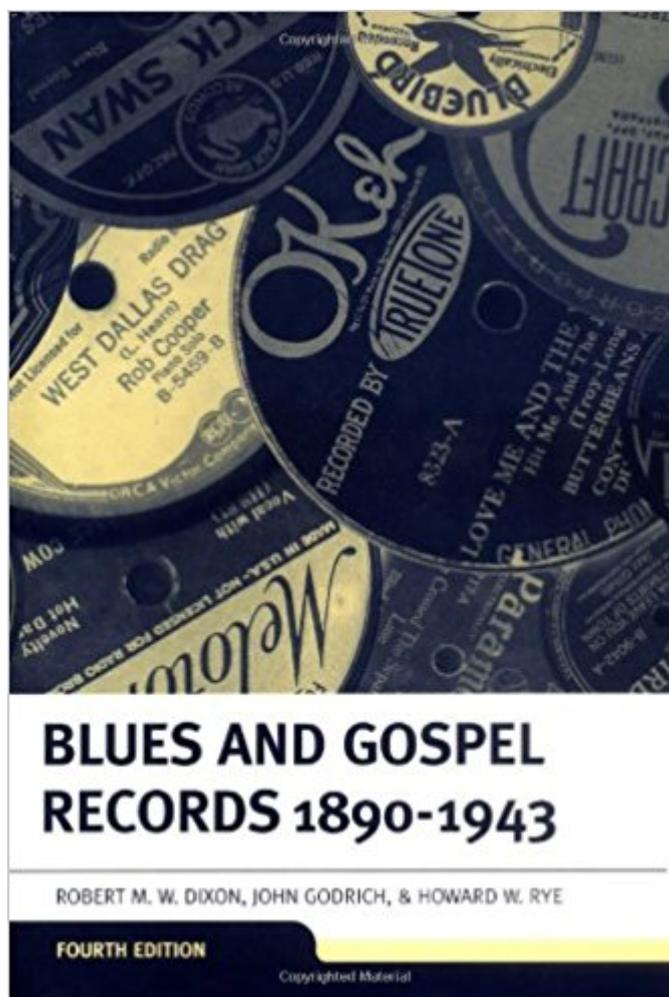


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Blues And Gospel Records: 1890-1943



Synopsis

Since its first edition in 1964, Dixon and Godrich's *Blues and Gospel Records* has been dubbed "the bible" for collectors of pre-war African American music. It provides an exhaustive listing of all recordings made up to the end of 1943 in a distinctively African American style, excluding those customarily classed as jazz (which are the subject of separate discographies). The book covers recordings made for the commercial market (whether issued at the time or not) and also recordings made for the Library of Congress Archive of Folk Song and similar bodies--about 20,000 titles in all, by more than 3,000 artists. For each recording session, full details are given of: artist credit accompaniment place and date of recording titles issuing company and catalogue numbers matrix numbers alternative takes There are also short accounts of the major "race labels" that recorded blues and gospel material, and a complete list of field trips to the south by travelling recording units. Howard Rye has joined the original compilers for this thoroughly revised, enlarged, and reset fourth edition. The scope has been widened by the addition of about 150 new artists in addition to newly discovered recordings by other artists. The compilation now includes recordings by groups such as the Fisk Jubilee Singers, the Pace Jubilee Singers, and the Tuskegee Institute Singers, who, although they employed African American materials and musical devices, were designed to appeal to a predominantly white audience. Early cylinder recordings of gospel music from the 1890s are included for the first time. Previous editions of this work are applauded for their completeness, accuracy, and reliability. This has now been enhanced by the addition of new information from record labels and from record company files, and by listening to a wide selection of titles, and detailed cross checking.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This encyclopedia is indispensable to anyone seriously interested in blues and gospel recordings of the pre-WW2 era. Awe-inspiring labor has brought forth a volume of nearly 1500 pages listing, alphabetically by artist, recording data for every known African-American blues and gospel performer whose work was put on disk through 1943. It is not a jazz discography, though a few essentially jazz acts are included. As well as commercial recordings, it also attempts to catalog all known folklore field recordings of the same period, particularly those of the Archive of American Folk Song at the Library of Congress. Included are an index of artists, to help locate sideman appearances, and an index of song titles. The work involved here, which has occupied several writers for many years, is awe-inspiring, particularly since the book is specialized enough (and priced highly enough) that it will never break any sales records. A love for this wonderful music is evident on every page. I bought a copy about 2 years ago and use it frequently, especially with my disk and tape collection. The kind of session data given so generously here was notoriously absent on LP reissues of early blues music. As an inveterate compiler and collator and list-maker, I can't imagine not having this info! The Oxford edition is a sturdy and well-made volume, and I consider the book worth every dime I paid for it, and then some. One "improvement" I would like to see in a future edition is the addition of some symbol to designate records of which no copy is known to exist. Here and there the editors note that a particular recording has "never been found," but this should be done more consistently. Even with such a notoriously lost 78 as Pm 13096, only the absence of a master number indicates its status.

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