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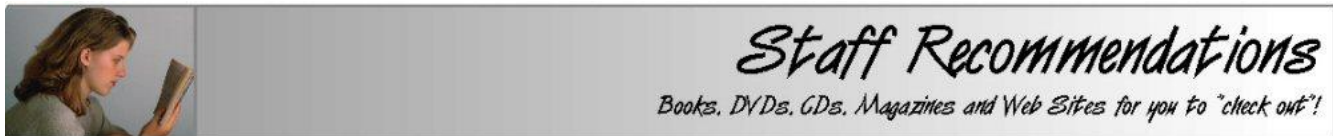
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## Staff Recommendations - April 2023



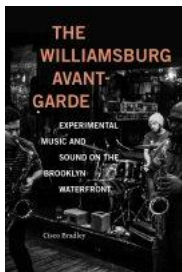
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## April 2023 Recommendations



### [The Williamsburg Avant-Garde: Experimental Music and the Sound on the Brooklyn Waterfront](#)

by Cisco Bradley (Music 781.65 Bra)

As the largest city in the United States, and an historic port city often referred to as “the melting pot,” it probably comes as no surprise that the astonishing diversity found in New York City often leads to new forms of musical creativity. The music there evolves over generations: in the Polley Music Library, you'll find lots of books that document scenes that were born or blossomed there, from many forms of jazz to hip hop to disco to various forms of indie rock and beyond. Many important classical composers have called the city home, and its many world class ensembles have debuted many of their works. And then of course there is Broadway, a whole subject unto itself with a massive influence on musical trends.



Scenes that start as underground or experimental music in New York City often become essential influences on mainstream music in subsequent years. The new book [The Williamsburg Avant-Garde: Experimental Music and the Sound on the Brooklyn Waterfront](#), addresses some of the most recent underground music scenes to come out of New York City and you can borrow it from the Polley Music Library.

As music history-related books go, this one cuts about as close to the present-day as one can get, ranging from the late 1980s until 2014, with the heaviest focus on the Oug Documenting histories this recent has a particular advantage that's nearly impossible for many other historians: the author can not only discuss the activities of the time with participants, but might have been able to participate personally! In this case, author Bradley notes in his thorough introduction how his many interviews for his website Jazz: Now, as well as throwing his own DIY shows starting in 2014, made this book almost a natural extension of his own activities. Indeed, having devoured this book several times myself, he is the perfect person to document this scene.

I should mention that the particular music covered in [The Williamsburg Avant-Garde](#) has had profound effects on my own life as a listener and musician. These are the musicians I count as “my generation,” whose work I followed as closely as possible from afar through the many recordings issued by participants documented in this book. When I was a teenager, I helped book shows in Nebraska for some of the artists mentioned in this book—in some cases house shows at my own home, in the midwest's equivalent of DIY performances discussed in the book—and I consider many of them long-distance friends. With that background, I feel like I have a strong understanding of what was happening musically within this Williamsburg scene, but this book goes much deeper than the music itself. As Bradley notes, “This book is a social and cultural history of the Williamsburg avant-garde,” and for those of us immersed in this music from afar, much of this history remained unknown unless one actually lived in the city or somewhere nearby on the East Coast. I learned a tremendous amount that I didn't know about music that I already love from this book.

For example, I didn't realize that Williamsburg had its own pirate radio station. Just like such stations helped to promote new music in the drum & bass scene in the UK, Ne Free103point9 contributed to the Williamsburg scene starting in the late 90s. For some reason I had just thought they were a record label, and indeed, its founders branched becoming a nonprofit that could serve the community in many ways, which continues today as Wavefarm.

Broadly speaking, the book tracks New York City's perpetual struggles between artists and real estate developers, a story that has perpetually chased creative communities borough to borough over decades. As artists took over vacant warehouses to put on creative multimedia events, they generally managed to remain friendly with neighbors under the radar of police for some time, but eventually that unending hunger for new development always seems to catch up. The narrative of the book will take you from neighborhood to neighborhood (and introduce you to lots of venues that sound like they were wonderful), but to get a visual sense of what happened over time, I really appreciate the three maps included just before the book's introduction. I found myself flipping back to these several times as I was reading, to get a sense of changes over time. Some things just move a few blocks, but in New York, that can take you into entirely different circumstances.

