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Encyclopedia Of The Blues



Synopsis

From cotton fields to international festivals, from Mamie Smith's 1920 recording of Crazy Blues to the young rising stars of today, the growth of the blues has been long and varied. This indispensable reference contains hundreds of entries with detailed examinations of the instruments, trends, recordings, producers, and performers who have helped to popularize blues music. Selected discography. 50 illustrations.

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Customer Reviews

As the title suggests, this volume is an alphabetical look at blues styles and artists from the early part of this century to the present. The biographical entries feature thumbnail sketches, a critical evaluation, and, frequently, photographs. A bibliography is included for further research, and a discography features an album from each of the entries. One minor problem is the lumping together of certain artists by region, giving them less attention than those who appear as a single-name entry. Moreover, placing most Caucasians in a section labeled "white blues" creates more of an apparent racial barrier than most blues musicians would likely accept. Still, this is a sound introduction for libraries with nothing on the blues; libraries that already have titles such as Robert Santelli's *The Big Book of Blues* (LJ 1/94) can pass. Dan Bogey, Clearfield Cty. P.L. Federation, Curwensville, Pa. Copyright 1997 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an alternate Paperback edition.

To enhance entries on topics from blues artist Dave Alexander to Zydeco, this new edition has over 75 black-and-white photographs. In our review of the first edition [RBB Ja 1 93], the Board described this title as a good addition "for libraries with an active blues audience." --This text refers to an alternate Paperback edition.

Great resource on well known and lesser known persons who have influenced the blues.

certainly one of the best books on the blues, from the traditional to the modern. Gerard is a large specialist of American music from Country to American and Amerindian. Hervé Cochard

It is an outstanding well researched book. He does get a bit snippy in his 'White Blues' section. He chides young white players who imitate blues in the 'Northern Folk Boom', while praising young white players of the 'British Blues' movement. He cites Stefan Grossman as one of these admirable British blues artists. Stefan, a great player and transcriber of country blues, is from Brooklyn, New York and has a much greater connection to northern white players. Again, this is a comprehensive and entertaining book. Some of the entertainment comes from Gerard's subtle opinions and personal views. I think he would be pleased with the state of the Blues 20 years after.

I write as a blues fan of forty years standing in order to assure folks that this French fellow knows his stuff. When I first heard about this Encyclopedia 8 years ago, I was concerned that it would be another effete European effort to convince Americans that they have no taste. Au contraire! This is the first survey-type of blues review which does justice to disparate blues streams such as blues shouters (barely touched on in Cohn's book) and boogie woogie, as well as Delta blues and obscure East Texas singers of the Twenties. The Encyclopedia is well-organized, with fine summary essays on various blues streams so that the reader can follow developments on different fronts without having to turn back and forth between essays on individuals. There is a generous serving of individual biographical sketches as well, and Gerard does us the favor of pointing out when certain blues artists are following in the footsteps of others. He also does a good job of including glancing references to less well-known blues artists who are worth investigating later in your blues journey. All in all an excellent reference work with plenty to interest the casual blues fan.

I have the hard-to-find first edition of Gérard Herzhaft's Encyclopedia Of The Blues, the one printed in 1996. It is worth finding if you can. If not, this edition (which I am trying to decide whether

to buy or not) may well be as good or better than the first. The first edition has over 500 pages, but fewer photos I think. Gérard Herzhaft's Encyclopedia Of The Blues is the most accurate, in-depth, and comprehensive collection of Blues musician information I have been able to find anywhere in the past 6 years of being an active Blues fan. I wish Gérard would know how much his great work is appreciated by all of us Blues music fans in the USA and the world. Thank you Gérard.

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