

There are nearly 2,000 entries, and the experienced British writer-editors Hardy and Laing explain their criteria clearly in the introduction. They note other writers, such as Tony Russell and Simon Frith, who contributed some of the sketches.

It would take someone of exceedingly wide tastes to be interested in all these listings, and many of the British artists will be unfamiliar to American readers. (For that matter, many of the American artists will be unknown to the American readers).

To give an idea of how wide a net the authors cast, look at some of the alphabetical sequences: The Andrews Sisters followed by The Animals, Iggy Pop followed by Julio Iglesias, Xavier Cugat and Culture Club, Fabian and John Fahey, Charlie Parker and Graham Parker, the Stranglers and Barbra Streisand.

The serious treatment of producers/entrepreneurs such as Lou Adler, Moe Asch (Folkways Records), the Bihari Brothers (Modern Records), Wes Farrell, Jack Good, Don Kirshner and Don (Duke Records) Robey also is long overdue.

Most entries consist of three to five paragraphs, but more comprehensive listings appear for bands and artists such as the Beach Boys, the Beatles, Creedence Clearwater Revival, the Everly Brothers, Jimi Hendrix, the Kinks, the Rolling Stones, Hank Williams, and the Who.

There is a glossary, but no discographies, and if both U. K. and American record labels are applicable, usually only the British one is chosen. Birthdates often are listed.

Members of bands and personnel changes are detailed. Did you know that Dave White, born David White Tricker, was replaced by Bill Carlucci in Danny And The Juniors? Now you know also that in the Village People, Victor Willis was replaced by Ray Simpson, who was replaced by Miles Jaye.

Occasionally, there is the minor error: Joe Boyd did not produce the first R.E.M. album, and the book incorrectly lists them as REM. However, the copy appears free of errors for the most part, and the typeface is easy to read. Artists who have their own listings are noted in other entries in boldface type.

There is no index, and no photos save on the cover sleeve. In an attempt to be all-inclusive, the writing at times wanders off into tangents.

But the major achievement here is undeniable. And at \$29.95, the value for libraries and private collections is evident. This sets the standard for all future pop music reference works.

A welcome companion indeed. *Reviewed by Bruce Rosenstein*

Picture Discs of the World. Price Guide and International Reference Book For Picture Records: 1923-1989.

By Joe Lindsay with Peter Bukoski and Marc Grobman. Scottsdale, AZ: BIODisc, 1990. 205 pp., illus., ISBN 0-9617347-2-8. Softbound, \$22.95. Hardbound edition also available. Available from BIODisc, P.O. Box 8221, Scottsdale, AZ 85251.

Probably the most popular article that this reviewer has ever written was a history and discography of Vogue picture records, published in *Record Research* in 1977. I still get letters about it. Picture discs have been one of the explosive growth areas in record collecting during the past decade. Beginning with the pictorial 78s produced by RCA Victor in the 1930s and Vogue (U.S.) in the late 1940s, check-wielding collectors have driven up the prices of thousands of 78s, LPs, 45s and even postcard recordings that bear all manner of illustrations, from the artistic to the

pornographic. The huge wave of LP picture disc releases during 1978-1980 was an example of industry hype that failed commercially, but left collectors with a lifetime of examples to collect.

With all this interest, it was inevitable that we would eventually have a price guide to picture discs, and this volume is exactly that. Make no mistake, this is not a scholarly history of picture discs, and it would probably be called a discography only in the rock field, where standards are abysmally low. There are no recording dates, no details on performers or album contents, no master numbers or release information. However, listings appear for nearly 6,000 items (!) from the 1920s to the 1980s, with copious illustrations. The pictures alone are worth the price of the book—more than 800 black and white photos and nearly 100 in color, all excellent reproductions on slick paper with careful identification. The pictorial coverage is extremely broad, ranging from the earliest to the latest examples, in all fields of music and speech.

Picture Discs of the World is divided into two principal sections, microgroove (140 pp.) arranged by artist, and 78 rpm (34 pp.) organized by manufacturer. The organization is accessible but idiosyncratic, as is often the case with self-published books. For example, there is an artist index to the microgroove section—which is already in artist order—with cross references found in the index but not in the main listings, where you would expect them. Some 78 rpm artists are listed in the microgroove index, some in a separate 78 rpm index, and some in neither.

The authors sprinkle short descriptive comments with stars instead of normal punctuation, which results in choppy reading (e.g., “Phonopress/Nescafe ** Holland * promotional * ‘rectangle’ shaped postcard * cardboard * 1957”). And the typefaces are, well, ugly. But one buys a book such as this for information, not beauty, and there is an admirable amount of that.

