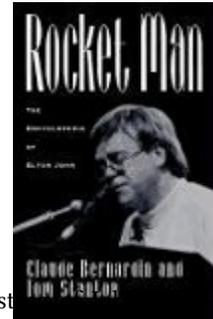


H-Net Reviews

in the Humanities & Social Sciences

Claude Bernardin, Tom Stanton. *Rocket Man: The Encyclopedia of Elton John*. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1995. \$60.95 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-313-29700-7.

Reviewed by Robert G. Weiner (University of North Texas)
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With the recent rise of encyclopedic books about artists like, Elvis, Madonna, and The Grateful Dead, it comes as no surprise that an encyclopedia documenting the 25 year career of Elton John is being published. With over 25 top-40 albums and over 50 top-100 singles in the last 25 years (including a top-40 hit every year since 1970), *Rocket Man* is a much needed addition to the study of this popular artist.

Claude Bernardin and Tom Stanton have spent nearly seven years putting this mammoth work together. *Rocket Man* deals with all aspects of Elton John's career from A-Z. It contains explanations and anecdotes, and presents the political and social causes that John has chosen to support, such as his involvement in the fight against AIDS. There are entries on John's various television appearances, band members, and friends, and a mini-encyclopedic entry on John's songwriting partner Bernie Taupin. *Rocket Man* is filled with fascinating facts and trivia.

The authors give an in-depth look at John's "river" of over 30 albums. Each album is discussed in detail with release dates, highest chart positions, anecdotes about the recording of the songs. Although it is obvious the authors are fans of John, they give a well-balanced look at what they consider to be his best and worst albums.

They also provide a year-by-year listing of his touring and eling concert schedule over the past twenty five years. Included are important concert events, which include his free 1980 concert in New York's Central Park, in honor of John Lennon, and his celebrated 1994 stadium tour with Billy Joel.

Rocket Man contains brief annotations to John's 500 songs. The authors have taken great care to provide the most "complete list ever offered" (262). The appendices discuss songs written by John and recorded by other artists. They also list cover songs John performed at his concerts, and present an extensive bibliography. The authors hope that this book reflects John's "music in its many colors" and indeed it does. *Rocket Man* belongs in major public libraries and those academic libraries with large popular culture and music collections. Anyone interested in the career of this enduring popular artist would also find it a welcome addition to a personal library.

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