For those who might not be as familiar with the riveting music produced by this scene, Bradley has structured the book to move smoothly between tales of particular venue biographies of the bands best known for playing them. The diversity of musical approaches represented in the book is quite impressive, though a particular commonality among Williamsburg scene tended to be immersion in various forms of improvisation. The cover of the book, for example, features a live photo of the band Little Women, fronted by LaPlante, who has gone on to some renown as the leader of the saxophone quartet Battle Trance, and Darius Jones, a phenomenal bandleader, soloist and interpreter in his right. While the band never became a household name, they are a great example of the new kinds of cross-genre impulses that were typical of the scene, featuring the rigor of classical music, the power and improvisation of jazz, and the explosive power of punk music. Lots of other genre-transcendent bands are discussed, some whose work is very serious like Zs, and others who had fun with their approaches, like Dynamite Club or People. I was also pleased to see drummer and composer Mike Pride appear throughout the book, perhaps more than any other musician, as he has participated in such a wide range of fantastic music over the last 20 years without getting as much credit as he deserves. Reading about the formations of so many bands from this scene, and seeing how they sometimes fold into other acts with time, is a pure joy, as the book documents the years for many musicians who have gone on to enjoy long careers that started within this community. If you're interested in learning more about the music produced by this scene over 25 years, Bradley includes a fantastic list of recordings in the "Art Sources" section at the end of the book. While some of the recordings listed here are influences on the Williamsburg scene, many of the scene's best recordings are mentioned as well—just look for albums released in the window between roughly 1988 and 2014 to get a taste on those.

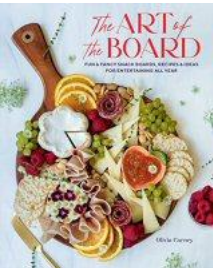
In the end, there's a lot to learn from books like [The Williamsburg Avant-Garde](#) even for musicians who aren't from this scene: the many stories captured in this book resound with the same kinds of struggles that bands and artists all over our country still experience every day. As important and essential as this music was (and is), perhaps the most important takeaway from this book is learning more about what it means to be an active part of a creative community, no matter how temporary, and how that work can be transformed by everyone involved, one neighborhood at a time.

(If you enjoy this, you may also wish to try [New York Noise: Radical Jewish Music and the Downtown Scene](#) by Tamar Barzel, [Arcana X: Musicians on Music](#) by John Zorn (ed.) [Universal Tonality: The Life and Music of William Parker](#) by Cisco Bradley.)

( official [Cisco Bradley](#) web site )

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Recommended by  
Polley Mu



[The Art of the Board: Fun and Fancy Snack Boards, Recipes and Ideas for Entertaining All Year](#)  
by Olivia Carney (641.812 Car)

This book is for those who are fascinated with the current charcuterie craze but haven't figured out where and how to start. Olivia Carney tells you frankly that she's written this book for hopeless hostesses and hosts who want to entertain but don't yet have the prowess.

She begins with the board itself and discusses the various board sizes and materials (wood, stone, etc) you can use and how to care for them. Then she provides a step-by-step guide for building a board. Do you want only cheeses and crackers or a variety of fruits, meats, and breads?

You'll find diagrams on cutting and slicing or recommendations for buying the ingredients ready-to-go for arranging on your boards. She writes about cheese knives, tongs, cocktail sticks, petite spoons, toothpicks, and other serving utensils you might want to use.

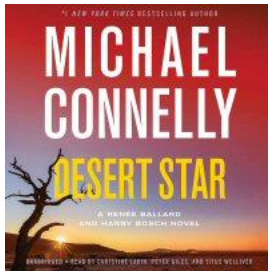
There are lots of photos of sample boards for the entire year from July 4th barbecues to Thanksgiving leftovers to breakfast trays or desserts. No board is too simple or too fancy. Pick this up for an interesting introduction to boards, recipes, and entertaining ideas.

(If you enjoy this, you may also wish to try [Boards: Stylish Spreads for Casual Gatherings](#) by America's Test Kitchen.)

( official [Liv Carney](#) Instagram )

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Recommended by [Ch](#)  
Bennett Martin Public Library — Pub



### Desert Star

by Michael Connelly (Compact Disc Connelly)

**Desert Star** is the fifth novel by Michael Connelly to feature his newest protagonist, Renee Ballard. At the same time, it is the 24th novel to feature his longest-running series character, Harry Bosch. And Harry's half-brother, roguish attorney Mickey Haller even pops up in a cameo late in the novel.

Ballard first appeared as a solo character in 2017's [The Late Show](#), but from her second novel onwards, she's been teamed up with retired Harry Bosch in one capacity or another. Following crucial events in 2021's [The Dark Hours](#), Renee was given the plumb job of heading up a revived Open Unsolved Unit, focusing on cold cases, and when she's given free reign to pick the volunteer researchers she wants to work with is #1 on her list. Though he's dealing with some heavy personal baggage in his own life, the opportunity to have access to police resources again to try to close the one big case has eluded him in his career is enough to pull the aging Bosch onto Renee's team of volunteer specialists. But before he can focus on the Gallagher Family case, Bosch has to work with the other researchers to try to find new leads on the murder of a city councilman's sister (from two decades ago) – the continued backing of the councilman, for the Open Unsolved Unit may hinge on them making some progress.

During the course of this novel, both of these cases reach conclusions, with some shocking developments along the way. The relationship between Renee and Bosch, who's been a father-like mentor to the young detective, is tested. The dialog, plot and pacing are absolutely top notch – Connelly novels always feel like they're capturing a bit of the real people doing real jobs. Personally, I've listened to all of the Ballard titles as audiobooks-on-cd, and these are some of the absolute best audiobooks out there. In the case of the Ballard & Bosch titles, Christine Lakin voices the chapters told from Ballards p-o-v, and Titus Welliver, who has portrayed Harry Bosch in the Amazon streaming series Bosch, the chapters told from Bosch's p-o-v (and in scenes where the two converse, both voices are heard), and in the brief moments where Mickey Haller shows up, he is voiced by Giles – who narrates the audiobooks of Connelly's Haller novels).

