

In the tradition of music journalism, McKeen's language oscillates between historian and superfan depending on the artist. His love for the Beach Boys, for example, is noticeable in prose and tone. **VERDICT** There is no shortage of literature dedicated to the music of this decade in American history. However, McKeen manages to hint at some larger forces, both dark and bright, that constellated this particular group of artists underneath the palm trees of La-La Land.—**Joshua Finnell, Los Alamos National Lab., NM**

Neibaur, James L. *The Monster Movies of Universal Studios*. Rowman & Littlefield. Jun. 2017. 224p. illus. notes. bibliog. index. ISBN 9781442278165. \$38. FILM

Like Dr. Frankenstein, Universal Studios under Carl Laemmle Jr., brought the monster movie genre to terrifying new life with the 1931 Tod Browning-directed film *Dracula* starring Bela Lugosi in his most iconic role. The characterizations of Dracula and Frankenstein's monster by Lugosi and Boris Karloff, as well as the studio's costume and makeup design, ensured that Universal's monsters would become the standard representation of these literary monsters in popular culture. In chronological order, historian Neibaur (*The Fall of Buster Keaton*) details the production and reception of each monster movie produced by the studio between 1931 and 1956, including such classics as *Frankenstein*, *The Invisible Man*, *The Mummy*, *The Wolf Man*, *Creature from the Black Lagoon*, and each of their respective sequels. The author provides insight into the challenges that the actors faced in the roles that made them household names. **VERDICT** Neibaur's book honors Universal's horror legacy with exhaustive research. The detailed breakdowns of each film makes this an excellent resource for film students and monster movie fanatics.—**Amanda Westfall, Emmet O'Neal P.L., Mountain Brook, AL**

Oldham, Gabriella & Mabel Langdon. *Harry Langdon: King of Silent Comedy*. Univ. Pr. of Kentucky. Apr. 2017. 346p. photos. filmog. notes. bibliog. index. ISBN 9780813169651. \$40; ebk. ISBN 9780813169675. FILM

Some have called Harry Langdon (1884–1944) the “fourth king of silent comedy,” just behind Charlie Chaplin, Buster Keaton, and Harold Lloyd in the pantheon. Noted for his sad, childlike face and a body racked by “flitting hesitant motions,” Langdon pursued a life on the stage, working his way up through medicine shows, the circus, and Vaudeville. Hollywood eventually beckoned, and he became part of director Mack Sennett's famed comedy team, appearing alongside

Sennett's “bathing beauties.” Langdon's relationship with Sennett was rocky, and he also had a difficult later relationship with writer, gagman, and director Frank Capra, who claimed Langdon was crippled by the “virus of conceit,” and Capra helped fix Langdon's image as a tragic figure in the public's mind. Unlike other comedy masters, Langdon didn't always play to his strengths, dividing both audiences and critics. The coming of sound and shifting public tastes unmoored him, and money troubles compounded by his two divorces led him to work in unsuitable projects. However, contrary to popular belief, he enjoyed a late-career modest comeback and a measure of personal happiness. **VERDICT** With valuable details on Langdon's early life, discussions of his comedy routines, and miniessay endnotes, this is recommended as an overdue tribute to an overlooked master.—**Stephen Rees, formerly with Levittown Lib., PA**

Winters, John J. *Sam Shepard: A Life*. Counterpoint. Apr. 2017. 480p. photos. notes. ISBN 9781619027084. \$28; ebk. ISBN 9781619029842. BIOG

A Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright for *Buried Child*, Sam Shepard (b. 1943) is an enigma in the world of theater and film. Nominated for an Academy Award for his role as Chuck Yeager in *The Right Stuff*, he is also accomplished in other performing arts, notably music and songwriting. Several of Shepard's plays have been on Broadway, including *Buried Child* as well as *True West*. The first part of journalist, critic, and Shepard scholar Winters's book discusses Shepard's early years and his stormy relationship with his father while growing up in Illinois and California. It delves into Shepard's romantic relationships, including with singer-songwriter Patti Smith, and the great love of his life, actress Jessica Lange. Although Shepard was fiercely private about his relationship with Lange, this volume details their romance and the journals they would write to each other. Other interesting people making appearances include the playwright's former father-in-law and best friend Johnny Dark, with whom Shepard filmed the documentary *Shepard and Dark*. **VERDICT** Highly recommended to theater and movie lovers.—**Holly Skir, York Coll., CUNY**

Wolfe, Brendan. *Finding Bix: The Life and Afterlife of a Jazz Legend*. Univ. of Iowa. May 2017. 272p. illus. notes. index. ISBN 9781609385064. pap. \$24.95; ebk. ISBN 9781609385071. MUSIC

Hailing from Bix Beiderbecke's (1903–31) hometown of Davenport, IA, the author

charts his personal quest to understand the somewhat elusive history and character of the jazz cornetist. Wolfe begins with a brief history of the town and its role in nurturing Beiderbecke. He continues with the now familiar story: Beiderbecke as a child prodigy on piano; his first infatuation with jazz and supposed meeting with Louis Armstrong; his dedication to jazz in Chicago; his heyday with the Paul Whiteman Orchestra; his precipitous decline after only six years; and his death from alcoholism. Throughout, he weighs the sometimes contradictory evidence in previous works about Beiderbecke, such as Richard Sudhalter and Philip Evans's meticulous *Bix: Man and Legend*, and Ralph Berton's more chatty *Remembering Bix*. **VERDICT** Breezy, engaging, and entertaining, this new entry in the Beiderbecke bibliography will be a fascinating starting point for those unfamiliar with the musician but will be of less interest to jazz fans who already know the basic story.—**David P. Szatmary, formerly Univ. of Washington**

Wolff, Daniel. *Grown-Up Anger: The Connected Mysteries of Bob Dylan, Woody Guthrie, and the Calumet Massacre of 1913*. Harper. Jun. 2017. 368p. notes. bibliog. index. ISBN 9780062451699. \$26.99; ebk. ISBN 9780062451712. MUSIC

On Christmas Eve, 1913, 73 people (mostly children) were killed in a stampede at a Christmas party in Calumet, MI. This tragedy, related to a bitter copper miners' strike, was commemorated in Woody Guthrie's 1945 song “1913 Massacre,” and is at the core of this book. Wolff (*4th of July, Asbury Park; You Send Me: The Life and Times of Sam Cooke*) weaves Calumet and early labor strife into a dual biography of Guthrie (1912–67) and Bob Dylan (b. 1941). It alternates chapters relating Guthrie's and Dylan's formative years, emphasizing how injustice and older folk and blues music influenced their songs. His chapter on the stampede, its aftermath, and Guthrie's song, is very effective and moving. Two personal essays bookend this work. In the first chapter, Wolff writes about his discovery of Dylan as a high school student and the profound impact of “Like a Rolling Stone.” He concludes with an almost Orwellian account of a 2013 visit to Calumet, where he visited the cemeteries and saw the remains of a once-thriving mining town. **VERDICT** Readers with an interest in American political and labor history will most appreciate this book. Fans of Dylan and Guthrie will be in familiar territory but will also learn about strands of influence on their

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