[Review of] Encyclopedia of Pop, Rock & Soul

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Philadelphia. However, Bob behind Live Aid, is nowhere to
ted in favor of Richard Marx,
neric but popular musicians
Grandmaster Flash and the
es and legends such as Lead­
rs' decisions on who to cover.
the appendix with a sentence or two
es of this book have been
ersonalities, directories of
orman Whitfield, or other
 comprehensive rock music
39, pp. 1802-03; VOYA, June


This second edition of Stambler's work updates and adds to the excellent biographical essays that appeared in the first edition (see ARBA 76, entry 1030). Over 500 entries aim "to reflect all of the pivotal influences in the evolution of today's popular music spectrum" (p. ix) by focusing on superstars and groups, both representative and influential. Alphabetically arranged entries (averaging 800 to 1,000 words) give birth date and place of all individuals and biographical essays (including interview quotations) with often only selective discographies. Length of entry seems to coincide with importance, but it is hard to accept five and a half columns on Abba and nearly four on Be Bop Deluxe while Jackson Browne gets only two and the Beatles not quite six (although individual members of the Beatles do have separate entries). Notable exclusions include America, John Hiatt, and REM. For substantial overviews of the major artists, however, Stambler's work surpasses the shorter but more numerous entries of Mike Clifford's The Harmony Illustrated Encyclopedia of Rock (see ARBA 87, entry 1268) and The Rolling Stone Encyclopedia of Rock and Roll (Summit, 1983) (which does include complete discographies), as well as the broader chronological coverage of Donald Clarke's The Penguin Encyclopedia of Popular Music (Viking, 1989). [R: LJ, 15 Feb 89, p. 156; RBB, 15 June 89, pp. 1802-03]—ROBERT AKEN