I absolutely love these Ballard and Bosch collaborations, and will rue the day when Connelly brings Harry's long and convoluted literary journey to a conclusion...which, rumor has it, may be coming sooner than his fans may wish.

(If you enjoy this, you may also wish to try all of the [Renee Ballard](#) novels, of which this is the fifth, and the later entries in the [Harry Bosch](#) series (which has been going strong particularly those since Harry retired from active police work.)

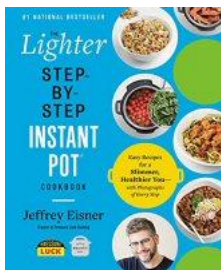
( official [Michael Connelly](#) web site )



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Recommended by

Bennett Martin Public Library – Pub



### The Lighter Step by Step Instant Pot Cookbook

by Jeffrey Eisner (641.7 Eis)

My first thought upon seeing this cookbook was, "Do we really need another Instant Pot book?" I can amend that to, "Yes, we do!" I stumbled across the book on a library table where someone else had left it and I ended up taking it home.

First of all, there are photos of every single finished product - as any good cookbook should have. Secondly, he provides photos of each step in the cooking process. I found that so helpful.

Eisner created his own "General Cooking Charts" of often-cooked items that you might not remember how long to cook in the instant pot. His charts cover more than just beef or poultry, but also includes Pasta; Rice & Grains; Seafood; Vegetables; and Beans & Legumes.

These recipes really are an attempt at a "lighter" version and are further coded as to whether they can be classified as Keto, Paleo, Dairy-Free, Gluten-Free, Vegetarian, or Vegan. All of the recipes have the nutritional values listed, and he also provides an inventory of his pantry staples.

The Table of Contents includes categories such as Basics for Now & Later; Soups & Stews; Pasta; Rice & Grains; Poultry; Meat; Seafood; Vegetables & Sides; and Dessert. The section, "How to Use Your Instant Pot, In a Nutshell" complete with photos of everything!

This turned out to be a well-rounded, basic instant pot cookbook that also provides a wide-variety of recipes and information. I ended up running out and buying this book, because, yeah, one really does need another Instant Pot book.

( official [Jeffrey Eisner](#) web site )

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Recommended by [Ch](#)

Bennett Martin Public Library – Pub



### The Periodic Table

by John Farndon and Shiho Pate (j546.8 Far)





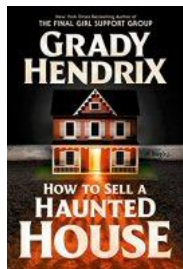
Each element is depicted as an active character who displays the color and characteristics of each. Essential to help students learn each element and its unique properties.  
audience: Middle School/High School/Chemistry students.

( official [Shihō Pate](#) web site ) | ( official [Shihō Pate](#) web site )

This was one of dozens of Graphic Novel reviews submitted by library staff during our 2022 In-Service Training day on 9/23/2022, all collected on [A Day Full of Graphs](#)



Recommended by  
Anderson and Bethany Branci



### How to Sell a Haunted House

by Grady Hendrix (Hendrix)

Louise has returned home to Charleston, South Carolina to assist her brother, Mark, with the funeral and estate of their parents who were killed sudden car accident. Louise considers Mark to be a failure and a leech on their parents. He accuses her of being the “perfect” daughter he has to live up to.

Their parents’ house is filled to overflowing with puppets of all sizes - each with its own name - and crafting materials to repair and make more puppets. Louise’s mother was a puppeteer who was HEAVILY involved in the puppeteering world, and performed for children’s parties and church programs. But now, what is happening with those puppets and Louise feels her brother is trying to freak her out.

The ‘haunting’ in this book is ambiguous. Is the house haunted because the puppets are possessed? Is Louise unstable and seeing hauntings where there are none, and why? Is the house haunted with family memories and unresolved issues thus making it difficult to agree on how to dispose of the personal property and the house?

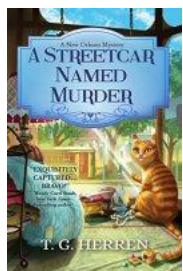
Louise is our narrator and we’re seeing this story only through her eyes. I have to admit, I had a theory about the house but I was still caught flat-footed at the end - and I saw it coming.

A suspenseful story that will keep you guessing. And you’ll never view “The Velveteen Rabbit” story the same again.

( official [Grady Hendrix](#) web site )



Recommended by [Ch](#)  
Bennett Martin Public Library – Pub



### A Streetcar Named Murder

by T.G. Herren (Herren)

Valerie Cooper is a widow with two college age boys living in New Orleans. When Collette, a “mean girl” and the mother of one of her boys’ friends bring her at a local store, she asks when Valerie will be selling her house. Soon after that, Valerie discovers she’s inherited part of an antique shop and her inherited money from her late husband’s estranged Great Uncle Arthur. Valerie attends a costume party and finds Collette has been stabbed and killed. Police interview her, Valerie discovers Collette has a deep hatred of her. She can’t figure out why, so she begins to ask questions. Valerie finds some answers that are not easy to accept.

