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BOOK REVIEW OF "THE BILLBOARD GUIDE TO PROGRESSIVE MUSIC"

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written at the beginning of the Civil War, illustrate the character of the time as well as the sentiments of the state's inhabitants.

The authors include a short essay, "A Tribute to American Song," which lists 221 songs which have played an important role in the history of Americana in the years 1760-1971. The wide variety of songs they consider to be a part of our American heritage include nearly every musical genre, from classical to jazz and rock. (Examples include George Gershwin's "Embraceable You," Fats Waller's "Ain't Misbehavin'," Cole Porter's "Night and Day," Bill Haley's "Shake, Rattle, and Roll," and the Beach Boys' "Good Vibrations" [1-14].)

As an added bonus, Studwell and Schueneman include sheet music for many of the songs in the second half of the book, which would allow anyone able to read music to play them. It is clear that the authors went to great lengths to make this volume useful to a wide variety of people. *State Songs of the United States* is an essential guide for those wanting to understand the history, music, and culture of state songs. It is a useful tool for librarians for helping patrons with research, and belongs in both public and academic libraries as well as in departmental music libraries and reference collections. Educators can use this volume to teach both history and music for all grade levels, from elementary to graduate school.

Mahon Library, Lubbock, Texas

Robert G. Weiner

Bradley Smith. *The Billboard Guide to Progressive Music*. New York: Billboard Books, 1997. 288 pp. \$18.95.

While there have been several recent studies of the history of progressive music (such as Paul Stump's *The Music Is All That Matters*, Edward Macan's *Rocking the Classics*, and Bill Martin's *Listening to the Future: The Time of Progressive Rock*), little has been published in terms of discographies and guides to the progressive music genre. *The Billboard Guide to Progressive Music*, by Bradley Smith, attempts to rectify that situation. Progressive music is usually associated with some of the superstar bands of the 1970s, many of whom are still active today, such as Emerson, Lake, and Palmer, Can, Yes, Jethro Tull, King Crimson, and Gentle Giant. Most progressive music groups attempted to blend classical music with rock and the avant-garde and produced music that strayed from the usual three-minute pop formula; their songs could last 20 minutes or longer. While the art form has never been a favorite of critics, there have always been thousands of fans who digest and collect the music with fanatical fervor and dedication.

Smith's guide starts out with an overview and history of progressive music in which he admits that defining "progressive" is difficult. He

argues that "'progressive music' has its roots in the late 1960s, the era of psychedelia" (2). Progressive music was almost certainly greatly influenced by psychedelic rock; in many cases, a progressive artist's first album was psychedelic rock, e.g., Pink Floyd's *Piper at the Gates of Dawn*, and Gong's *Majick Brother*. However, Smith fails to include any discussion of how composers like Stockhausen, Varese, and Sun Ra, as well as avant-garde jazz artists like John Coltrane, Charlie Parker, Ornette Coleman, and Miles Davis helped influence and foreshadow the innovations upon which many later musicians, including rock musicians, built. For example, the members of Can were actually students of Stockhausen. Smith goes on to talk about the parallels between progressive music and speculative fiction (15-18) and describes how various fiction genres both in print and on screen have influenced progressive artists. By far, the most influential genre (inspiring both the album-cover artwork and lyrical themes) is science fiction/fantasy; looking at and listening to early albums by Yes, Tangerine Dream, Pink Floyd, Genesis, Bo Hansson, and Gong indeed verify this comparison. Gong's *Radio Gnome Invisible* trilogy, to choose but one example, has a whimsical, Tolkienesque style.

The bulk of Smith's book consists of his guide to what he considers the "Key Recordings in Progressive Rock." Some of the artists one would expect to find listed are Pink Floyd, ELP, Yes, Genesis, King Crimson, Tangerine Dream, and more experimental artists like Mike Oldfield, David Torn, Mahavishnu Orchestra, and Henry Cow. To the author's credit, he also includes albums by newer progressive acts like Anekdoten, Anglagard, Ozric Tentacles, and Melting Euphoria. However, *The Billboard Guide to Progressive Music* could better be distinguished by what is left out rather than what was included; it is actually quite far from being the authoritative guide it claims to be, and seems more like a guide to the key albums in Smith's record collection. Smith completely leaves out classic progressive albums such as Kansas's *Leftoverture* and UK's first album *UK*. He also almost completely ignores artists from the German progressive rock scene such as Can, Faust, Amon Düül, and Kluster, many of whom directly influenced the artists Smith does list. Progressive music heavyweights Gentle Giant and John Zorn are disregarded, and Frank Zappa, Marillion, and IQ are all but disregarded. Smith inaccurately does not view many of the neo-prog acts of the early 1980s as valid progressive acts. Smith does include industrial avant-garde band Throbbing Gristle, known for making "anti-music," or music which is not supposed to be musical, and its offshoots. Smith makes a good case for Throbbing Gristle's inclusion as progressive artists, citing their tremendous musical sophistication. However, Smith fails even to men-

tion similar artists who were no less influential, interesting, and important, such as Nurse with Wound, as well as Gothic progressives Death in June and Devil Doll. The author ends up seeming to be rather pompous in his determination of what is and is not progressive music.

The book has six appendices and a helpful index. The appendices include Smith's "canon" of the top 100 classic progressive recordings, the five progressive music styles, the top 30 space music recordings, the 30 best-sounding recordings, and additional recommended titles. The listing of the top 30 space music recordings is further indication of the author's self-indulgent tendency to include his favorites over truly pioneering work such as Hawkwind's *In Search of Space*, Doremi Fasol Latido, *Hall of the Mountain Grill*, and *Warrior at the Edge of Time*. The last appendix will probably prove the most helpful to readers, as it lists addresses and phone numbers of mail order distributors from whom interested readers can obtain much of the music reviewed in the book; it also tells which artists can be found at each particular mail order house. Smith also includes a section on record labels and artist contact addresses.

It is easy to tell which artists are Smith's favorites; throughout the book, nearly the full collections of artists like Tangerine Dream, Throbbing Gristle, King Crimson, Mike Oldfield, Kate Bush, and Pink Floyd are extensively reviewed and discussed, once again at the expense of other artists who perhaps deserved at least a mention. Despite the pompous tone of the text, Smith actually writes well and informatively about the artists included, and, to his credit, discusses many artists outside of the mainstream to whom readers might want to lend an open ear. Smith writes very persuasively for those albums he likes, and it is easy at times to get caught up in his enthusiasm for those recordings.

For the novice, *The Billboard Guide to Progressive Music* does provide an introduction (albeit an incomplete one) to the genre and, for the knowledgeable fan, Smith has provided an enjoyable yet frustrating read. However, since this is one of the only books of its kind, it is worth purchasing for academic and public libraries with music collections.

Mahon Library, Lubbock, Texas

Robert G. Weiner

Sebastian Danchin. *"Blues Boy": The Life and Music of B. B. King*. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1998. Illustrated. 156 pp. Hardback. \$28.00.

Another book about . . . The King? It details his humble roots in Mississippi; it covers his early Memphis years as an unknown performer—and later as an emerging superstar; it traces the glory years of signa-