very nasty things going on behind it.

It is hard to think of anything more that Irish governments and the Catholic church could have done in their efforts to control sexual behavior. The state banned contraceptives, divorce, abortion and even adoption. It implemented sweeping censorship of literature and cinema. The church, for its part, mobilized a powerful array of social and psychological weapons, preaching in effect that sex was the only sin. When a journalist wrote to the powerful archbishop of Dublin, John Charles McQuaid, in 1970, wondering whether the church was overly obsessed with sex, to the exclusion of issues such as poverty, lack of education and low welfare rates, he replied indignantly that "sex ... is a sin and is the concern of the church."

Yet none of this stopped sex. It merely tended to make it furtive, exploitative, unsafe and shrouded in shame. With typical subtlety, one Catholic pamphlet of 1960 urged girls to adopt the acronym FEAR: "If kisses are Frequent, Enduring, and Ardent, there can be hardly any just Reason for them."

The other side of this hysterical hatred of the body was brutality. Drawing on court files and official

records, Ferriter explores the high levels of child sexual abuse (both in church-run institutions and in the family), infanticide, prostitution and venereal diseases, the vulnerability of servants to assault by their employers and the steady stream of unmarried mothers entering church-run homes or escaping to England. He details the consequences for women of the ban on contraceptives: even in the mid-1960s, a fifth of all Irish mothers had seven or more children.

Keeping up appearances was crucial. There was an obsession with the idea that Ireland's chastity was under assault from England, both as the source of evil literature and ideas, and as the place where innocent Irish emigrants would be corrupted. In 1956, when the London-based *Observer* newspaper published a series on sex, and would not agree to keep papers out of Ireland, the Irish newspapers' association decreed that "it would not do to let them in." In 1960, McQuaid complained about an ad in the same nasty rag showing a mother and daughter wearing their new bras. Less comically, the idea

of banning women under 21 from emigrating to England was seriously discussed at the highest levels of church and state.

In many respects, it is more remarkable that this system continued for as long as it did than that it collapsed so rapidly in the 1990s. As late as 1974, the attorney general, Declan Costello, was urging that the possession of a contraceptive by an unmarried person be made a criminal offence. In 1991, the Virgin Megastore in Dublin was prosecuted for selling condoms. And even now, abortion law decrees that a woman may not terminate her pregnancy in Ireland but has a constitutional right to do so in Britain.

Sexual liberation may not be the answer to all prayers. The dismantling of the system of sexual suppression has not made Ireland into a utopia of love and bliss. It would be nice to think that there might be some golden mean between brutal repression and in-your-face, commercialized sexuality. But for anyone tempted by the sin of nostalgia, Ferriter's superbly researched narrative is a powerful prophylactic.