Ultimately, the inheritance and her questions bring her to the attention of the killer and Valerie has to fight for her life.

I liked this book a lot, I read for the characters and this certainly has great characters. The descriptions of New Orleans and life in NOLA were fascinating. The mystery was solved, though I thought I knew who the killer was soon after it happened, I didn’t get all the answers until the end of the book.

I hope this turns into a new series it’s a wonderful read.

(If you enjoy this, you may also wish to try [Death in the Margins](#) by Victoria Gilbert, or [In the Dog House](#) by V.M. Burns.)

( publisher’s official [T.G. Herren](#) web page )



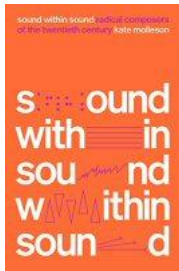
Recommended by  
South and Gere Branci

### Sound Within Sound: Radical Composers of the Twentieth Century

by Kate Molleson (Music 780.922 Mol)

In the world of contemporary classical music, there are some household names familiar to the general public, but as various forms of pop music became dominant, a lot of interesting composers have gone unnoticed. Even within the classical music community, there are those whose music has been influential or remarkable in some circles, yet haven’t gotten much attention. It’s unfortunate, but we all lead busy lives, and there is so much to hear and experience that some folks just end up slipping through the cracks.





Some of us, though, have the luxury or passion (or both) to spend a little more time looking into the deeper roots of favorite forms of music, and occasionally we have opportunities to share our discoveries with other through things like books, blogs, magazines, or radio programs. Long-time Scottish music journalist and broadcaster Kate Molleson, whose professional life has afforded her the unique opportunity to look at contemporary classical music in tremendous depth, has been able to share her discoveries with all of us in a variety of formats, including a 7-year stint as the classical music critic for the Guardian, her New Music Show and Music Matters programs for BBC Radio 3, and now through her new book, [Sound Within Sound: Radical Composers of the Twentieth Century](#), which you can borrow from the Polley Music Library.



In her introduction, Molleson reflects on her motivations for writing this book. As a passionate lifelong fan and student of classical music, she dived in Century music over time, and was disappointed to see many of her favorite artists underrepresented in music history books. There may be many reasons for this, but as Molleson has observed, the composers we study, even from the 20th Century, still tend to be white male Europeans and Americans, yet there have been lots of composers active in this period that don't fit that description. This book, which Molleson says that she wrote "out of love and anger," is a step toward balancing the historic and reintroducing elements she says are sometimes lacking in contemporary music discussions: "If classical music is serious about wanting change, it needs to reclaim its intrinsic sense of adventure." And she rejects common tropes used to describe composers like "the genius" or "the lone wolf" while telling the stories of these vital, important composers.

Indeed, the 10 composers profiled in [Sound Within Sound](#) all led (and a few are still leading) exemplary creative lives in terms of adventure, and collectively they represent multiplicity of musical approaches. What they have in common instead is being outside of the dominant narrative in classical music history, which tends to focus on European American white men and their music. Here we find women, people of color, or people who live outside of America or Europe. They appear in the book in the order of their birth, which helps to take us through the 20th Century in more or less chronological order.

Molleson starts with Mexican composer Julian Carrillo, whose early work with microtonal music was among those of the first generation exploring microtonal subdivisions in Western music. While others were investigating pitches smaller than a semitone around the same time, Carrillo thought of microtonal music as part of a broader philosophic investigation, publishing his continually-evolving thoughts on microtones and other musical observations over the years. And as Molleson points out, he remained a prolific creator of quality music while resisting the popular trends toward traditional and indigenous music that were popular in Mexico during his career. Like Harry Partch generations later, he invented and modified instruments to make performances of his microtonal music possible.

The profile of Ruth Crawford that follows is especially poignant, as her reputation has become largely dependent upon her work with folk music as part of the greater Seeger family. While the family's activities as folklorists and song collectors helped us to preserve some of our own history, this has unfortunately obscured Crawford's earlier work as a composer, among the earliest to bring European musical modernism to America in unique forms along with contemporaries like Cowell and Ives. This chapter highlights Molleson's talent for bringing out more universal themes in these individual composers' lives: in conversation with Ruth's daughter, the well-known folk artist Peggy Seeger, she discusses the nature of women's roles in the earlier parts of the 20th Century, notions of folk (or non-academic) music in relation to the working class, and the male-dominated narratives found in much of the folk music of America. There is a lot to unpack here!

