From the Reference Desk-Reviews of Reference Titles

Tom Gilson

Against the Grain, gilsont@cofc.edu

Follow this and additional works at: http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/atg

Part of the Library and Information Science Commons

Recommended Citation
DOI: https://doi.org/10.7771/2380-176X.6530
From the Reference Desk

by Tom Gilson (Associate Editor, Against the Grain, and Head of Reference Emeritus, College of Charleston, Charleston, SC 29401) <gilson@cofc.edu>

Black Recording Artists, 1877-1926: An Annotated Discography (2013, 978-0786472383, $95) is a one-volume reference compiled by Craig Martin Gibbs and published by McFarland. Mr. Gibbs, a lecturer at Kyoto University in Japan, attempts to construct a comprehensive timeline of the first 50 years of recorded black music by African American, Caribbean, Mexican, and South American artists. (In truth, the overwhelming majority of the artists are African American.) In doing so he gives readers access to more than 2,500 unique entries with relevant information about individual recordings.

Before discussing the entries themselves, a word about the organization of the book is in order. As the Mr. Gibbs notes in his introduction, a benefit of a chronological approach is that it allows the grouping together of different “types” of music that are usually treated separately. For example, in Mr. Gibbs’ approach all of the recordings made during December of 1920 are grouped in sequence by date regardless of whether they are jazz, blues, or popular. Therefore, because it treats black music as a whole, a chronological listing offers a sense of the overall ebb and flow of black music’s development, while at the same time helping to pinpoint trends and identify the most prolific artists over distinct times and eras. (Researchers can look to the individual entries to find genre identifications.)

Finding specific information in a chronological arrangement requires solid indexes and this book offers three. The first is by artists and group; the next by recording title; and the third by commercial label. Value-added items include five appendices: a list of field recordings in the U.S.; piano rolls; recordings from the Caribbean, Mexico, and South America; films featuring black performances; and relevant compact discs where specific recordings can be found.

But admittedly, the entries are where the information is and, fortunately, these entries deliver. All of the key elements are there including the date, artist name, location of the recording, its matrix number, the title of the record, label name, sources where the entry can be heard, and finally the relevant discography and bibliography sources including exact page numbers.

Serious musicologists as well as historians of Black culture will find Black Recording Artists, 1877-1926 a font of often obscure but always fascinating information. It is also a resource that will enable researchers to trace the development of black recorded music through its formative stages offering historians and music scholars a trove of data to analyze. As one examines this work it becomes obvious that Mr. Gibbs has performed an impressive feat of dedicated scholarship. Academic and music libraries with an interest in black music and culture will welcome it on their reference shelves. And given the price some may want a second copy to circulate.

SAGE has released another interdisciplinary two-volume set that draws from a number of academic fields. The Encyclopedia of the Mind (2013, 9781429850572, $175) treats numerous topics using a very broad approach to the areas of cognitive science and mind studies. Entries rely on research in a variety of fields including anthropology, biology, computer science, education, linguistics, philosophy, and of course, the numerous subfields within psychology like social, cognitive, developmental, and experimental psychology.

Edited by Harold Pashler of the University of California, San Diego, the set includes more than 290 articles that delve into specific topics within broad categories ranging from Action and Motor Control to Emotion; Disorders and Pathology to Learning; Language and Communication to Personality; and Consciousness to Morality and Ethics. A unique Reader’s Guide provides increased specificity for each category by further dividing them into recurring “approaches” like computational perspectives, neural basis, philosophical perspectives, and psychological research. Individual entries are then entered under these “approaches,” giving readers a more detailed thematic finding aid and guide to specific coverage. Complementing the Reader’s Guide is a well-structured general index and “see also” references for each entry. In addition, bibliographies accompany each article and there is a complete list of contributors with their academic affiliations. The entries themselves are grounded in recent scholarship and intended for a college and university audience. Although the articles are not too weighed down by jargon, lay readers will need some previous background to take full advantage of the articles in this set.

Because of its broad, interdisciplinary approach, the Encyclopedia of the Mind offers a complementary perspective to standards like the Corsini Encyclopedia of Psychology and Behavioral Science (2002, 978-0-471-24400-4, $530) and the American Psychological Association’s and Oxford University Press’ Encyclopedia of Psychology (2000, 978-1557981875, $1115). Given the publication dates of these resources, this new set should also offer some much needed updating for certain topics. In short, the Encyclopedia of the Mind will be a useful addition any academic collection supporting courses in psychology and cognitive studies. (This title is available online via SAGE Knowledge at http://knowledge.sagepub.com.)