Most entries give artist, record size, song title or LP name (but not contents), catalog number, country of origin, estimated value, and a short text entry with descriptive information, including number of copies pressed (if known) and “year” (of release?). The microgroove section is made up primarily of rock LPs, including many non-U.S. items, although there are plenty of non-rock surprises. Did you know about Mr. T’s picture LP, or Groucho Marx’s, or Britt Ekland’s very sexy release? The 78 rpm section is an eclectic mix, including popular, classical and children’s records, and even Nazi propaganda discs.

Incidentally, all of these discs have a spindle hole—it’s hard to play the record without it—and it is amusing to note the awkward position the little hole occupies in the illustration. Often it is drilled smack in the middle of the artist’s forehead or throat, like a bullet hole left by some angry buyer who wanted music, not cheap art. Once in a while the location is intentionally, or unintentionally, hilarious. The Eurythmics’ Annie Lennox seems to have a round fly landing on her nose; Tina Turner and Jimi Hendrix something disgusting falling out of theirs; the Monkees’ Mickey Dolenz a round piece of tin in his ear (appropriate?); Elvis a hickey on his chin; and Alfred E. Newman, a round false tooth. On some of the more salacious discs, you can imagine where on the artist’s body the little hole appears.

The U.S. Vogue label of the 1940s is rather thoroughly covered, although with less discographic detail than in my *Record Research* series a dozen years ago. Another label that I checked for accuracy was RCA Victor of the 1930s. Of the 30 known 1930s Victor picture discs, 24 are listed in *Picture Discs of the World* (missing are 17-4001, 17-5003, 18-6001, 18-6002, a variant of 18-6003, and X-1000). Not a bad start on a rather obscure and ill-publicized series, but obviously not complete.

Unfortunately, some of the information given for the Victor discs is erroneous. The series was launched in late 1932, not in 1931. Number 17-4000 is not by "Leo Reisman & His Orchestra with Janet Gaynor and Henry Garat" (Gaynor was the star of the film from which the songs were taken; her picture is on the recording, but not her voice). The recordings "Habenera" and "Miramar" are by Pablo de Sarasate, not "Pablo Sarosote." (Rock fans always seem to want to be on a first name basis with their subjects; in describing a variant pressing of this disc the author remarks "actual music on this disc is by Jimmie Rodgers, not Pablo." Hi, Pablo.) No hint is given of the remarkable origin of the Sarasate titles, which were recorded for G&T in Paris in 1904.

No. 18-6004, probably an unissued variant, is misprinted 16-6004, and the content is attributed to Jimmie Rodgers rather than to Johnny Marvin, the actual performer. The 2000 series mistakenly is shown as 12-inch rather than 10-inch, and numbers 221-226 as six-inch rather than seven-inch. Number 39001, "Music in the Air," is given as "Music Is in the Air." This is, incidentally, the most frequently found Victor picture disc.

The current value given for the Victor picture discs is generally in the \$100 to \$300 range, which seems about right in today's market. The Caruso picture disc is said to be worth \$350/\$450, and the ultra-rare Jimmie Rodgers disc, \$1200/\$1800. The compilers of this book have an enormous collection of these records, and will no doubt be able to retire in style if they can realize such prices.

The whole subject of price guides is controversial. For those who see only dollar signs in these (or any) recordings, I feel sorry. They are missing a great deal.

Despite its shortcomings, *Picture Discs of the World* is a landmark publication, both for its breadth and its excellent illustrations. The price is reasonable, and until something better comes along—for which I would not hold my breath—it is strongly recommended to anyone interested in this field. *Reviewed by Tim Brooks*

Vogue: The Picture Record.

By Edgar L. Curry. Everett, Washington: The author, 1990. 92 pp. \$19.95. Available from the author, 8502 8th Avenue W., Everett, WA 98204.

The colorful Vogue Picture Records produced in the U.S. between 1946 and 1947 have become highly collectible in recent years. This is certainly not due to the quality of the music, most of which is quite pedestrian late-1940s pop material (although a few sides by jazzman Charlie Shavers, bandleader Art Mooney and a country band called the Down Homers, which may have included a young Bill Haley, stand out). The interest is probably due more to Vogue's gaudy, campy illustrations, which are prototypically "forties." Even contemporary reviewers called them "glam-puss discs" and, less kindly, "coal company calendar art."

Collector Edgar Curry has put together a remarkably professional-looking small book on the label, highlighted by large size photographs of all 67 single 78s and eight 78 rpm albums known to have been released. In addition, several misnumberings and other rarities are pictured. Most of the many illustrations are in black and white, although a few are reproduced in the gloriously garish full color for which Vogue is famous.

In addition to the pictorial directory, Mr. Curry has reprinted, with minor updates, a history of the label as written by this reviewer, which originally appeared in *Record Research* magazine in 1977. The article includes information from several