The same is true for all of the fascinating composers covered in [Sound Within Sound](#). We talked about Russian composer Galina Ustvolskaya a while back, and there is a great introspective chapter on her work and life here that furthers the discussion around her unique music. The origins of the Tropicalia musical movement in Brazil are traced to the work of Walter Smetak, particularly focusing on his "plásticas sonoras," sonic sculptures made of simple, locally-sourced materials. The unique and sometimes large-scale music of Filipino composer Jose Maceda is discussed, along with his unique relationship to Filipino culture and politics of his time. And Chicago's AACM comes up here through the work of composer Muhal Richard Abrams. I was especially taken by the chapter on Ethiopian composer Emahoy Tsegue-Mariam Guebru, too, who unfortunately passed away just this year. Her music is particularly filled with a unique brand of joy and discovery that I suspect almost any listener will love!

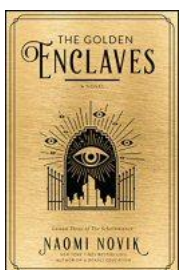
My biggest takeaway from this book is that there are simply so many composers who may not have become household names for a variety of reasons, but whose work is so compelling, and whose life stories are so fascinating, that there truly seems to be no end to music discovery. The 10 composers featured here could just as well represent the 20th century as more familiar names like Bartok, Stravinsky or Cage, and our musical lives would remain just as fulfilling. Take a moment to learn about these composers, enjoy their work, and deepen your love of the many forms of music all around us!

(If you enjoy this, you may also wish to try [The Life of Music: New Adventures in the Western Classical Tradition](#) by Nicholas Kenyon, or [The Courage of Composers and the Taste: Reflections on New Music](#) by Balint Andras Varga.)

( official [Kate Molleson](#) web site )

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Recommended to  
Polley Mu



**The Golden Enclaves**  
by Naomi Novik (Novik)

Naomi Novik is my favorite contemporary author. Since the publication of [His Majesty's Dragon](#) (from the Temeraire series) I have waited rather impatiently for each book that this brilliant author has released. No book was more anticipated than [The Golden Enclaves](#), book three in the Scholomance series. Book two, [The Last Graduate](#), ended with a cliffhanger which desperately needed to be resolved. [The Golden Enclaves](#) starts right where book two left us – with the main character finally out of the Scholomance School, but without her friend and partner, Orion. The entire mission of this book is to resolve the chaotic world now engulfing the world, which only El can do, with a little help from her classmates. El must face her fears and the truth about who she is in order to

society to survive. This was another book that was nearly impossible to put down. I look forward to seeing what new stories are published by this incredibly talented and creative author.

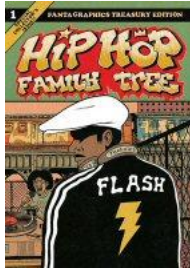
(If you enjoy this, you may also wish to try [The Temeraire series](#), [Spinning Silver](#), [Rooted](#), or [The Scholomance series](#) all also by Naomi Novik, or [The Harry Potter series](#) by J. K. Rowling.)

( official [Naomi Novik](#) web site )

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Recommended

Bennett Martin Public Library – Pub



### The Hip Hop Family Tree

by Ed Piskor (Music 789.1648 Pis)

A fantastic and thorough account of the early developmental years of hip hop. The history is solid, the narrative is engaging, and the art is fantastic. There are four volumes that cover the 1970s to 1985. Best Audience: Teens and adults.

( official [Ed Piskor](#) web site )

This was one of dozens of Graphic Novel reviews submitted by library staff during our 2022 In-Service Training day on 9/23/2022, all collected on [of Graph](#)

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Polley Mu



### Punderworld, Vol. 1

by Linda Sejic (741.5 Sej)

The title and cover art of this one caught my eye on the New Books display at the downtown library. [Punderworld](#) started as a web comic and all of the to-date as of 2021 was compiled in this trade paperback graphic novel. Writer/artist Linda Sejic created this one in between working on her previous work, Blood Stain, as a means of burning off her work stress, only to realize she had a commercially-releasable title here.

[Punderworld](#) is a lighthearted, romantic look at the gods and demi-gods from classical Greek mythology, as viewed through a modern-day lens. This is where the Greek myths are brought into the modern day, but modern sensibilities are applied to the characters of Greek mythology. The central character is Hades, god of the Underworld, whose job is to pass judgement on the souls of the dead to determine their final destination. On one of his infrequent visits to the surface world and the rarified air of Mt. Olympus, he encounters beautiful, young Earth Goddess Persephone...and is instantly smitten (as is she, though she has no idea who Hades is a shy, introspective individual and it isn't until his lascivious and more-worldly "wingman" Zeus realizes that Hades has a crush, that he'd even consider approaching Persephone to express his interest. Unfortunately, Persephone also has an overly-protective mother in the form of fellow Earth Goddess Demeter, who won't even consider letting her daughter have the free time to explore relationships.

This graphic novel is the accident-prone beginning of the relationship between Hades and Persephone, involving runaway flying chariots, crash landing and getting lost in the Styx, and finally figuring out who each other is. This story has a large, multi-faceted supporting cast of additional Greek Gods and Goddesses. The art is absolutely terrific – not like but not cartoonish, and more like paintings than drawings. The central characters are all charming to get to know, and I found myself rooting for their relationship to begin (at least officially). Sejic includes some bonus pages at the end of the book, explaining the origin of this project and encouraging readers to follow her online to stay up on future entries in the Punderworld series – yes, this ends on a cliffhanger, and as of early 2023 there has not yet been a second collected graphic novel volume...though she promises more is coming soon.

