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All Music Guide To Electronica: The Definitive Guide To Electronic Music (All Music Guides)



Synopsis

Provides information about the artists and styles that make up electronica, including profiles of Autechre, DJ Spooky, and John Digweed.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Perused this volume years ago at a library and searched the internet to find a copy for myself. Very pleased.

Actually, 1.5 stars: this has to be, without doubt, the most unfocused and incomplete AMG ever produced. I agree with the reviewer who asserted that AMG simply cut and pasted content off their web site and quickly threw together this diffuse hodge-podge of questionable and incomplete listings. Caveat Emptor: this book is not the 2nd edition like lists it as. 2nd editions generally take what was wrong with firsts, correct, and expand. This is what the AMG brain-trust needs to do with this book: the foundation is there, just seriously review content, edit out what isn't true electronica (by their admitted definitions), and expand to include other artists, including the complete discography (you don't have to review each album, just list) of established artists and the genre's prolific indies like Thumbtack Smoothie and Voice of Eye. So what if it approaches 1,200 pages? Same with Pop: unless they're cutting-edge contributors like Blancmange or Gary Numan, leave all the 80's synth-pop and hair-band fluff out; C'mon AMG, Flock of Seagulls and Talk Talk? Plus,

devoting nearly three pages to verbose, hyper-detailed reviews of every Prince album, yet hardly any attention to the shifting careers and prolific output of ground-breakers like Tangerine Dream and Klaus Schulze? Some listings are just plain insulting: the superficial Sun Ra discography is a huge disservice; although Sun Ra did introduce electronics into the jazz idiom, the music was still jazz--artists like this should be given full attention in the AMG Jazz Guide. Likewise, rock-oriented artists should remain in the AMG Rock Guide; I like Radiohead and Pink Floyd, but they seem woefully out of place here (in the case of PF, they stop the discography listings at "The Wall." Who was in charge of this project?) And if AMG wishes to questionably include the "Shoegazer" movement as electronica, why list My Bloody Valentine and leave out Lush or Catherine Wheel? Be consistent!! Not that the book is all bad. The essays and chart maps on how all the various electronica sub-genres evolved are informative reading, and push the book up 1/2 star. Plus they give good attention to all the various DJ's and their respective roles in the genre's development. And thankfully Yanni and John Tesh aren't included (there is a benign God, after all.) The foundation is here; nonetheless, AMG needs to start over with this guide, review, cut, and expand. Better yet, maybe an enterprising MUSICHOUND editor will read these reviews and decide to produce and release their own competing guide. At least they won't short-shrift the artist's discography for the sake of space. Who knows, they might even include a photo or two....

As a collector of many forms of Electronica new & old, I'm going to have to side with Matthew Collins on this one. The book is truly voluminous in its bulk of basic biographical info on lots of dj's and groups, but it lacks the Discography information collectors crave. It's true that this book is great for a beginner I guess, but most of the people who would be willing to buy this are probably really into Techno & Electronica, and I would think would expect a little more than what seems to be a bunch of info from the Allmusic website on Biographies. It is worth its price if you have cash to spare, and a spot on your shelf, but really, if you have the internet then just go to the website Allmusic.com for more info than there is in the book. And I have to say I agree with Mr Collins on "who the heck is Amon Duul" Maybe the group was an important figure in obscure indie-electro or something, but they're not a part of the Techno music that I love & know. And Prodigy is an awesome group, they just get bashed cause they got too popular, and I guess you can't be popular and be part of Electronica.

AMG's voluminous electronic music directory is cogent and exhaustive, sure to be a delight for the style's fans and non-fans alike. Fans will love this book for its thoroughness, its uber-cool,

authoritative air and for its immense lack of humor, all of which seem reflective of the scene(s) it seeks to document. Non-fans will be delighted by the intensive devotion to ephemera and the belligerently academic tone which seeks to browbeat outsiders into accepting the worldview of a musical movement that hails each club opening as the birth of a new subgenre. Hundreds of artists and dozens of styles are outlined and their histories detailed with absolute, messianic precision. While AMG's level of writing is superior to most of its contemporaries, the tone is no less smug or evangelical; the sense of being intellectually bludgeoned will seem familiar to those of us who have watched the rise of electronica with wry but aggrieved detachment. (Yes, I'm sure you love the stuff, but do you have to devote so much energy to coercing the rest of us into adopting your point of view?) All kidding aside, this book will be a definitive resource for years to come. Anyone interested in understanding the growth and self-perceptions of the electronic music cult will find this book invaluable.

Just a reply to Matthew here in terms of the prolificness of Amon Duul compared to the Prodigy. There's absolutely nothing prolific about the Prodigy, not compared to the real innovators from Amon Duul to Kraftwerk to Aphex Twin (who is the king of all electronic music the last decade). Amon Duul is extremely important in a lot of the electronic music groundwork, so that's why there are 2 and a half pages compared to the Prodigy, who are just a pop/dance band and merely entertaining to watch. It's not about who one likes, it's about who truly is and was important in electronic music. It's good to be diverse in liking different styles and all that, even though I don't understand liking a true innovator such as an Aphex Twin in the same vein as Armin van Buuren, DJ Tiesto, Ferry Corsten or Anti-loop who are the most one-dimensional, generic/teeny bopper-techno acts/DJ's around.

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