

November 2001

Publisher Profile: David R. Godine, Publisher, Inc.

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Recommended Citation

Long, John (2001) "Publisher Profile: David R. Godine, Publisher, Inc.," *Against the Grain*: Vol. 13: Iss. 5, Article 20.
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7771/2380-176X.3220>

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Publisher Profile — David R. Godine, Publisher, Inc.

by John Long (Consultant) <john-long@worldnet.att.net>

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Number of employees: 8

Founder & Publisher: David R. Godine
Founded in 1970

of books published: 30 new titles per year;
backlist, 340 titles


Important publications: Peter Bowler's, *Superior Person's Books of Words*, Vols. 1, 2, & 3 (avail. in boxed set); John Kessler's *Night Shadows: Twentieth-Century Stories of the Uncanny* (due in Oct.); Ralph Graves' *Champagne Kisses, Cyanide Dreams* (avail.); Bascove's *Where Books Fall Open* (due in Dec.); Jonathan Williams' *A Palpable Elysium* (due in Nov.); Richard Watson's *Cogito Ergo Sum: A Life of René Descartes*.

Editor's Note: "Books are the treasured wealth of the world and the fit inheritance of generations and nations" wrote Henry Thoreau, in *Walden*. I think about that quote when I encounter publishers like David R. Godine. Quintessential examples of the book publisher's art come to mind: When I met with David Godine and I commented on the beautiful design and production of his books, he said to me, "We pay attention to the little things." He gave me a quick lesson in recognizing quality book production by showing me the "little things" that make a difference in a great book: printing on acid-free paper, binding in full cloth, the end papers, the exquisite design and line drawings, and the lovely way that each printed page is presented to the reader ("books of typographic distinction that delight the eye...").

I visited Godine's office, near Park St., in downtown Boston. On that day, David and his fine staff (5 in the Boston office and 3 in their Jaffrey, NH fulfillment center) were involved with one project concerning an upcoming author's signing that will take place at the Bickerton & Ripley Bookstore on Martha's Vineyard. Five hundred copies of Ralph Graves' new novel (Mr. Graves lives on Martha's Vineyard), *Champagne Kisses, Cyanide Dreams*, were being dropshipped to Bickerton & Ripley to arrive prior to the author's bookstore signing (scheduled around mid-August).

Much to my delight and admiration, I found that David is involved in every aspect of the publishing enterprise: he even makes sales calls to booksellers throughout the Northeast; to coincide with these sales calls he often visits Godine authors and illustrators en route.

Godine's list is truly eclectic and includes: "books about the history and design of the written word, literary essays, and the best fiction in translation," poetry, nonfiction, Mary Azarian's wonderful illustrations, regional architecture, literature, biography & memoirs, nature & gardening, music & cooking, and an "unusually strong list of children's books."

Finally, I asked the highly respected Senior Trade Buyer (Brown University Bookstore, Providence, RI), Peter Sevenair, about some of his favorite Godine authors and titles. Peter (who has an unerring sense for recognizing superb books and writing) recommended: the late Andre Dubus' canon, William Gass' *In the Heart of the Heart of the Country*, Richard Watson's *The Philosopher's Diet*, William Zinsser's *Easy to Remember*, and the unsurpassed Jorge Luis Borges', *The Library of Babel* (with splendid etchings by Erik Desmazieres). Peter applauds the fact that David Godine actively "discovers out-of-print books" and makes them available again (e.g., Watson's *Philosopher's Diet*); and that the Godine books are "so well made and designed." 

From the Reference Desk

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phabetically arranged articles. Although a bit pricey, it is a scholarly and well organized effort that will find a place on the shelves of both interested scholars as well as academic and larger public libraries.

Adolescence in America: an Encyclopedia (2001, 1576072053, \$175) is one of the six titles that makes up ABC-CLIO's *American Family* series of reference books. Like the others in the series, *Adolescence in America* is a 2-volume set that deals with social, medical, psychological and other developmental issues. Although edited and written by academics, the articles are accessible to the lay reader and parent as well as the student and scholar. For a 2-volume set the bibliographies are impressive. My only concern is, as with other ABC-CLIO references, the paper bindings may not hold up under repeat usage. Diverse in its coverage and serious in its treatment, *Adolescence in America* should find an interested audience in both public and academic libraries.

Garland has released another volume in its highly praised and respected *Garland Encyclopedia of World Music*. Volume 3, *The United States and Canada* (2000, 0824049446, \$250) is available and should be particularly welcome by academic librarians. Unlike other musical encyclopedias that emphasize history, theory and performance, the approach here is cultural and grounded in the field of ethnomusicology. Like the others in the set, this volume is organized into three parts. The first offers an overall musical profile of both countries as well as an essay on scholarship and historiography. Part 2 concentrates on the social and cultural contexts while Part 3 deals with specific geographic regions and musical cultures within the US and Canada. *The United States and Canada* is an impressive scholarly accomplishment full of thoughtful articles on a rich diversity of topics with bibliographies that are a treasure by themselves. Admittedly, it is not as easy to use as the traditional alphabetically arranged volume, but the extra effort is worth the reward. *The United States and Canada* also comes with a CD-ROM of audio examples.

The *Organizing of Black America: An encyclopedia of African American Associations* (2001, 0815323093, \$125) is another worthwhile Garland publication. This book documents Black America's tradition of bonding together to fight adversity and further advancement. Coverage ranges from the Rainbow Coalition to the Harlem Tenant League, from the NAACP to the Mosaic Templars of America, and from the Jackie Robinson Foundation to the Bureau of Colored Troops. In all, there are 576 entries that list religious, fraternal, political, military, educational and social organizations. This is a unique reference that pulls together information about an essential part of the African American story. Fact filled and accessible, this book will be useful for both public and academic libraries.

From the thunder of natural storms to the discovery and use of explosives, scientists have been interested in the phenomena of resulting shock waves. Reflecting both history and recent research, Academic Press has published a 3-volume set entitled the *Handbook of Shock Waves* (2001, 0120864312, \$1300) sure to appeal to the specialist. This set is jammed full with details on experimental theory and techniques as well as shock wave interactions and propagation in gases, liquids, solids and in space. There are also specific articles discussing shock wave reflection and refraction, chemical reactions and kinetics, as well as shock channels and tunnels. Intended for the research expert and engineers, this handbook is loaded with formulas, charts, diagrams and extensive bibliographies. The *Handbook of Shock Waves*

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