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**Graven with diamonds: the many lives of Thomas Wyatt: poet, lover, statesman, and spy in the court of Henry VIII, Nicola Shulman (book review)**

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**Must Read: Rediscovering American Bestsellers.** Continuum. 2012. 373p. ed. by Sarah Churchwell & Thomas Ruys Smith. bibliog. index. ISBN 9781441162168. pap. \$29.95. **LT**

Relentlessly suspicious of popular literature, particularly the best seller, literary scholars and cultural critics continue to grapple with understanding the allure of the "must read," its historical impact, and its enduring mass appeal. In this new collection of essays, Churchwell (*American literature*, Univ. of East Anglia, U.K.; *The Many Lives of Marilyn Monroe*) and Smith (*River of Dreams: Imagining the Mississippi Before Mark Twain*; *Southern Queen: New Orleans in the Nineteenth Century*) focus on the "critically neglected but historically popular texts" spanning Colonial America (*Charlotte Temple*) to the 21st century (*The Da Vinci Code*). Uniformly dense chapters written by literary academics offer meticulous profiles of selected bestsellers that detail the book's production, distribution, and marketing influences, in addition to an analysis of its cultural impact and literary legacy. Notable chapters include, "Crimes and bestsellers: Mario Puzo's path to *The Godfather*"—a look into the novel's success when the publishing industry was on the edge of crucial change during the years following World War II; and "*Ten Nights in a Bar-Room* and the Visual Culture of Temperance"—an insightful essay on America's 1854 best-selling graphic novel that illustrates the country's "dark years." **VERDICT** Recommended for readers interested in publishing trends and the rise and fall of popular American literature, and for the literary extremist.—**Annalisa Pesek, Library Journal**

**Shulman, Nicola. Graven with Diamonds: The Many Lives of Thomas Wyatt: Poet, Lover, Statesman, and Spy in the Court of Henry VIII.** Steerforth Pr. Feb. 2013. 368p. ISBN 9781586422073. pap. \$19.99. **LT**

If the average person knows the name of Thomas Wyatt, it's for a reason that's either risqué (his rumored affair with Anne Boleyn) or literary (his contributions to English lyric poetry). The poetic exploits interest UK writer Shulman, who delves into the poems to examine their meaning, quality, and significance to Wyatt himself. The resulting work falls somewhere between biography and literary analysis, for although Shulman touches on the aspects of Wyatt's life listed in the subtitle, she is most interested in their intersection with his poetry and in the ways poetic expression and courtly love pervaded the culture and politics of the Tudor world. Shulman's observations are

## REVIEWERS OF THE YEAR 2012



**Lisa Campbell** Univ. of Michigan Lib., Ann Arbor

Cookbook columnist Lisa Campbell is both a literal and figurative tastemaker for the library market. She stays up to date on the latest trends in food and cooking, and puts that knowledge to work as she sorts through scores of new releases to determine which ones will be best for library patrons. She makes the additional effort to prepare at least one recipe from every cookbook she reviews, in the process judging the clarity of the directions and the quality of the finished dish. Her reviews are smart and engaging, and, most of all, useful for her fellow librarians, since she has a knack for distilling what sets a cookbook apart from its peers and expressing that clearly and succinctly. Almost all of her reviews suggest other titles that support the book's content and could be displayed with it. Lisa thinks big, pays attention to the details, and does it all cheerfully and efficiently. I'm delighted to suggest her as a Reviewer of the Year.—**Stephanie Klose**

intriguing and her prose is entertaining, whether she's detailing Wyatt's court life or teasing out layers of meaning from his sonnets, but she tends to stretch a point or an interpretation a bit too far in order to bolster her assertions. **VERDICT** Shulman's vibrant style, her distinctive approach to Wyatt's poetry, and the lack of other recent works on Wyatt make this a recommended read, although it lacks the rigor necessary to make it a true definitive work on the subject.—**Kathleen McCallister, Univ. of South Carolina Lib., Columbia**

### PERFORMING ARTS

**Alleyne, Mike. The Encyclopedia of Reggae: The Golden Age of Roots Reggae.**

**Sterling. 2012. 332p. photogs. index. ISBN**

**9781402785832. pap. \$24.95. MUSIC**

Reggae has been evolving and growing in popularity since the early 1960s. Alleyne's (recording industry, Middle Tennessee State Univ.) authoritative look at the entire genre includes comprehensive articles on 25 major reggae stars and features 14 sidebars explaining everything from dub to dancehall. David Moskowitz's *Caribbean Popular Music: An Encyclopedia of Reggae, Mento, Ska, Rock Steady and Dancehall* offered a good start on this subject, but its solid information was paired with only a few black-and-white photos. This new book is much more visually appealing, in full color and with vibrant four-color artwork that makes it a fun browse as well as a useful reference title. **VERDICT** This well-written and informative book covers most, if not all, of the main performers of reggae's golden era, and should be included in all comprehensive music and reggae collections.—**Bill Walker, Stockton-San Joaquin Cty. P.L., CA**

**Ankerich, Michael G. Mae Murray: The Girl with the Bee-Stung Lips.** Univ. of Kentucky.

**2012. 392p. ISBN 9780813136905. \$40.**

**ebk. ISBN 9780813140384. FILM**

If one silent-film superstar personifies the iconic Norma Desmond (Gloria Swanson of *Sunset Boulevard*), it would be Mae Murray. Beautiful, talented, vain, glamorous, famous, and infamous: Murray, with her "bee-stung lips," had one of the great faces of the silent era. Beginning her career as a dancer on Broadway in the early 1910s, Murray made an easy transition from the Ziegfeld Follies into film and found great success and stardom that lasted throughout the silent era. The arrival of sound film, along with an unfortunate marriage and bad career decisions, led to the inevitable fading of Murray's star—a common Hollywood story. Murray herself, however, was very uncommon. Ankerich (*Broken Silence: Conversations with 23 Silent Film Stars*) has managed to capture lightning in a bottle, piercing the fog of time and faded memories to create a compelling and haunting biography of one of film's long-forgotten lights. **VERDICT** In what will surely become the actress's definitive biography, Ankerich captures a glittering, elusive Murray, who lived in a self-created bubble of everlasting fame and who spun faster and faster until one day "she was gone." Recommended for all fans of silent film and Old Hollywood glamour.—**Teri Shiel, Westfield State Univ. Lib., MA**

**Benjaminson, Peter. Mary Wells: The Tumultuous Life of Motown's First Superstar.** Chicago Review. 2012. 304p. discog. illus. bibliog.

**ISBN 9781569762486. \$26.95.**

**ebk. ISBN 9781613745298. MUSIC**

Benjaminson follows his definitive biography of Supremes vocalist Florence Ballard (*The Lost Supreme: The Life of Dreamgirl Florence Ballard*) with the first biography devoted solely to the tumultuous

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