

## Reference Books

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Editor

**Art Song Composers of Spain: An Encyclopedia.** By Suzanne R. Draayer. Lanham, Md.: Scarecrow, 2009. 544p. Alkaline \$75 (ISBN 978-0-8108-6362-0).

Suzanne Rhodes Draayer's *Art Song Composers of Spain: An Encyclopedia* fills a major gap in the literature. Although categorized as an encyclopedia, the overall organization is historical with biographical entries for each historical period divided into groups of major and minor composers. Each entry comprises a biographical essay, a complete list of songs and other important works, a discography, and a bibliography. Many entries also include musical analysis and musical examples. Also noteworthy is an overview of the place of the arts in Spanish history and politics and an introductory chapter on Spanish song types and the "Spanish sound." There is a general bibliography, composer index, and index of song titles. One of the recurring themes in the author's discussion is the general lack of availability and poor distribution of printed editions of this repertoire. To help address this issue, the author has assembled in the appendix a list of currently available scores documenting the Spanish song repertoire. As an alternative, there is some coverage of this material in *The Spanish Song Companion*, devised and translated by Jacqueline Cockburn and Richard Stokes (Scarecrow, 2006), although this work is primarily devoted to English translations of song texts. Broader and more comprehensive coverage of Spanish music is provided by the *Diccionario de la Música Española e Hispanoamericana* (Sociedad General de Autores y Editores, 1999–2001). Although *Art Song Composers of Spain: An Encyclopedia* goes a long way to fill a major gap in the literature, it is nonetheless a specialized resource and recommended primarily for large music collections and collections that focus on Spanish culture and language.—Paul Cauthen, Assistant Music Librarian, University of Cincinnati, Ohio

**Broadway Plays and Musicals: Descriptions and Essential Facts of More Than 14,000 Shows through 2007.** By Thomas S. Hischak. Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland, 2009. 644p. Alkaline \$295 (ISBN 978-0-7864-3448-0).

Thomas Hischak knows his theatre—and anyone researching plays or musicals will certainly be well acquainted with his work. Hischak is the author of many significant reference sources, including *The Oxford Companion to the American Musical* (2008), *The Oxford Companion to American Theatre* (2004), and *American Plays and Musicals on Screen* (McFarland, 2005). While these previous works have been focused on either musicals or plays, his new work, *Broadway Plays and Musicals: Descriptions and Essential Facts of More Than*

*14,000 Shows through 2007*, erases that division and presents a comprehensive list of all Broadway productions from 1919 through 2007.

Hischak presents a chronicle of Broadway over the last eighty years, providing an alphabetical list of shows that includes premiere date, theatre name, number of performances, principal author and actor information, a brief plot summary of the show, and critical reception or other noteworthy information regarding the production. Productions are listed in chronological order in a later section. It is the combination of both factual and plot information for plays and musicals that makes this a unique resource. While standard reference books such as Richard C. Norton's *A Chronology of American Musical Theatre* (Oxford, 2002) or Samuel Leiter's *The Encyclopedia of the New York Stage* series (Greenwood, 1985–) contain some of the same information, neither present it with the same depth and breadth as seen here.

In defining the scope of his project, Hischak adheres to an established classification for Broadway theatres, noting that "contractually, a 'Broadway house' is one of some forty theatres in midtown Manhattan designated by the various unions for a 'Broadway contract'" (1). He uses 1919 as a starting date for two reasons: the increased number of theatrical productions following World War I, and after this date, "most of the theatre activity was finally centered in the Times Square area as new playhouses were built in the district and older, outlying theatres were considered Off Broadway (although that term would not be widely used until the 1940s)" (1). It should be noted that he has also included six hundred of what he has defined as "Notable Productions Before 1919"—these exceptions can be easily found in the chronological index.

The book has a steep price of \$295, but its all-encompassing presentation of both theatre and musical theatre productions distinguishes it from other reference books that may be owned already. It is recommended for all collections that support theatre and music programs, in addition to general reference.—Kristina Lampe Shanton, Music Librarian, Ithaca College, Ithaca, New York

**Characters and Plots in the Fiction of Kate Chopin.** By Robert L. Gale. Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland, 2009. 199p. Alkaline \$75 (ISBN 978-0-7864-4005-4).

Though Kate Chopin is now best known for *The Awakening*, she was a prolific writer. According to Robert L. Gale, she "wrote 114 fictional items—97 short stories, two novels, four fragments, one unfinished item, and 10 destroyed or lost" (2). Students and scholars will benefit from *Characters and Plots in the Fiction of Kate Chopin* because it will help them to gain familiarity with this large body of work. This reference work consists mostly of plot summaries and descriptions of characters.

Gale carefully presents all of Chopin's stories and characters in alphabetical order. The two novels are summarized chapter by chapter. In addition to the individual entries there is a chronology, an index, and a four-page bibliography. Though the focus of the book is on the characters and plots,