Critical Survey of Mythology and Folklore: Love, Sexuality, and Desire (2013, 978-1-4298-3765-1, $295) is the first title in the projected series from Salem Press. Utilizing Salem’s proven formula, editor Thomas J. Sienkewicz explores folk and mythical classics from cultures worldwide. Not surprisingly, the series starts with a set centered on a literary theme of unending fascination to almost everyone.

The two volumes making up Love, Sexuality, and Desire consist of 62 critical essays averaging 7,000 words each that have been organized under seven major themes including the Lover’s Quest; Gods and Goddesses in Love; the Myth of Ideal Love; Loss of the Beloved; Tales of Transformation; Animals Loves; and Love, Sexuality, and Creation. Each entry offers overviews, plot summaries, and analysis of representative myths and stories from a diversity of cultures. Coverage ranges from the Romans and Greeks to the Brothers Grimm while also including “tales from Native American, African, Oceanic, and East Asian traditions.”

In addition to the overview, summaries, and analysis, each entry also features the author, time period, country/culture of origin, and the genre of the story. A final section that discusses cross-cultural influences helps demonstrate the relationships among the myths and tales of varying traditions. This section also attests to the broad-ranging resonance many of these stories possess. In addition to the thematic arrangement of the set there are chronological, country and culture, and general indexes that lend organization to these two volumes.

The essays are not intended to substitute for reading the original. Rather they aspire to give the reader both a valuable overview of the tale as well as a solid foundation for future exploration of its complexities. In this they succeed. Each entry offers the type of insights and analysis that should make the original tale or myth more approachable for students. Added to this, the contributors employ a serious but reader-friendly style that will enable this critical survey of mythology and folklore: love, sexuality, and desire (2013).
reference to be of value to upper division high school students as well as undergraduates. Sidebars entitled “Historical Context” and “Myth into Art” are interspersed when relevant and each entry has a useful bibliography.

Critical Survey of Mythology and Folklore: Love, Sexuality, and Desire is a useful and accessible reference that should have wide appeal and could easily find a home in high school, public, and undergraduate libraries. As is the case with all Salem reference works it is available online through Salem’s online platform, Salem Literature, with a single purchase of the printed set. Given this option, some libraries may want to place the print set in circulation while relying on the online version for reference.

One might wonder if a topic like the White House staff was worthy of the effort required in producing a serious reference work. Upon examining the CQ Press Guide to the White House Staff (2013, 978-1-6042-6604-7, $160) one would have to answer in the affirmative. Prior to FDR, a small professional staff of administrative assistants was available to the President to assist him with basic managerial tasks. But with the passage of the Reorganization Act of 1939 creating the Executive Office of the President, the White House staff started to grow exponentially and now includes hundreds of highly trained specialists. Authored by Shirley Anne Warshaw, this reference carefully traces the history, evolution, and growing influence of the White House Staff, and throws light on the influential role it performs as part of the Executive Branch of government.

The bulk of the Guide to the White House Staff provides researchers with an informed history of the modern White House staff including chapters on the development of its operation as well as the evolution of key policymaking units. However, a discussion of the formative years, when little money or attention was paid to Presidential staff needs, occupies the first section of the book and lays the ground work for what follows. The overall result is a thorough and comprehensive treatment of the numerous transitions and changes that the White House staff has undergone as well as a discussion of its growing influence and responsibilities. The text is complemented by photos, tables, charts, lists, and informative sidebars that are also visually appealing. An appendix that provides a year-by-year list of the names of all White House staff and their positions for each administration since FDR makes clear the growing number of staff in successive administrations.

In typical CQ Press fashion, the Guide to the White House Staff is fact-filled, even-handed, and exhaustive. Value-added features are impressive with well-chosen illustrations enriching the historical coverage offered by the narrative text. In this reference, Ms. Warshaw makes it clear that the White House Staff has become an integral part of the Executive Branch and it function, fulfilling more than a managerial role. It is obvious that the White House staff has a major influence on policy as specialized staff has been added routinely to help address new issues. Ms. Warshaw also includes a telling final chapter that covers the “career paths for White House staff after leaving office” which provides biographical data showing many of them gaining influential positions in the private sector.

Academic and large public libraries where there is an active interest in the politics and the function of American government will want to give this work serious consideration. As noted in the preface, it can easily be viewed as a companion to the fifth edition of the CQ Press Guide to the Presidency and the Executive Branch (2012, 978-1-6087-1906-8, $425). (Both these CQ Press titles are available online via SAGE Knowledge at http://knowledge.sagepub.com.)

Extra Servings
Oxford University Press is planning the release of a major multivolume music reference work in August of 2103.

