

**Janell R. Duxbury, Rockin' The Classics and Classicizin' The Rock: A Selectively Annotated Discography. Westport, Connecticut; Greenwood Press, 1985; 188 pp.**

It's not a new idea, but this study presents the case in the most thorough and authoritative manner yet available. Janell R. Duxbury dedicates this resource guide "To music lovers everywhere;" however, one suspects that this carefully annotated discography is actually designed for some very specific audiences. The attempt to link contemporary rock sounds to classical roots is a gambit designed to illustrate the musical unity of Western culture. Such a suggestion makes most elite culture enthusiasts ill. Humorously, it also sickens many rock music fans. Yet the reality of borrowing, mixing, and assimilating among American and European music over the past three centuries is undeniable.

Rockin' The Classics and Classicizin' The Rock presents three broad approaches to linking the old music to the new. First, the author presents a discography of 475 rock recordings which directly utilize classical melodies. The sources of borrowed classical themes--composer and work--are specifically identified. Variations range from contemporary renditions of complete classical works that do not stray noticeably from the original, to brief classical quotes or phrases so subtly incorporated into rock compositions that only the most discerning ear could pick them out. In the next section Duxbury compiles 116 recordings which feature orchestral performances of tunes composed and originally released by rock artists. Finally, the author presents a variety of recordings by rock singers performing with accompaniment by orchestras or choruses (in studio and live concert settings), by rock groups simulating a baroque or classical sound structure, and by contemporary classical musicians who have been directly influenced by rock harmonics, exotically tuned guitars, heavy amplification techniques, or even popular culture record packaging (psychedelic covers and picture-disc vinyl). So as not to be accused of overlooking other contemporary versions of classical music, Duxbury also assembles appendices devoted to big band recordings of Dvorak, Wagner, Beethoven, an Tchaikovsky, to jazz albums featuring numbers composed by Mozart and J.S. Bach, to parodies of the classics by Spike Jones and Peter ("P.D.Q. Bach") Schickele, and to country and folk versions of compositions by Handel and J.S. Bach. The notations throughout the text are clear, concise, and detailed. A general index includes the names of classical composers, rock groups and individual artists, orchestras, choruses, orchestra conductors, sound recording producers, and song or instrumental titles.

The scope of Duxbury's examination of the classical roots of rock establishes beyond dispute that Ars Nova, The Beatles, Deodata, The Electric Light Orchestra, Emerson, Lake, and Palmer,

Walter Murphy, Elvis Presley, Sky, The Supremes, Tomita, The Toys, The Ventures, Rick Wakeman, and Jackie Wilson adopted, adapted, and displayed elements of high culture music during their recording careers. This type of assertion demands musicological balance, though. Duxbury points to but a single strand in the complex braid of contemporary music. Latin American influences in rock have been documented by John Storm Roberts and Dave Marsh; African influences have been proclaimed by Eileen Southern, Samuel Charters, and Paul Oliver; and American folk and country influences are championed in the works of many, many scholars. Recent essays by Nick Tosches and George Moonogian, pushing the search for rock's "roots" from the mid-fifties back toward American recording artists and songs of the thirties and forties, reflect the increasingly common notion that contemporary music--from The Rolling Stones to Barry Manilow, from J.B. Hutto to Madonna, and from Eddie Rabbitt to Michael Jackson--was clearly not born in a vacuum. Few popular music scholars or record collectors have ever thought otherwise. But Duxbury's fine work needs a cautionary statement which directly acknowledges the pluralism of rock's heritage. Lacking this, Rockin' The Classics... seems to be pursuing too singular a cultural point.

Every academic library and music archive should secure a copy of this unique discography. Most popular culture scholars and musicologists will also want to obtain the study.

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