

Yale Univ.; *Reading American Photographs*) adds art historical analysis to Phillips's visual interpretations and explains in his book-length essay that "Phillips deploys paint and language to deduce an inner life from known facts, to elicit a more complex Mathew Brady than we have known." Phillips seems to be a hot commodity these days—no fewer than three monographs have been produced on the artist since 2004 (*Bed as Autobiography*, *John Ransom Phillips: A Contemporary Book of the Dead*). **VERDICT** This book is both visually and conceptually pleasing, and though it will be of interest to historians of photography, it will be most appreciated by students of contemporary American art.—Kraig Binkowski, Yale Ctr. for British Art Lib., New Haven, CT

Seo, Audrey Yoshiko & Stephen Addiss.
The Sound of One Hand: Paintings and Calligraphy by Zen Master Hakuin.
Shambhala, dist. by Random. Sept. 2010.
c.288p. ISBN 978-1-59030-578-2. \$65.

GRAPHIC ARTS

Hakuin, who lived from 1685 or 1686 to 1768 or 1769, is best known in the West for the koan, "What is the sound of one hand clapping?" He is also venerated as the true reviver of Zen in Japan, in part because of his devotion to meditation on koans, which separate the viewer from conventional interpretation and ideally bring the Buddhist closer to true insight. This marvelous book is a study of this renowned master's paintings and calligraphy by Seo (Japanese art & culture, Coll. of William and Mary) and Addiss (Tucker-Boatwright Professor in the Humanities: Art, Univ. of Richmond). Hakuin's art is deceptive: at times simple and almost childlike, it has the simplicity possible only to a true master; notable, too, is the sense of sheer joy that runs through his sketches of Zen monks and folk deities. **VERDICT** Seo and Addiss's perceptive and informed commentary round out a volume of pricelessly charming and inspiring images from a Zen master of the 18th century. This volume will be of interest to Zen practitioners, artists, and aficionados of Asian arts and culture; it's also a must for academic libraries.—Graham Christian, formerly Andover-Harvard Theological Lib., Cambridge, MA

Walker, Brian. **Alice Neel: Painted Truths.**
Yale Univ. 2010. 296p. illus. bibliog. index.
ISBN 978-0-300-16332-2. \$65. FINE ARTS
Alice Neel (1900–84) focused on portraiture for most of her life, a period when abstraction dominated the art world. She was one of the few mid-20th-century

artists to paint the human figure and practically the only woman to specialize in portraiture, and although recognition came late in her life, it established her as an important artist. Accompanying an exhibition at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, TX, that will also travel to two international venues and that includes both Neel's portraits and her New York cityscapes, this volume covers nearly seven decades of Neel's life and work, including her social and artistic activism and her single motherhood. Essays by exhibition curator Walker and three other scholars and reflections on Neel by artists Frank Auerbach, Marlene Dumas, and Chris Ofili add to the book's significance. Neel's paintings are represented by 120 color illustrations, in concert with thematic texts and entries. With a bibliography, a chronology, and a checklist of the exhibition, the only comparable work is the catalog, now out of print, for Neel's 2000 retrospective exhibition. **VERDICT** An essential purchase for libraries focusing on contemporary art and/or women's studies.—Martha Smith, Elmira Coll. Lib., NY

LITERATURE

Donaldson-Evans, Lance. **One Hundred Great French Books: From the Middle Ages to the Present.** Bluebridge, dist. by IPG. 2010.
c.240p. index. ISBN 978-1-933346-22-9.
pap. \$15.95. UR

Moving chronologically from the epic poem *La Chanson de Roland*, the oldest surviving work of French literature, to the Belgian Francophile Amélie Nothomb's *Stupeur et tremblements* and Michel Houellebecq's *La possibilité d'une île*, a story about a man and his clones, this work doesn't contain a single boring entry; each one presents useful insights by Donaldson-Evans (Romance languages, Univ. of Pennsylvania). Entries include a brief summary and commentary and run no more than two pages. A wide spectrum of literary genres, styles, and formats are covered, ranging from the classics to 21st-century works, as well as comic books, detective novels, and sf. **VERDICT** This easy-to-use guide will be of interest to students and scholars alike and will appeal to anyone interested in French literature. Recommended for public libraries and all academic libraries with strong French and literature collections.—Bob T. Ivey, Univ. of Memphis

