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[Review of] AMG All-music Guide

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Internet Resource

AMG all-music guide.

Internet Resource. <http://www.allmusic.com/>

[Revisited May'05] Now in its 10th year, this site (first reviewed CH, Sup'98, 35SUP-121) has a new interface and added content and features. The designers' commitment to accuracy, currency, and comprehensiveness continues, compensating for the site's unrelenting advertisements. Contributors (among them William Ruhlman, Bill Dahl, Bill Janovitz, Bryan Reesman) provide biographies, reviews, and essays on popular music and, with the latest revision, classical music. Those wishing to access all features (e.g., advanced searching, music samples) must register. A basic search by name, album, song, or classical work appears on all pages; a clunky advanced search allows specialized searches, including full text. Coverage is impressive: 786,000 albums (263,000 reviews), 6 million samples, 265,000 classical compositions, and 76,000 biographies. The site's strengths continue to be the biographies, recording credits, and internal links to performers and reviews. Music samples require Windows Media Player. Samples are often available for all of a recording's songs at 30 seconds per song and for specific recordings or performers with three 10-second samples of limited usefulness. Discographies are updated quickly, sometimes just days after release. Capsule biographies, updated less frequently, are substantive and analytical; William Ruhlman's entry on Peter Himmelman is a glaring exception. Sidebars cross-reference influences and influenced artists and show photos and cover art. Additional essays offer thematic overviews. The site performs best in Internet Explorer (IE) and well in other Windows browsers. Macintosh users should avoid IE and use FireFox or Netscape; advanced search does not work on Safari. Whatever the browser, the site is fast. *AMG* is self-contained except for the ads. Those seeking outside links should be aware of *Artist Direct* www.ubl.com, its many nonfunctional links notwithstanding; it also reproduces and credits *AMG*'s biographies but is a far less useful reference tool. **Summing Up:** Essential. All collections; all levels.

--R. A. Aken, *University of Kentucky*

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Grove music online

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