

Synopsis

From Abba to ZZ Top via Oasis, James Brown, and Frank Sinatra, this wonderful resource to the world's nonclassical music has been updated and revised to include a wider range of New World and ethnic musicians from Latin America and Africa along with a range of new entries from the contemporary Brit-pop scene and all of your old favorites. Donald Clarke covers a truly spectacular array of artists, from the early blues (Big Bill Broonzy, Ma Rainey, Bessie Smith) and ragtime Scott Joplin, Eubie Blake) to the golden age of Broadway musicals, the great swing bands of the 1930s, jazz from around the world, American country, English folk, rock 'n' roll, reggae, soul, funk, punk, and the rest. The extensive Index ensures that no songwriter, musician, record label, or musical style is overlooked.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Donald Clarke is the author of *Wishing on the Moon: The Life and Times of Billie Holiday* (Penguin), *The Rise and Fall of Popular Music*, and *All or Nothing at All: A Life of Frank Sinatra*. A graduate of the University of Wisconsin, he lives in Austin, Texas, with his wife and son.

The several different contributors to this book tend to emphasise different aspects of the musicians and their performances, resulting in some highly personal reviews. The quality of writing varies a bit,

too. The last word on The Carpenters, for example, reads: "Karen's solo album was finally released '96, making some fans wonder how long she would have lived if she had been allowed to be herself

Was what I expected, although there was an error with birth year for Alice Cooper, he was born in 1948, in this edition it states 1945.

As another reviewer noted so accurately, this book might lead to depleted wallets for music lovers. I bought it to expand my knowledge of Jazz and Latin Jazz history, and on those topics it is outstanding and indispensable. The nice surprise for me was that the book is as entertaining as it is informative. Potential buyers should be realistic and realize, though, that a TRUE encyclopedia of popular musics, especially if it were to account for more of the world (this edition is very UK/USA-centric) would take many, many more volumes than even this large one. There are some mighty strange omissions, as well as some unusual inclusions. For example, although the book generally covers the history of English rock very well, there are no entries for either Roxy Music or King Crimson. In a perfect world, such sins of omission would be unforgivable, especially since so many throwaway, best-forgotten bands receive detailed entries. Similarly, while there is an entry for the influential USA band Talking Heads, there isn't one for founder David Byrne, who has played an extremely important role in the contemporary popularization of Latin American musics, like it or not. On the other hand, I was amazed at the accuracy and detail of the information on UK punk rock in what could have been a snobbier book in more pretentious hands. There is some good, bitchy gossip here...check out the wicked entry for John Lydon/Johnny Rotten! Music lovers, DO buy this book! Just don't expect it to contain every little detail under the sun on every artist. It's easily worth more than it costs, and will bring you years of armchair pleasure, and very well may expand your horizons and enrich your musical life.

I used this "encyclopedia" (1000 page book) to familiarize myself more with musicians I know well, vaguely remember and wasn't familiar with at all. I am very interested in the reasons why people make certain types of music, and the connections between and influences upon them. This book includes so many, many musicians and groups from the last 100 years or so--all genres, with a little information about each so you get the idea. It's amazing who was whose friend or where certain people hooked up before they became famous, etc. If someone had an influence on trends or other musicians, they're probably in this book! If you're into the history of music at all, this is a great source. I found a lot of good CDs researching this book. Probably there are other such books out

there, but this is the one my local library had!

Don't get me wrong, I HAVE NOT READ the book. I'm going to, but I'll have to wait for sometime before I can lay my hands on it. But, if Clarke really did to the second ed. as what he'd done to the first ed. (1988), then this book deserve to be your ultimate guide to the realm of the popular music. Last word : BEWARE about the effects of reading this book to your financial positions. When I started reading the 1st ed., I've had only a handful of records in my shelves, mostly '80s pop music. With this book, I trekked through the realm of jazz (from Louis to Wynton), Rock (Jim to Van Morrison), Blues (Kings to Rush), Country (Nelson to Parsons, and back) and others. If only the book was about junkfood, I'll be in the hospital right now. (How much did the record companies gave you, Clarke ?)

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