Spurling, Hilary. **Pearl Buck in China: Journey to The Good Earth.** S. & S. Jun. 2010.
c.288p. photogs. maps. index. ISBN 978-1-4165-4042-7. \$27. UR

Spurling (*The Unknown Matisse*, *Matisse the Master*) explores the contradictions in writer Buck's life and works. Buck, the

daughter of a fundamentalist Christian missionary, spoke Chinese before learning English and spent more time in China than America. Her family, both her birth family and the family she built with her second husband, had to flee China on more than one occasion owing to political turmoil. Her works achieved an enormous amount of success, especially her second novel, *The Good Earth* (after *East Wind, West Wind*), during her lifetime. They were best sellers, and she won the Nobel Prize in Literature, yet they have been largely ignored in recent years. Spurling's biography examines Buck's childhood, the influences that informed her writing, and the marriage that ultimately brought her happiness. **VERDICT** Readers and academics interested in China will most likely find the book appealing. [See Prepub Alert, *LJ* 2/15/10; ebook ISBN 978-1-4391-8044-0.]—Pam Kingsbury, Univ. of North Alabama, Florence

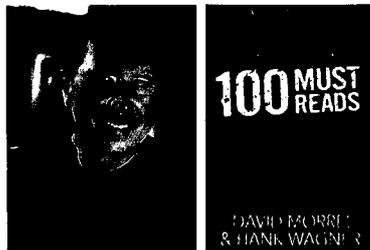
☆**Thrillers: 100 Must Reads.** Oceanview, dist. by Midpoint Trade. Jul. 2010. c.400p. ed. by David Morrell & Hank Wagner. ISBN 978-1-933515-56-4. \$27.95. UR

The top names in the thriller genre today reflect on and examine suspense classics in 100 riveting essays. Created by the International Thriller Writers organization and edited by *First Blood* author Morrell and critic Wagner, this anthology starts far into the past with Lee Child's examination of the Greek myth of Theseus and the Minotaur and proceeds up to the modern publishing game changer, Dan Brown's *The Da Vinci Code*. The other titles mentioned include a variety of obvious choices, like Michael Crichton's *The Andromeda Strain* and John le Carré's *The Spy Who Came in from the Cold*, but some are head scratchers, like Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* and Jules Verne's *Mysterious Island*. Each essay persuades the reader to understand why a particular title deserves to be featured, including the not so obvious choices. The debate to define a thriller and separate it from the mystery genre will intensify even further thanks to the various selections here. **VERDICT** This is an essential reference book for readers' advisory; suspense fans will also enjoy browsing to find new titles and authors to savor. [See Q&A with Morrell on p. 74.—Ed.]—Jeff Ayers, Seattle P.L.

PERFORMING ARTS

Kaiser, Linda Pembroke. **Pulling Strings: The Legacy of Melville A. Clark.** Syracuse Univ. May 2010. c.186p. illus. bibliog. index. ISBN 978-0-8156-0950-6. \$29.95. MUSIC
This is the first book to be published

Q & A David Morrell



In *Thrillers: 100 Must Reads* (reviewed on p. 73), the genre's top names reflect on the suspense classics of the past—from the Greek myth of Theseus and the Minotaur to Dan Brown's contemporary classic, *The Da Vinci Code*. One of the editors of this essential reference is David Morrell, author of *First Blood*, which introduced Rambo and set the template for the modern action novel.

How did the idea behind this book originate?

When I teach fiction writing, I emphasize to my students that if they work in a genre, they need to be experts in its history. Otherwise, they might unintentionally replicate another author's work or write books that they think are cutting-edge but are old-fashioned. It occurred to me that there wasn't a good reading list for classic thrillers. Hank Wagner (a reviewer friend) and I decided that we would coedit a nonfiction book in which 100 contemporary thriller writers contribute essays about 100 classic thrillers.

How were the titles chosen?

We gathered advice from thriller critics and authors who know the history of the genre. We planned to start in 1860 with Wilkie Collins's *The Woman in White*, because reviewers of the time credited it as the first "novel of sensation." Then we decided to begin earlier, in 1838, with Edgar Allan Poe's only novel, *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym*. But Douglas Preston pointed out the many thrillers that came before 1838: Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* in 1719, for example. Lee Child suggested we go back to the 13th century B.C.E. and the story of Theseus and the Minotaur. In the opposite direction, our cut-off date was 2000. We didn't think it was possible to be objective about books more recent than that, but in the end, we included 2003's *The Da Vinci Code*, which had an undeniable influence.

