

Century Culture (Routledge, 1982), in this two-volume set he includes entries on nineteenth-century figures, such as Darwin, Marx, and Lincoln, who have had a profound influence on today's culture. Entries range in length from a half-page to six pages and include a list of further reading.

New Makers of Modern Culture makes for fascinating reading. In the introduction to the 1981 edition, the editor states that he does not try to impose a uniformity of style on the contributors, as that would lead to "the crabbed and clipped prose style that, in many reference-books, only ossifies its subject matter" (xvi). This freedom of style persists in the new edition. Because the contributors are writing interpretively about their subjects, some entries contain an element of opinion as well as language that is far different from that of the average biographical compendium. The entry on Saul Bellow, for instance, uses the phrase "as the arteries hardened" to describe Bellow's attitudes in his later years, and the Monty Python entry is written tongue-in-cheek from start to finish.

Although reference librarians may find this set very readable and full of insights, they are undoubtedly going to have problems employing it in reference work. The contributors have been charged with interpreting their subject's influence on modern culture, so the entries include the most minimal biographical information. Also, the extraordinarily wide range of coverage and the rather amorphous nature of culture will make it a difficult source for reference staff to remember to consult. For instance, among the entries are excellent essays on Eldridge Cleaver and on post-modernist figures Jacques Derrida and Michel Foucault. When looking for information on Cleaver, however, a much more likely strategy would be to seek out a reference work focused on African Americans or on activists of the sixties. When helping a patron find background information on postmodernism, a busy reference librarian needing to quickly find the best print or online reference resource would most likely go to a title such as *Encyclopedia of Postmodernism* (Routledge, 2001), which is clearly focused on the subject.

New Makers of Modern Culture is a unique and fascinating work that analyzes the contributions of many disparate people to contemporary culture. Although it has drawbacks as a reference source, it is a worthy addition to any large academic or public library's collection.—*Peter Bliss, Reference Librarian, University of California–Riverside*

Opera: An Encyclopedia of World Premieres and Significant Performances, Singers, Composers, Librettists, Arias, and Conductors, 1597–2000. By Franklin Mesa. Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland, 2007. 474p. alkaline \$145 (ISBN 0-7864-0959-2).

Mesa's principal goal for this encyclopedia is to provide information on two opera topics that are not thoroughly covered in existing reference works: details of first and other significant performances, and information on forgotten and neglected works, including recent American operas. There are entries for 1,153 works. Each entry gives the composer; librettist; literary model for the libretto, where appropriate;

date, place, venue, and principal soloists of the first performance; setting; and list of characters. Many entries also include a select list of aria titles and brief information on subsequent performances. Fully one-third of the encyclopedia is devoted to a separate section of singer biographies. The single index covers personal names, cities, and opera houses.

Unfortunately, some of the editorial choices and many aspects of presentation make this encyclopedia both difficult to use and of limited utility. Rather than provide separate entries for composers, conductors, and librettists as he does for singers, Mesa incorporates this information into the individual opera entries—at times, it seems, randomly. With information spread across multiple entries, the result is considerable duplication, difficulty of retrieval, and inconsistency. For example, four of the five entries that reference conductor Thomas Schippers include lengthy but not identical biographical sketches, while the fifth entry has only a single sentence. As another example, fourteen entries must be consulted to extract all that the author has to say about conductor Arturo Toscanini. Each entry is presented as a single paragraph block, making it difficult to scan for specific details, especially when the information takes the form of lists (singers, arias, characters).

Also awkward and inconsistent is the presentation of names. Full names are always given in inverted order, regardless of context. If there is a corresponding entry in the singer biography section, the name is flagged with an asterisk. But many performers are identified only by last name, and none are marked with an asterisk, even when there is a corresponding biographical entry. Much other basic information is absent. Characters are not identified by their voice range, nor are performers matched with the roles they sang. Furthermore, the attempt to identify the leading female singer by invoking Italian terminology has resulted in a significant error: the term "primo soprano" (first soprano) is given incorrectly throughout as "prima soprano." Finally, despite the incorporation of numerous aria lists and the inclusion of arias in the encyclopedia's title, this work cannot be used to match an aria title to its parent opera as there is no aria index.

This attempt to fill a perceived gap in the reference literature on opera is largely unsuccessful and should be considered, with serious reservations, only by libraries that collect comprehensively in this area. Other libraries seeking an opera encyclopedia should consider instead the four-volume *The New Grove Dictionary of Opera* (Oxford Univ. Pr., 1992, reprinted in 2004), which also is available electronically as part of *Grove Music Online, International Dictionary of Opera* (Saint James Pr., 1993, 2 vols.) or *The New Penguin Opera Guide* (Penguin, 2001).—*Paul Cauthen, Assistant Music Librarian, University of Cincinnati, Ohio*

The Oxford Companion to World Exploration. Ed. by David Buisseret. New York: Oxford Univ. Pr., 2007. 2 vols. alkaline \$250 (ISBN 0-19-514922-X).