Charming, delightful, romantic read with a fresh take on classic mythology. I loved this!

( official [Linda Sejic](#) web site )

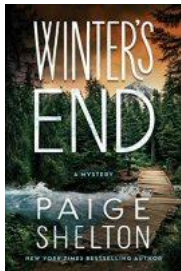
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Bennett Martin Public Library – Pub

### Winter's End

by Paige Shelton (Shelton)



It's spring in Benedict, Alaska. Time for mud and the annual Death walk, where citizens come to town to mark down that they made it through the winter. When an older gentleman named Al doesn't show up. Beth and Orin hike up to check on him. When they find him he's ill and hadn't eaten in a while. Beth fixes him food and begins to care for him while Orin goes for help.

Though help arrives Orin doesn't return, soon after that Beth realized her new friend Kaye was checked off the "census," but hasn't been seen for a while. When someone finds her dead Beth starts to ask questions. The Millers (Kaye's husband's family and the Oliphants are the modern Alaskan Hatfield and McMillan. It comes to light that Kaye has been hanging around with the Oliphants and may have been having an affair with Cyrus the younger son. Beth is also still looking for her father who's been missing for many years. Could the killer have been Kaye's husband? Her lover? Or did she stumble on Beth's own father?

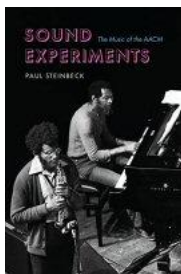
I like the characters in this series and this is a great addition. Beth is becoming more comfortable with her new role in life and we're learning more about the townsfolk. I was attracted to the series because it's set in Alaska and this book does not disappoint in the mystery or the description of life in Alaska.

(If you enjoy this, you may also wish to try [Breakup](#) by Dana Stabenow, or [Bitter Rain](#) by Shannon Baker.)

( official [Paige Shelton](#) web site )

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Recommended by  
South and Gere Branc



### Sound Experiments: The Music of the AACM

by Paul Steinbeck (Music 781.65 Ste)

While the history of modern jazz is often associated with activities in and around New York City, there have been jazz scenes around the country as well. One of the most notable was in 1960s Chicago, where the Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians (AACM) was born. One thing that's immediately different about the Chicago scene compared to the east coast is that they formally organized themselves, a great way for musicians to become colleagues, learn from one another, and offer mutual support. The AACM was founded in 1965, and a huge range of important names in jazz have been part of its ranks over the decades, including Anthony Braxton, Roscoe Mitchell, Muhal Richard Abrams, George Lewis, Wadada Leo Smith, Threadgill, Lester Bowie, Jack DeJohnette, Tomeka Reid, and many more. As an organization, they have operated music programs directed at inner-city youth and they've run their own AACM School of Music, where students get to interact with well-known AACM members as teachers.



The latest book about the AACM is [Sound Experiments: The Music of the AACM](#) by Prof. Paul Steinbeck, which you can borrow from the Polley Music Library. This is his second book related to the AACM, as he published "[Message To Our Folks](#), a book about the Art Ensemble of Chicago, in 2017, which we also have. Both the Art Ensemble and the AACM have been very influential, and there are already several good histories written about the AACM in particular. However, Steinbeck asserts that [Sound Experiments](#) is the first book to contain a deep analysis of the diverse music itself coming out of the AACM, as opposed to just an account of their history. The first chapter offers a quick historical overview of the group's foundation, and historical highlights appear throughout the book to place the pieces, composers and performers discussed in context, but indeed the overall focus of the book is on discussion of a handful of representative pieces from members of the Association.

It's worth mentioning on that front that this is a book that features some fairly formal music analysis, including some transcribed passages and reproductions of handwritten musical notation. While you don't need to read music to enjoy a lot of the book, it's also fair to say that it's primarily aimed at an audience who does, musicians and musicologists more than casual listeners. That said, if you're already a music lover that's into jazz, you will still understand the majority of the narrative descriptions around the pieces discussed in the book and still encourage anyone interested to check it out.

The representative pieces by AACM members and groups discussed here reveal the massive range of musical ideas inspired by the AACM. Like most jazz, most of these pieces feature elements of composition and improvisation, but most feature more unique formal structuring than the usual "head-solos-head" format found in earlier forms of combo jazz. One of the interesting features in AACM pieces are the use of what they call "little instruments," which many members perform with in addition to their primary instruments. These are used to add new kinds of textures and colors to the music, and included things like bike horns, ratchets, maracas, cymbals, and various small African instruments. Conventional musical notation is used for some of the pieces, while others become fairly unconventional. The work of Anthony Braxton is a great example of this: in his Chicago days with the AACM, much of his music still included aspects of traditional notation, but it was combined with elements of graphic notation. On paper, this music looked like it landed somewhere between traditional notation and the more aleatoric "new music" scores found in the 60s. And indeed, the chance-based operations of aleatory approaches to music share a certain kinship with jazz improvisation sonically as well.