How were the contributors chosen?

Our book is a fund-raiser for International Thriller Writers (ITW), an organization that Gayle Lynds and I cofounded. It's amazing how many of our members donated their time and talent when we asked them to contribute. Some had an intimate connection with a particular thriller author—Raymond Benson wrote a number of James Bond novels, for instance, and Max Allan Collins was a friend of Mickey Spillane's. As soon as we put out the word, ITW members began volunteering, some of them mega-sellers such as David Baldacci, Steve Berry, Jeffery Deaver, and Tess Gerritsen.... A few writers

appear twice, both as essayists and as authors of a classic thriller, James Grady (*Six Days of the Condor*) and Justin Scott (*The Shipkiller*), for example.

Why did you write about Agatha Christie's *And Then There Were None*?

Part of it was nostalgia, as I had appeared in a high school stage production of that novel. One question that comes up a lot is, What is the difference between a mystery and a thriller? Broadly, the difference is that traditional mysteries tend to be cerebral, emphasizing logic and deduction while playing down gore and emotions. In contrast, thrillers tend to be visceral and exhilarating, emphasizing emotions and sensation. *And Then There Were None* is an example of how the two types can be combined. It's a terrifying story, and yet it strongly appeals to our sense of deduction and logic.

First Blood is one of the 100 titles discussed. What is the book's legacy?

It's an odd experience being associated with a character [Rambo] who is recognized around the world. This happened with only four other characters in the 20th century: Sherlock Holmes, Tarzan, James Bond, and Harry Potter. The book is sometimes called "the father of the modern action novel" because, until 1972 when *First Blood* was published, no novel contained as much sustained action in a nongenre tone, and even today, few books have that level of action. It influenced a generation of thriller authors.

How can a reader or librarian use this book?

It's a wonderful opportunity to showcase exciting titles unfamiliar to many library patrons—*The Big Clock*, *Laura*, *Rogue Male*, *The Great Impersonation*, *The Riddle of the Sands*. I suggest that libraries have a display in which *Thrillers: 100 Must Reads* is flanked by ten books each month, chosen from our project's contents. I think readers will welcome the chance to read timeless examples of this wonderful genre.—Jeff Ayers, Seattle P.L.

about harpist Melville A. Clark (1883–1953), but it isn't a biography. Instead, Kaiser, a fellow harpist, captures Clark's little-known legacy as a musician, inventor, and entrepreneur. She devotes an entire chapter to the invention of the Clark Irish harp, the first portable harp made in America. Harp enthusiasts will appreciate the detailed explanations of the harp's design and distinctive sound. Kaiser also lists Clark's other inventions, including nylon music strings, which are still used today. Historians will be taken by the glimpses she provides into early 20th-century life, including a photograph of a piano and harp moving wagon and a newspaper clipping of British soldiers holding the tiny war balloons that Clark designed to send messages into enemy territory. Diagrams of his inventions are included in the appendixes. **VERDICT** Original historical documents, photographs, and personal interviews bring this book to life. The sequence of the narrative is sometimes hard to follow, but this volume remains a useful addition for libraries specializing in music and musical history.—Karen McCoy, Farmington P.L., NM

Kashner, Sam & Nancy Schoenberger. *Furious Love: Elizabeth Taylor, Richard Burton, and the Marriage of the Century*. Harper: HarperCollins. Jun. 2010. c.512p. photogs. bibliog. index. ISBN 978-0-06-156284-6. \$27.99. FILM

When Elizabeth Taylor and Richard Burton starred together in *Cleopatra* in the early Sixties, they began a romance that shocked the world, and the public could not get enough of "le scandale" (as Burton coined it). Because they were married to other people and flaunted their relationship, they were denounced by the Vatican and some in the U.S. House of Representatives. They eventually wed, and for a quarter of a century their tempestuous on-again, off-again love affair continued to make headlines. Despite their occasionally over-the-top prose (e.g., "And now, suddenly, Elizabeth would be playing love scenes with this devastating Welshman, made vulnerable by drink, a god brought down to earth, whose need for alcohol translated into a ravishing thirst for life"), biographers Kashner and Schoenberger (coauthors, *A Talent for Genius: The Life and Time of Oscar Levant*) have written a fascinating book that includes new research and interviews (Taylor shared Burton's love letters) and captures the glamour of a by-gone era. **VERDICT** This well-researched dual biography is juicy enough for any celebrity bio maven. [See Prepub Alert,

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