In the introduction, editor David Buisseret acknowledges the difficulty of understanding exactly what a "companion"

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is meant to be. He comes to the conclusion that it should be understood in the light of friendship, comfort, and reassurance. The information in these volumes, therefore, is intended to be approachable, informative, and of interest to a varied audience. The term “exploration” also is difficult to define, and in this work is taken at its broadest, though somewhat subjective, connotation. Buisseret has made an effort to include many non-western explorers and topics and admits to a prejudice in favor of women because their role has “often been overlooked” (xxiv). This is possibly an allowable prejudice.

Oxford Companion to World Exploration is organized alphabetically, with people, places, and concepts intermingled. It has an impressive, extensive list of international contributors, and all the entries are signed. The length of each entry depends on the importance and breadth of the subject, and each has a brief bibliography, with some sources annotated. Reputable Web sites, such as MapHist and The Map History Discussion List (www.maphist.nl), are occasionally included. See also references are included where appropriate.

Illustrations and maps accompanying the entries are black-and-white, with color plates of maps and illustrations grouped together and referred to in the body of the entries. Many of the illustrations are historic photographs, works of art, and illustrations from rare books and manuscripts, which certainly add to the interest of the topics. The *Companion* is published in association with the Newberry Library, and their extensive collection is well-represented in the illustrations and maps.

The topics and people included in the work are varied and eclectic. An example is “Medical aspects of exploration,” which was unexpected but very interesting and informative. Aspects of space exploration also are included in the work—coverage is sporadic, but adequate for a general resource such as this. Another concept that isn’t usually found in works such as this is “Literary Representations.” For example, the entry “Pacific: Literary Representations” focuses on the Pacific in literature rather than eyewitness discovery accounts.

Several other resources can be found that are similar to this one. The *Encyclopedia of Exploration* (Facts On File, 2004) is another two-volume work. It separates the entries between explorers (volume 1) and places, techniques, and cultural trends (volume 2). I prefer the alphabetical format of the *Oxford Companion to World Explorations* and find the entries in it more interesting and diverse than those in the Facts On File work. One of the best resources on world exploration is, sadly, out of print. *Times Atlas of World Exploration: 3,000 Years of Exploring, Explorers, and Mapmaking* (HarperCollins, 1991) is a beautiful work that cannot be matched in color illustrations and maps.

Oxford Companion to World Explorations is well-written and provides an interesting, diverse overview of world exploration. I recommend it, with reservation, to high school, large public, and university libraries. My reservation is that the most interesting reading in the volumes is found mostly by browsing, and most library users are not likely to be

browsing a reference work.—Suzanne T. Larsen, Faculty Director, Jerry Crail Johnson Earth Sciences and Map Library and Oliver C. Lester Mathematics and Physics Library, University of Colorado, Boulder

Renaissance and Reformation. Ed. by James A. Patrick. Tarrytown, N.Y.: Marshall Cavendish, 2007. 6 vols. acid free \$469.95 (ISBN 0-7614-7650-4).

Surveying European history from 1300 to 1700, this lavishly illustrated encyclopedia features 158 articles by thirty-nine scholars on the leading figures, places, and events of the Renaissance and the Reformation. The encyclopedia is divided into six volumes, with five containing articles and the sixth providing a variety of supplementary materials. Arranged alphabetically, the articles cover the breadth and scope of Europe during these periods of dramatic change, constant upheaval, artistic triumph, and technological development. Topics include biographies of artists, writers, rulers, popes, and families, such as Lucrezia Borgia, Giotto, Leo X, Machiavelli, Thomas More, and the Viscontis; articles on specific countries, such as England, the Italian city-states, Poland, and Switzerland; and entries that provide an overview of broad concepts, such as agriculture, astrology, banking, education, exploration, Islam, medicine, music, warfare, and women. Volume 1 provides a useful thematic index to the articles divided into the following categories: architecture, painting, and sculpture; daily life; literature and music; people; philosophy, religion, and scholarship; places; politics and economics; the Reformation and the Counter-Reformation; rulers and ruling families; science, technology, and exploration; and wars and battles.

The sixth volume in the set provides a variety of useful tools, including a detailed timeline; a helpful glossary of terms; resources for further studies, including both books and journals; “places to go,” which is primarily a listing of museums (the Galleria Borghese in Rome is inexplicably omitted even though it contains the best examples of Bernini’s work); Internet resources; and resources for young readers. There also are eight indexes, including an index to the maps, six thematic indexes, and a comprehensive index. Each volume also has an index limited to that particular volume. In reality, except for the index to the maps, the comprehensive index alone would suffice in place of the thematic and individual volume indexes because it contains the entries from all the other indexes.

In comparison to other encyclopedias of either the Renaissance or the Reformation, the articles in *Renaissance and Reformation* provide greater depth for the selected topics. The shortest article is four pages in length, while many exceed ten pages. Other encyclopedias, such as *Encyclopedia of Italian Renaissance and Mannerist Art* (Macmillan, 2000), *Encyclopedia of Renaissance Literature* (Facts On File, 2006), *Encyclopedia of the Renaissance and the Reformation* (Facts On File, 2004), or *The Hutchinson Encyclopedia of the Renaissance* (Westview, 1999), either focus on specific aspects, such as art