While Braxton's music can sound very modern, other influences on AACM artists were sometimes quite traditional. The group Air, for example, developed out of saxophonist Threadgill arranging Scott Joplin piano rags for the trio. While their vocabulary stretched considerably beyond this, they continued to incorporate the occasional rag into their performances, and they developed strategies for improvising in a manner that sounded faithful to the intention of such pieces. Some of Threadgill's music of this period with incorporated Japanese musical concepts, and he developed his own percussion instrument, the "hubkaphone," made of bells, gongs, cymbals, and hubcaps hanging in a metal frame.

Over time, the concepts behind AACM-related music have continued to evolve with technology. Trombonist George Lewis has been a fantastic example of this in practice with his "Voyager" piece, which creates duets between computer-generated music and live performers. The piece debuted in the late 1980s, and Lewis has continued to refine it as new kinds of interactive software become available. But no matter the technology, the goal of the piece remains the same, which is to create "a software-driven improvising ensemble that could create orchestral textures based on the musical concepts of the AACM."



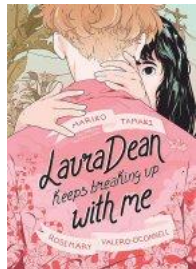
The AACM continues to grow and evolve, too. The final chapter focuses on a piece by flutist and composer Nicole Mitchell, one of the first members of the AACM to be born foundation, and one of the notable leaders within the group in recent years. Her “Mandorla Awakening II: Emerging Worlds” is a great example of a contemporary piece that anywhere the composer’s imagination desires, with elements of rock, pop, world idioms and more. The work also points to extramusical considerations like evolving technological spirituality, a kind of fresh take on Afrofuturism. This is a great piece to end this book on, as it’s an excellent example of how vibrant and forward thinking the AACM and its can be, even 50 years after its founding.

(If you enjoy this, you may also wish to try [Message to Our Folks: The Art Ensemble of Chicago](#) also by Paul Steinbeck, or [Sun Ra's Chicago: Afrofuturism and the City](#) by Willi Sites.)

( official [Paul Steinbeck](#) web site )

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### [Laura Dean Keeps Breaking Up With Me](#)

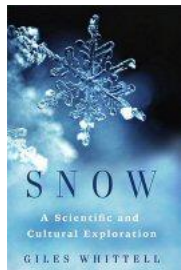
by Mariko Tamaki and Rosemary Valero-O'Connell (YA PB (Graphic Novel) Tamaki)

Toxic teen relationship leads to strained friendships and hurt feelings. Can Freddy find it in herself to end it with her girlfriend, who keeps breaking up with her? Best Audience: Teens/New adults., and fans of Coming of Age stories.

( official [Mariko Tamaki](#) Twitter feed ) | ( official [Rosemary V O](#) Twitter feed )

This was one of dozens of Graphic Novel reviews submitted by library staff during our 2022 In-Service Training day on 9/23/2022, all collected on [of Graph](#)

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### [Snow: A Scientific and Cultural Exploration](#)

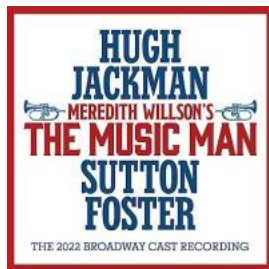
by Giles Whittell (551.578 Whi)

This guy loves snow! Whittell is a chief staff member of the London Times and has also authored some other nonfiction books and a novel. As we are (I done with snow for a while in these parts, this will give some context to the nature of snow and people’s reactions to it. The book is not thick but is d packed with technical, statistical, and anecdotal information about the form of precipitation with which humans have a love-hate relationship. Types deadly avalanches, champion skiers and snowboarders, Vladimir Putin, and other snow-related and snow-dependent topics are covered!

( official [Giles Whittell](#) Twitter feed )

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Walt Bran



### [Music Man: The 2022 Broadway Cast Recording](#)

by Meredith Willson (Compact Disc 782.14 Mus)

I’ve been a huge fan of the actor Hugh Jackman for years, and have really enjoyed his performances in such musical films as Les Miserables and The Greatest Showman. Similarly, I’ve enjoyed what performance by Sutton Foster that I’ve had the chance to see and hear, including her multi-season fun on Younger, and her contributions to soundtrack albums like Young Frankenstein, Anything Goes and The Drowsy Chaperone. But I’ve never had the chance to see either of them live, in person, in a stage show. None-the-less, I had hopes for enjoying them as the leads in the soundtrack to the 2022 Broadway version of The Music Man, the classic American musical.

This soundtrack is fine, on its own, and is particularly rewarding as a two-disc set, which includes a LOT more music than has been on the : releases associated with earlier stage and film productions. And, I actually did enjoy listening to it in the end. Both Jackman and Foster are enthusiastic performers and mo capable singers. BUT...and it’s a big but...as someone who grew up listening to the soundtracks to both the 1957 Broadway production and the 1962 feature film version, Jacl Foster simply do not inhabit the characters of Harold Hill and Marian Paroo like Robert Preston did for both stage and screen, and Barbara Cook and Shirley Jones did for the and screen versions. The late Robert Preston simply IS Harold Hill, and Jackman was a mere pretender.

