

EVERY PICTURE tells a story

BY ALEJANDRA NAVARRO

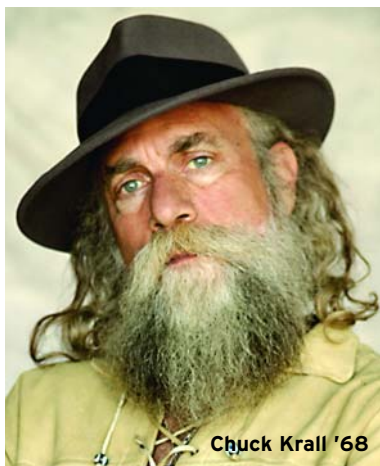
Microphone in hand, singer Patti Smith gazes intently at Chuck Krall '68. He responds with a smile. Punk rocker Joey Ramone laughs. Oblivious, Jimi Hendrix hangs his heavy gaze on the strings of his guitar.

Their black and white images—along with those of more than a dozen musical legends—line the walls of Krall's Los Angeles loft like a display of music history. These are just some of the artists he has photographed during his 35 years as a freelance photographer working for such record labels as Columbia, EPIC, Warner Brothers and RCA; concert promoter Bill Graham; and radio stations. His work has appeared in *Rolling Stone*, *People* and *The New York Times*. Recently, *In Style* magazine used Krall's 1975 shot of Debbie Harry in a black miniskirt and thigh-high leather boots.

"There's a story behind each picture," says Krall, who got to know the artists whose songs, he says, reflected or were catalysts for social change. So it's fitting that Krall's photograph of Wayne Kramer of the Detroit, Mich., rock group, MC5, clutching a stars and stripes guitar, will hang in the "Songs of Conscience, Sounds of Freedom" exhibit at the new Grammy Museum in Los Angeles. Krall planned to attend the grand opening this month.

"Interestingly, it was my very first rock 'n' roll picture I shot in New York's Flushing Meadows in 1969," says Krall, who now features his work through Getty Images and Chuck Krall Photography (www.chuckkrall.com).

Krall, who earned a marketing degree, seemed destined to work in the music industry. As a Peace Corps volunteer in Jamaica, he got his first break taking photos for the organization. It was there that he encountered a young and relatively unknown Rastafarian singer named Bob Marley. He recalls the day Marley playfully razed him for not eating jerk pork and for having a long, shaggy beard—he's



sported the beard since his Quinipiac days.

Krall attributed both to his Jewish heritage—an explanation Marley respected. Five years later, the two would cross paths again when Krall was asked to be Marley's tour photographer. His images have appeared on album covers, posters and T-shirts. One of his best-known portraits is of Marley with short dreads holding a teacup.

"The dream of the photojournalist is always to shoot that defining moment," says Krall, who tried to capture the real person behind the iconic stage presence. Krall's favorite picture is of a pensive Marley reading the *San Francisco Examiner* with headlines about the Nixon impeachment

hearings. "Bob Marley was a very bright man. He was such a gifted song writer because he knew what was going on in the world."

Lenny Kaye, who eventually became the guitarist for Patti Smith, traveled with Krall to the West Coast and introduced him to editors of music publications in San Francisco. Krall spent most of the 1970s traveling with bands for weeks at a time, stopping at venues such as the historic Roxy in Los Angeles. He remembers nights scrambling to get film processed and on an editor's desk by 10 a.m. the next day, and making friends with pilots who would take film to editors across the country.

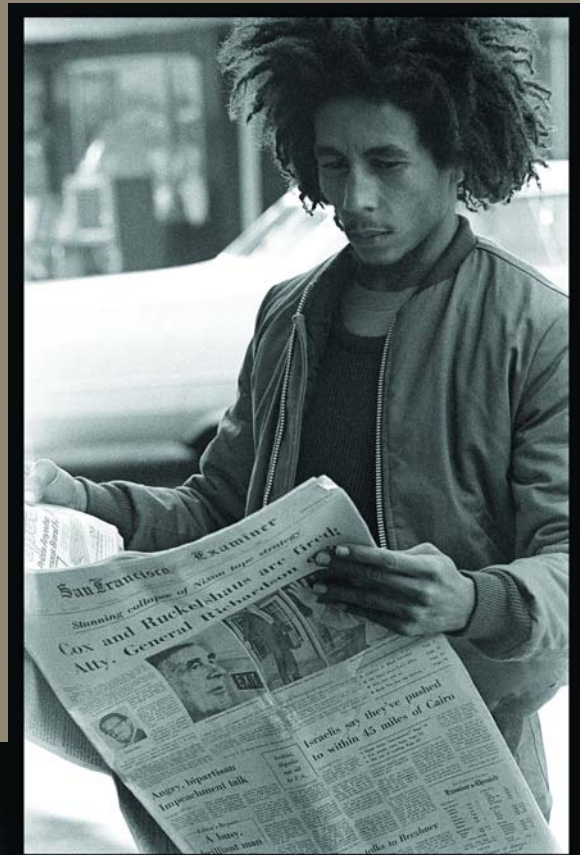
At concerts, Krall would move stealthily around the stage and backstage, capturing intimate scenes such as Carlos Santana praying before a show. "I had to be invisible," Krall explains. He also witnessed the dangerous side of rock 'n' roll, but kept his distance from it. "When the drugs came out, I put the camera away," says Krall, who tried to maintain the musicians' trust to keep his access.

By 1980, disco lessened the demand for live shots, and Krall became a bodyguard for Ozzy Osborne. Later, he spent seven years working for the *National Inquirer*.

Clearly, his early work gives him the most pleasure. He estimates his collection of 30,000 images is worth \$5 million. And the stories behind each picture? Priceless.



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