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[Review of] The Penguin Encyclopedia of Popular Music

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Orig

Clarke, Donald. **The Penguin encyclopedia of popular music**. Viking, 1989. 1378p
index ISBN 0670803499, \$40.00

Clarke, a native of Wisconsin, focuses on the full range of 20th-century popular music in nearly 3,000 entries (averaging 200-250 words). Most of the alphabetically arranged entries cover performers (both groups and individuals), but songwriters, producers, record labels, and styles are also included. Cross-references are included in the body of the text, and 4,500 entries are included in a very good analytical index (which covers primarily individuals--inclusion of songs and albums would enhance its usefulness tremendously). The telegramlike brevity of the entries is annoying, but the detail is quite good for such short entries, and most entries include critical commentary. The coverage is very broad, including such diverse names as Miles Davis, Joe Pass, Marty Robbins, Bill Monroe, the Andrews Sisters, Fred Astaire, and Grupo Niche, as well as the expected rock and roll and current popular personalities. Coverage of minor artists is good but haphazard: Joy of Cooking is included, but not It's a Beautiful Day, Osibisa but not Mandrill, Albion Band but not John Hiatt or Adrian Belew. Typographical errors and misinformation are rare (e.g., Joan Armatrading's "Shouting Stage" is listed as "Shooting Stage"). Although not covering the terminology of popular music as well as Arnold Shaw in the Dictionary of American Pop/Rock (CH, Jun'83) or providing as much detail as Irwin Stamber's Encyclopedia of Pop, Rock, and Soul (2nd ed., 1989; 1st ed., CH, May'75), Clarke provides one of the better one-volume overviews of popular music. Both public and academic libraries at all levels.

--R. A. Aken, University of Kentucky

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