

Drone, Jeanette Marie. *Musical AKAs: Assumed Names and Sobriquets of Composers, Songwriters, Librettists, Lyricists, Hymnists, and Writers on Music*. Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2006. xvi, 645 p. ISBN: 0810857391. \$100.00 (Cloth).

\*“Excuse me, but I heard that Elvis Presley was once called ‘Sir Swivel Hips’. Is there any way I could prove that?” Jeanette Marie Drone has provided the world of music librarianship with a volume to answer this and many other questions of “pseudonymity.” *Musical AKAs: Assumed Names and Sobriquets of Composers, Songwriters, Librettists, Lyricists, Hymnists, and Writers on Music* is an index to more than 15,500 assumed names and sobriquets of about 9,800 composers, songwriters, lyricists, librettists, hymnists, and writers.

There are many reasons musicians might use one or more assumed names, as Drone explains in her very engaging preface. A musician might use different names with different publishers, different names for different genres of music, or different names for work in different professions (e.g., one name for musical compositions, another name for literary works). A musician might change names to hide ethnicity or for ease of pronunciation. Many music critics have been known to “hide” under assumed names. The author gives interesting examples for each type of assumed name. She also discusses different ways of creating an assumed name: using initials rather than entire names, translating a surname, scrambling the letters to create an anagram.

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The “Introduction” to *Musical AKAs* is comprehensive and explains very clearly the scope of the book, the author’s research process, and noted exclusions. Strangely, she defines her use of the term “assumed names” (“legal name changes, pseudonyms, pen names, *noms de plume*, nicknames, and initials”, xiii) but not the word *sobriquet* (“a nickname” according to *The Canadian Oxford Dictionary*, 1998 ed.). The book excludes individuals who are performers only. Common derivatives of forenames and nicknames are not given separate entries, and neither are cases which use a second forename instead of the first. Drone also does not consider women’s married names as “assumed names” in the book. A short literature review places *Musical AKAs* in context, identifying other sources for musicians’ assumed names, and these sources’ limitations (not specific to music; out of date; limited in scope).

Drone is an independent scholar currently working as a freelance educator. Throughout her career she has gained great expertise and authority in many areas of music librarianship. She holds graduate degrees in music and library science, including a Ph.D. in Library Science from The University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. She was music librarian at Memphis State University from 1969 to 1980, and has been a visiting scholar at several schools of library and information studies. In the area of music cataloguing, Drone has worked for OCLC doing name authority work on a contract basis, and has also published music cataloguing tools

through OCLC. In addition, she has published other bibliographic resources: *Index to Opera, Operetta, and Music Comedy Synopses in Collections and Periodicals* (Scarecrow Press, 1978), and *Musical Theatre Synopses; An Index* (Scarecrow Press, 1998).

At 664 pages, *Musical AKA's* is a weighty hardcover and has simple, professional cover art. The book is divided into four chapters. Drone's lengthy list of sources comprises Chapter 1. Chapter 2, "Original Names", contains the bulk of the book's data. Here is a reasonable facsimile of an entry for referral:

**Saint-Saëns, (Charles) Camille**  
**1835-1921**  
[composer, pianist]

**French Beethoven, The** *Source(s):*  
<http://www.gdyo.org/notes51803.htm>  
(12 Apr. 2005)  
*Note(s):* See also George Onslow

**French Mendelssohn, The**  
*Source(s):*  
<http://inkpot.com/classical/stsaensvc.html>  
1 (12 Apr. 2005)

**Phémus** *Source(s):* PIPE; RIEM

**Sannois, Charles** *Source(s):* PIPE

This example shows the range of sobriquets included in this volume: nicknames given by colleagues or the popular press as well as self-assigned *noms de plumes*. Large serif font makes pages of dense text very readable. The formatting of the entries is clear, especially after reading the Introduction. The author uses square brackets [], italics, spacing, and punctuation to

delineate parts of each entry. Sources for the assumed names are listed in abbreviated form (URLs are given for Web sources), and this reader had no trouble locating the abbreviations in the source list that makes up Chapter 1.

Chapter 3 is a list of assumed names and sobriquets with cross-references to Chapter 2. For example, in the entry for "Phémus" in Chapter 3, there is a *See* reference to "Saint-Saëns, (Charles) Camille" but none of the data from Chapter 2 is duplicated here. Chapter 3 is handy for using a musician's "common" name in order to find their birth name (e.g. Sting. *See* Sumner, Gordon (Matthew)).

Chapter 4 is entitled "Notes" and contains a list of additional assumed and original names with more explanatory material than would fit in Chapter 2.

Naturally, with a work of this magnitude, Drone could never please everyone by who was included and who was not. Since she covers Western music of many genres and many time periods, from Palestrina to Cher, there will naturally be gaps. What is not clear to this reader is *why* certain names were excluded. For example, some well-known Canadian composers are absent (John Beckwith, Violet Archer, David Foster), and some lesser-known Canadian composers are included (Henry Burr, Anna Malenfant, Louis-Philippe Laurendeau, Hector Gratton). The absence of Pierre Boulez is noteworthy as well. Certainly it is possible that the missing names have never been associated with a pseudonym or sobriquet. To her credit, Drone readily acknowledges potential errors and omissions in the volume and

encourages readers to submit corrections.

The entries in Chapter 2 are understandably brief (to maximize space and legibility), and Drone is to be applauded for her ability to reduce what must be mountains of fascinating reading material into such a quick-reference volume. The author includes occasional explanatory notes for lesser-known individuals (e.g., under “Fortini, James” on p. 131 one sees “*Note(s)*: Do not confuse with his son; see following entry.”). However, the brevity of the entries is frustrating at times. For example, in the “Saint-Saëns” example above, the name “Sannois, Charles” is listed, but the reader cannot be sure whether this is a pseudonym or a sobriquet, or whether Saint-Saëns published under that name. The reader would have to consult the source, PIPE (Drone’s code for *Pipers Enzykopaedie des Musiktheaters*), and not all readers will have easy access to this seven-volume work.

These slight reservations aside, there is no doubt that with *Musical AKAs* Drone has filled a big gap in music reference literature. There are many reference books for pseudonyms and nicknames, but only a very few are music-specific and even these have limited scope. *Pseudonyms on American Records, 1892-1942* (Allan Sutton, Mainspring Press, 2001) focuses specifically on performers on 78-rpm era American record labels. *Rockspeak!* (Simon Warner, Sterling Pub. Co., 1996) lists

stage names and real names of rock music performers. Berkowitz’s *Popular Titles and Subtitles of Musical Compositions* (Scarecrow Press, 1975) focuses on nicknames of compositions rather than people. *Musical AKAs* has a vast scope and is very accessible, making it an essential addition to any music reference collection. Although Drone modestly describes her research process in two scant paragraphs in the Introduction; in reality it is exhaustive and on-going. Future volume(s) are planned which will deal with the thousands of assumed names Drone has identified in copyright sources.

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