The second edition of The Grove Dictionary of American Music (9780195314281, $1, 195) is in the works and “will be the largest, most comprehensive reference publication on American Music. Twenty-five years ago, the four volumes of the first edition of the dictionary initiated a great expansion in American music scholarship.

continued on page 41
This second edition reflects the growth in scholarship the first edition initiated. At eight volumes, it provides greatly expanded coverage, particularly in the areas of popular music, cities and regions, musical theater, opera, concert music, and music technology, as well as the musical traditions of many ethnic and cultural groups.”

Music librarians will also be happy to know about some forthcoming 2013 titles from Cambridge University Press.

The Cambridge Wagner Encyclopedia (9781107004252, $200) offers entries covering “a comprehensive range of topics. More than eighty scholars from around the world, representing disciplines from history and philosophy to film studies and medicine, provide fascinating insights into Wagner’s life, career, and influence. Multiple appendices include listings of Wagner’s works, historic productions, recordings, and addresses where he lived, to round out a volume that will be an essential and reliable resource for enthusiasts and academics alike.”

The Cambridge Verdi Encyclopedia (9780521519625, $200) “covers all aspects of Verdi’s music and his world, including the people he knew and worked with, his compositions, and their reception. Extensive appendices list all of Verdi’s known works, both published and unpublished, and the characters in his operas. As a starting point for information on specific works, people, places, and concepts, the Encyclopedia reflects the very latest scholarship, presented by an international array of experts in a manner that will have a broad appeal for opera lovers, students, and scholars.”

ABC-CLIO has a couple of new titles planned for later in the year.

Alcohol and Drugs in North America: A Historical Encyclopedia (978-1-59884-478-8, $189) “This two-volume encyclopedia provides accessibly written coverage on a wide range of topics, covering substances ranging from whiskey to peyote as well as related topics such as Mexican drug trafficking and societal effects caused by specific drugs. The entries also supply an excellent overview of the history of temperance movements in Canada and the United States; trends in alcohol consumption, its production, and its role in the economy; as well as alcohol’s and drugs’ roles in shaping national discourse, the creation of organizations for treatment and study, and legal responses.”

Encyclopedia of Populism in America: A Historical Encyclopedia (978-1-59884-567-9, $189) “This comprehensive two-volume encyclopedia documents how Populism, which grew out of post-Civil War agrarian discontent, was the apex of populist impulses in American culture from colonial times to the present… The entries spotlight the people, events, organizations, and ideas that created this first major challenge to the two-party system in the United States. Additionally, attention is paid to important historical actors who are not traditionally considered “Populist” but were instrumental in paving the way for the movement — or vigorously resisted Populism’s influence on American culture. This encyclopedia also shows that Populism as a specific movement, and populism as an idea, have served alternately to further equal rights in America — and to limit them.”

CQ Press has just released a title that those of us interested in politics will want to check out.

Encyclopedia of Politics of the American West (9781608719099, $295) “is an A to Z reference work on the political... continued on page 43
for motivation to expand your library’s community partnerships? Do you want to work with an agency outside of your organization to meet the program and information needs of your population? Are you interested in creating a grant-writing team but you’ve been too daunted to try? Grab a copy of Grant Money through Collaborative Partnerships. It will give you the information and confidence to move forward, and it’s a good read to boot.

These two books explore grant funding from very different angles. While Kepler’s edition identifies numerous grant sources, Maxwell’s book is more of a manual for understanding the grant development process and navigating the grant partnership journey. Alone, they each provide a solid springboard for researching and starting a grant application. Together, though, they offer a holistic view of the sources, approaches, and steps to take to apply for and receive a grant. The pair would be an advantageous addition to any library manager’s desk collection. As well, The ALA Book of Library Grant Money should be included in any collection that supports a library school program.

SAGE also has a recent release that a number of folks will want to follow up on as well as a second edition that is set for a July launch. Encyclopedia of Philosophy and the Social Sciences (9781412986892, $350) “is the first of its kind in bringing together philosophy and the social sciences. It is not only about the philosophy of the social sciences but, going beyond that, it is also about the relationship between philosophy and the social sciences... The Entries cover topics of central significance but also those that are both controversial and on the cutting-edge, underlining the unique mark of this Encyclopedia: the interrelationship between philosophy and the social sciences, especially as it is found in fresh ideas and unprecedented hybrid disciplinary areas.”

Encyclopedia of White-Collar and Corporate Crime, Second Edition (9781452225302, $315 prepub.) The first edition was published in 2004 and this new version “captures what has been going on in the news and behind the scenes with new articles and updates to past articles.” Events like “the largest Ponzi scheme in history (Madoff), an ecological disaster caused by British Petroleum and its subcontractors (Gulf Oil Spill), and U.S. Defense Department contractors operating like vigilantes in Iraq (Blackwater)” are discussed in this new edition.

Most, if not all, of these titles will be available electronically. Visit the appropriate Websites for further information.