

Sullivan writes on aspects of American popular culture. In the *Encyclopedia of Great Popular Song Recordings*, Sullivan compiles over 1,000 recorded songs gleaned from numerous discographies, charts, best lists, historical studies, periodicals, and listening. His selection of songs, which range from the Gay Nineties into the twenty-first century, is based on a “weighted point system” and, as he admits, “personal taste.” The songs are then divided and chronologically arranged into ten titled “playlists,” each of which Sullivan believes presents “a reasonable balance of eras and genres” (viii).

When compared to Chris Smith’s *101 Albums That Changed Popular Music* (Oxford, 2009) or Nigel Harrison’s *Songwriters: A Biographical Dictionary with Discographies* (McFarland, 1998), Sullivan emphasizes the qualities of the performance of a particular song over the album as a whole or the perspective of the composer. This he does in a good degree of detail; some of the song articles range up to five columns in length.

Sullivan states that the playlists themselves are ranked, with the songs in playlist 1 being “the greatest classics of all, and down from there” (viii). This leaves one to puzzle over what inspired the particular playlist titles. For example, how are the songs in “Playlist 4: Good Rockin’ Tonight, 1904–2005” greater than those in “Playlist 5: Jazzocracy, 1897–2010” or lesser than those in “Playlist 1: Crazy Blues, 1906–2004”? Perhaps some guidance on what characteristics to look for in a particular song grouping would also have been helpful.

This said, the encyclopedia is likely to stimulate some thinking on the part of the reader. One of Sullivan’s goals is to erase the artificial boundaries that distinguish one genre from another (ix). For example, in the chapter titled “Playlist 3: Sitting on Top of the World, 1890—2011,” he includes, to interesting effect, the Johnny Mathis rendition of Erroll Garner’s *Misty* and the Rolling Stones’ *Sympathy for the Devil*. The encyclopedia also looks soundly documented. There are footnotes on each page, a lengthy bibliography classified by topic, and a scattering of documented photographs.

The plethora of informed books that sets out to weigh “the best” in music is bound to be subjective to a certain degree. It is this subjectivity that often makes them engaging to their readers, who enjoy comparing their own insights and opinions to those of the writer’s. While it is not a replacement for the numerous discographies that already line library shelves, *Encyclopedia of Great Popular Song Recordings* is a good supplementary title for any academic or public library that serves interests in popular music.—Nevin J. Mayer, *Instruction Coordinator, John Carroll University, University Heights, Ohio*

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***Encyclopedia of Latino Culture: From Calaveras to Quinceañeras.*** Ed. by Charles M. Tatum. *Cultures of the American Mosaic*. Santa Barbara, CA: Greenwood, 2013. 3 vols. acid free \$294 (ISBN: 978-1-4408-0098-6). E-book available (978-1-4408-0099-3), call for pricing.

Back in 1992, my first year on the library faculty at New Mexico State University in Las Cruces, I remember talking

with my colleague Donald Barclay (now Interim University Librarian at the University of California-Merced) about the lack of reference materials for students researching topics from their own Mexican American/Chicano/Latino/Hispano heritage—things like *El Día de los Muertos*, *quinceañeras*, Spanglish, Homies or *descansos*. Donald joked, “Just tell them to look it up in *‘The Quinceañera Encyclopedia.’*” Well, that was twenty-two years ago and nothing of the kind existed, though New Mexico’s population then (and now) was nearly 50 percent Hispanic. Since 2000, the Hispanic/Latino population nationwide has increased by more than 40 percent—a demographic shift reflected in the availability of many reference materials like this excellent new work edited by University of Arizona scholar Charles Tatum.

While acknowledging the predominance of Mexican heritage among Hispanic/Latino Americans, the *Encyclopedia of Latino Culture* includes information on traditions from other nationalities and ethnic origins—from Central and South America, Cuba, Puerto Rico, and other Caribbean nations. However, the index contains no entries for Nicaragua, Guatemala, El Salvador, Panama or the Dominican Republic, though Cuba and Puerto Rico figure prominently as would seem appropriate based upon the relative influence of those cultures in the United States population as a whole. It is important to note that by far, most of the articles in the reference work are about Mexican cultural influences in the United States.

The encyclopedia offers a brief overview of Latin American and Latino history, a chronology, and a useful discussion of the varied and sometimes confusing terms used to identify Latino/Hispanic Americans. The bulk of the articles that follow—written by more than 150 contributors with a variety of academic expertise in the arts and humanities—describe and comment upon cultural expressions arranged alphabetically: arts, celebrations and holidays, family and community, food, literature, media and sports, music and dance, religion and spirituality, and theater. Under each of these major themes is an alphabetical arrangement of subtopics—a blend of thematic and alphabetical arrangement that does not add to ease of use. Various “Spotlights” appear throughout the volumes focusing on celebrities, historical figures, artists, or something else that did not fit into the main sequence.

To find any particular topic, the user must consult both the table of contents and the index at the end of the third volume. A reference work arranged this way must rely on its index to point the user to what might be relevant material contained within various entries. However, in my scan of the index, I found difficulties such as: *descansos* spelled *descanos*, Baez spelled Boez, Tejano music listed only under “Music, Tejano,” Selena Quintanilla Perez listed only under “Quintanilla,” as well as many compound expressions beginning with the Spanish articles *el, la, los, las* listed only once under the article and not at all under the accompanying noun.

The comprehensive *Encyclopedia Latina: History, Culture and Society in the United States*, edited by Ilan Stavans (Grolier Academic Reference, 2005), covers a wider range of topics