[Review of] Encyclopedia of Punk Music and Culture

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Cogan (Molloy College) draws on his long-term involvement with punk culture as writer and musician to create this broad-based, up-to-date guide to the performers, publications, labels, venues, and terminology of punk. The more than 600 entries are alphabetically arranged, and can also be found via a topical guide and analytical index (that unfortunately misses many textual references). The US–British focus is enhanced by brief overviews for selected countries with punk scenes. Entries are concise (most are under two pages) and include biographical details and discographies for performers, with occasional black-and-white photos. The work’s strength is the analytical discussion of styles (e.g., emo, hardcore, straight edge); city scenes; gender, sexual, and political issues; and influences (e.g., reggae, rockabilly, Captain Beefheart), with coverage inclusive of 1960s protopunk through each evolution of the following 40 years. Few influential figures are missing, although recent significant bands like Hatebreed and Against Me! are notably absent. Cross-references allow readers to follow relationships throughout the work. Sloppy editing detracts from this unique reference tool: several entries are marred by typos, diction and tense errors, and unintentional repetition; one hopes these are cleaned up in later printings and editions. At the time of this review, The Rough Guide to Punk, by Al Spicer (2006), advertised as presenting 250 profiles with critical reviews and entries on venues, styles, etc., was still in press. Summing Up: Recommended. All levels.

--R. A. Aken, University of Kentucky

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