FOREWORD REVIEWS THE INDIE WE LOVE.

The Acoustic Guitar
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The Acoustic Guitar is an ambitious coffee-table book. It charts the evolution of the acoustic guitar from origins in the sixteenth century to the present time. There is a wealth of information here for the novice, containing at least a passing mention of the players, builders and companies associated with the acoustic guitar. This, however, isn't the best reason to own this book. The best reason, as with most books of this type, is the luscious photographs of beautiful and sometimes historic instruments. The text is, as has been said of a star pitcher's hitting abilities, an unexpected and pleasant addition.

This does not mean that the text isn't useful. In fact, many sections are extremely helpful, for instance the relationship between the Dopyera Brothers and National Guitar Company. Others seem less integral, such as the chapter on British luthiers. Despite the shear voluptuousness of the photographs, the historic approach creates some strange omissions and inclusions. As would be expected the Gibsons, Martins and Benedettos are given star coverage. In a truly historic approach there would also be a considerable mention of companies like Guild, favored by Mississippi John Hurt and Taj Mahal among others. The twelve-string guitar is not mentioned and recent developments like the baritone guitar and the seven-string might as well not exist. One would also expect that the discussion might not only describe that a certain Luthier introduced fan-bracing, but might explain what effect this innovation had on the structure and sound of the instrument. Still, a line must be drawn if a book is to be produced at a rational price and quality.

There are a large number of guitar books that combine beautiful pictures with lessons and "how-to" approaches. But the price of this book has to be the best bargain in the guitar world, and the historic approach is informative and fresh.

Peter Terry