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[Review of] Soul Music A-Z

Robert A. Aken

University of Kentucky, robaken@uky.edu

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Gregory, Hugh. **Soul music A-Z**. Blandford, 1992, (c1991). (Dist. by Sterling) 266p
bibl ISBN 0713721790, \$24.95

Gregory (writer and researcher for a British film company) has compiled this biographical guide to soul personalities, primarily performers but also producers, label owners, and writers. Although he defines soul in a broad sense (excluding rap and hip hop but including such names as Van Morrison, Robert Palmer, and Delbert McClinton), Gregory stays essentially true to covering those whose music and style reflect a blend of rhythm and blues and gospel. The more than 600 alphabetically arranged entries include brief biographical sketches (averaging 300-500 words) that include songs that made the charts (with UK and US top listings and date), and selective discographies. Irwin Stambler's *Encyclopedia of Pop, Rock, and Soul* (rev. ed., 1989; 1st ed., CH, May'75) lists 120 figures in common with Gregory (the major names one would expect, including Marvin Gaye, James Brown, Al Green, and Sam Cooke) with longer entries. Gregory's work suffers from typos, comma splices, run-ons, and other evidence of sloppy editing--e.g., "Pittsburg, Philadelphia" for "Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania" (p. 60)--but he does provide basic biographical information on a number of lesser-known soul music figures and groups, e.g., Al Bell (head of promotion at Stax), Chairmen of the Board, and Teddy Riley. Stambler does not cover songwriters; Gregory lists Holland and Dozier as well as Goffen and King. This work will prove a useful starting point for those interested in pursuing the personalities of this very influential aspect of popular music.

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

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