For Broadway soundtrack fans, I do still recommend this 2022 version...its got an infection sense of energy, and some of the tracks featuring group performances are outstan if you’ve never heard the songs of The Music Man before, you may end up loving this version. But for someone well-versed in the history of Broadway music, this one ultimat bit short. Its main selling point, for me, is the fact that there’s twice as much music represented as in previous production albums.

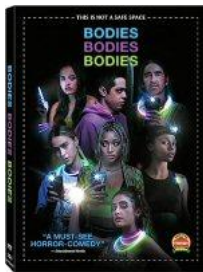


(If you enjoy this, you may also wish to see if you can find the soundtracks to both the [1957 Broadcast Cast Album](#), and the [1962 movie version](#) of this story. But by all means the 2003 TV-movie version, starring Matthew Broderick, as it is far inferior to all other versions.)

( official [Music Man on Broadway 2022](#) web site )

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### Bodies Bodies Bodies

(DVD Bodies)

**Bodies Bodies Bodies** is variously characterized as a satire, a whodunit, a black comedy, and a horror film. I say “yes” to all of these! I found it strikingly reminiscent of *Glass Onion*, though more realistic and messy. A group of college-age rich kid friends (and a couple of their current partners) are having a house party during a storm with drugs, TikTok video filming, and intense ongoing personal conflicts. They start to play a social deduction game where someone plays the murderer and others tapped in the dark have to play dead. Then the storm knocks out power and one of them is truly dead.

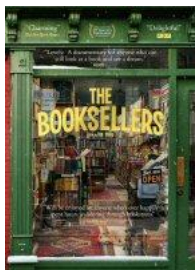
This film’s lighting is striking. Much of the film is lit only by cell phones, flashlights, and glow sticks, yet it never feels too dark for the audience to see what’s going on in the foreground. The characters are intense, as concerned about their relationships, their image, and their secrets as they are being the next to die. The opening scene shows two of the young women making out for a couple of minutes while discussing the upcoming visit. Without giving the audience information to make sense of what they’re saying, you can feel their deep insecurities and needs, which sets the tone for the whole story. **Bodies Bodies Bodies** succeeds in creating tension for the whole runtime and has a reveal that will make you want to watch it all again.

**Bodies Bodies Bodies** was written and directed by women and is queer inclusive. Other recommended watch-alikes are [Heathers](#) (1989) and the interactive drama PS4 game *Dawn* (2015).

( [Internet Movie Database entry for this film](#) )

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### The Booksellers

by Fran Lebowitz (DVD 002.075 Boo)

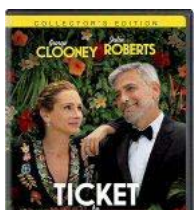
If you are one of those people who can’t walk by a small bookstore without going in to browse the shelves, breathe in the aroma of dusty books, and immerse yourself in the printed word, then this film is for you. *Booksellers* from New York City were interviewed and discussed what it means to be a bookseller in the 21st century at a time when physical books are becoming less popular with the rise in use of ebooks. As one of those people who loves going into bookstores just to browse and experience the thrill of being surrounded by books, I loved this documentary. The booksellers ranged in age from 20-somethings to octogenarians; all described their deep love of books and sharing that love with others. I especially enjoyed the comments and humor of Fran Lebowitz, author and book-lover. Bookstores may become difficult to find in the future since the Internet has made it so easy to get your hands on anything you want at cheap prices. This film is a touching tribute to the people who have worked hard to keep physical books available to those who seek them.

(If you enjoy this, you may also wish to try [84, Charing Cross Road](#) by Helen Hanff (also adapted into a film).)

( [Internet Movie Database entry for this film](#) )

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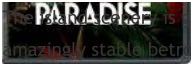
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### Ticket to Paradise

(DVD Ticket)

Seeing longtime friends George Clooney and Julia Roberts as David and Georgia Cotton, bickering ex-spouses who have to grudgingly cooperate to try to save their daughter’s seemingly ill-considered spontaneous choice to marry her Bali-nese boyfriend and settle into an island lifestyle, is 100% of the fun in this otherwise paint-by-the-numbers relationship comedy.



...orgeous, just like the costumes, and the supporting cast is charmingly quirky (including Kaitlyn Dever as headstrong Lily Cotton, Maxime Bouttier as hi  
amazingly stable betn  
theth, Gede, and Billie Lourd as Lily’s sarcastic best friend Wren), but this film is all about how David and Georgia get past the differences that drove  
apart, first to address their shared concerns about their daughter, and later when they begin to realize that the things that originally brought them together 20+ years ago a  
play.

There’s nothing “new” or “original” in this one, but it is great fun to see some charismatic actors making the most of a chance to work together.

( [Internet Movie Database entry for this film](#) )

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