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[Review of] The Rough Guide to Rock

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The Rough guide to rock.

Internet Resource. <http://www.roughguides.com/rock/rockhome.html>

Providing the complete text of *Rock: The Rough Guide* (1996), with some updating and additions, this straightforward collection of short, pithy biographies includes birth/formation dates, home base of the performers, a representative quotation, and a selected, briefly annotated list of recordings. The Web masters ask for help from visitors, and given the variety of contributors, the entries are surprisingly consistent in their readability and correctness. A clickable alphabet on each page leads users to a list of performers. Some entries link to other Web sites, some include pictures. The collection is not searchable, but there are cross-references to other entries. The perspective (and spelling) is primarily British, but coverage is worldwide and broad--including influences like Robert Johnson, major soul groups of the 1960s, and new bands like Gomez. Among the significant omissions: Peter Himmelman, Lida Husik, K's Choice, Mojave Three, Our Lady Peace, Samples, Smithereens, Young Dubliners; despite claims of regular updating, the site suffers from some lack of currency (when this reviewer visited, some 1998-99 releases were not mentioned, though Mark Sandman's July 1999 death was). Though it claims to be the "biggest rock guide on the web," with 1,200 entries this site is well below the 30,000 entries on the *All-Music Guide* <http://allmusic.com/> (CH, Sep'99). But although this site loads quickly and is easy to navigate, the Web has not significantly enhanced the paper copy. In print, *The Guinness Encyclopedia of Popular Music*, ed. by Colin Larkin (2nd ed., CH, Sep'96), and *The Encyclopedia of Popular Music*, also ed. by Larkin (1998), are still the most complete guides; *All-Music Guide's* extensive discographies and cross-references to recordings, performers, and technicians make it the premier resource on the Web. Nonetheless, *The Rough Guide* is worth consulting for the advantages mentioned above and its occasionally more lengthy entries.

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

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