

Litten used Hitler's own writings, plus Nazi newspapers, to show otherwise, briefly exposing Hitler to the threat of prosecution for perjury.

The Reichstag fire of February 27, 1933, was the turning point that enabled Hitler to become a dictator. Litten was arrested that very night. The first half of *Crossing Hitler* details Litten's early life, the trial and the immediate aftermath; the second his arrest, imprisonment, and unusual death.

Litten's staunchly loyal mother memorialized her son in a 1940 book. Lawyers in today's Germany remember and honor Litten with a jurisprudence award. For the rest of the world, Hett's well-researched history is an excellent introduction, and a creepy reminder of the insidious power of evil. (October) *Dick Cady*

HOUSE & HOME



Do-It-for-Less! Weddings: How to Create Your Dream Wedding Without Breaking the Bank

Denise Vivaldo
Sellers Publishing, Softcover
\$19.95 (272pp)
978-1-4162-0519-7

About 2.5 million weddings occur annually in the U.S., costing roughly \$40 billion; wedding budgets often run as much as a new car or even a home down payment. To bring sanity back to wedding costs, Vivaldo, a Hollywood chef, caterer, party planner, and author of *Do-It-For-Less Parties*, delivers the details for creating a personalized once-in-a-lifetime day that doesn't leave newlyweds married to debt.

In this bridezilla-free, no-nonsense guide, the author acknowledges that do-it-for-less success requires reasonably well-organized brides and/or friends with organizational and logistical skills. Specific, detailed how-to information encompasses every aspect of wedding planning to give brides the confidence to successfully carry through on the event.

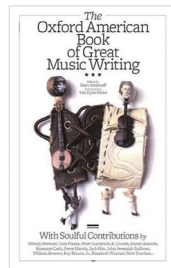
From the initial planning, budgeting, and list-making, to enlisting the right friends to help, all the way through the details of the reception and refreshments, Vivaldo serves as the reader's personal wedding planner, cheerleader, and step-by-step guide. With hands-on expertise, and with more than 10,000 parties and catered events to her credit, Vivaldo offers a professional's insights for making wise choices for a memorable wedding on a budget and names resources in the Do-It-Yourself (DIY) appendices. Sidebars, hints, and lists offer inspiration and numerous ways to shave corners without affecting the event's beauty.

Commonly, half the wedding budget is spent on reception-related items, so the author's experience as chef and caterer serves her readers well. Nearly two-thirds of the book focuses on the reception—including venue, envisioning logis-

tics, bar and beverages, and detailed, innovative seasonal wedding menus that include ingredients, recipes, presentation tips, and amounts for 12, 25, 50, and 75 people. The tantalizing wedding cake section alone encompasses more than ten percent of the book.

Not every bride is ready to take on these daunting tasks of doing it all herself; those working full time might find it especially challenging. But even the partial DIY girl will find plenty of money-saving ideas. The real strength of the book is its presentation of ideas and resources from a pro, who inspires brides to take conscious control of the process to be able to enjoy a uniquely special day without putting their future into hock. For brides-to-be looking for a dream-wedding idea book that is firmly grounded in financial reality, this is an eye-opening, must-have guide filled with an expert insider's tricks of the trade. (October) *Bobby Middendorf*

MUSIC



The Oxford American Book of Great Music Writing

Marc Smirnoff, editor
University of Arkansas Press,
Hardcover \$34.95 (466pp)
978-1-55728-887-5

Music makes the world go 'round. Readers of the "Oxford American," a magazine of all things Southern, have felt for years that they have been the center of that world. It is the steamy South, after all, which has been the source of much of America's greatest musical talent. Texas can lay claim to flamboyant blues rocker Janis Joplin and gritty blues legend Leadbelly. The Mississippi Delta was the incubator for Ike Turner, wild man Jerry Lee Lewis and, of course, "the king," Elvis Presley. The Deep South produced rock group R.E.M. in Georgia, Lynyrd Skynyrd "from the bad side of Jacksonville (Florida)" and Randy Newman of Louisiana. And the Appalachians are home to people like blind guitar wiz Doc Watson. Even comedian and actor Steve Martin, who grew up in southern California, minutes from Disneyland, embraced the banjo, an instrument first brought to the American South by slaves.

Those are just a few of the artists addressed in this anthology of fifty-five essays, with the occasional poem, oral history, and short story included, culled from the magazine's past ten years by the publication's editor. A foreword by musician and composer Van Dyke Parks sets the tone for the book and, with unerring Southern hospitality, opens the door for readers who may have never ventured below the Mason-Dixon line.

Without stereotyping, the editor allocates these musical talents into genres such as "Rockabilly," "R & B: Dept. of Al Green," "Folk/Bluegrass" and "Jazz." The writers are no

less impressive than their grasp of subject matter, and they present personal arguments for their infatuation. Humorist Roy Blount, Jr., in his interview with singer Ray Charles, shares with the reader why Charles, who started out with a small combo, graduated to a ten-piece band.

"When you got a big plate, you can put as much as you want on it," Charles tells him. "If you want just a little bit to eat, just put a little bit on. But if you want a lot, you can have that, too." In a musical world that is succumbing to "big business," Southern musical talents old and new fight onward, determined to tell their stories. Readers will crank up their stereos while studying the pages and making exciting discoveries. (October) *Karl Kunkel*



Rebels Wit Attitude: Subversive Rock Humorists

Iain Ellis
Soft Skull Press, Softcover
\$15.95 (256pp)
978-1-59376-206-3

At first glance (or hearing), Chuck Berry, Madonna, Marilyn Manson, Nirvana, and Gretchen Wilson may seem to be as different as B flat is from F sharp. In *Rebels Wit Attitude*, Iain Ellis intelligently argues that each of these artists—and many others like them—have several important similarities: they are all subversive in either their lyrics, stage image, or packaging (sometimes all three at once); their music is geared toward young listeners; they all revel in a primal, often harsh, but always trail-blazing rock sound; and they all exhibit diverse humorous elements in their music. Ellis, a music columnist for *Pop Matters*, aims to "scrutinize this humor: what it consists of, how it manifests itself, who and what it is targeting, and how it ultimately functions and affects society."

Ellis devotes a separate section to each decade of musical innovation, from the 1950s to the opening years of the twenty-first century. In each he discusses the most influential and most subversive rock humorists of the time. What emerges is a brainy, fun, and thought-provoking rollick through the last fifty years of music history.

For instance, in the section devoted to the 1950s, "The Fifties: Evolution to Revolution," Ellis features several groundbreaking musicians, beginning with Chuck Berry, "a quintessential all-American maverick," and the granddaddy of subversive rock humor. Ellis explores how the lyrics of toe-tapping Berry favorites such as "No Particular Place to Go," "Roll Over Beethoven," and "School Day," served as a thinly veiled clarion call to the youth of the time to throw off the stifling cloak of adult authority and revel in the new sound of the young—rock and roll.

In "The Nineties: Rock in Flux," Ellis examines the birth of modern alternative music with