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tions interrégionales pour éviter la «minorisation» des francophones sur l'île de Montréal. La préservation du caractère français de Montréal passe aussi par la relance économique.

Les livres qui traitent de sujets encore d'actualité au moment de leur parution ont souvent le défaut de vieillir très vite. Cependant, comme celui de Levine retrace les événements de façon chronologique et qu'il raconte l'histoire linguistique de Montréal à partir d'aussi loin que 1760, il devrait garder longtemps son intérêt. Les modifications que Levine a dû apporter à son dernier chapitre montrent cependant qu'il est hasardeux d'interpréter l'histoire à mesure qu'elle se fait : au rythme où les relations linguistiques évoluent à Montréal, il faudrait sans doute réécrire une nouvelle version du dernier chapitre à tous les cinq ans. Par exemple, il affirme presque que le référendum de l'automne 1995 et le discours du Premier ministre Parizeau qui a suivi ont modifié pour toujours «le cours de la dynamique linguistique de Montréal» (p. 375). Il me semble qu'il faudrait attendre un peu avant de se prononcer sur cette question. Le livre demeure toutefois un incontournable pour tous ceux qui veulent comprendre la dynamique linguistique de Montréal. Il est important par ailleurs de souligner l'excellence de la traduction de Marie Poirier.

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Pitt, Leonard and Dale Pitt. *Los Angeles A to Z: An Encyclopedia of the City and County*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1997. Pp. xix, 603. Maps, black and white illustrations, appendices, selected readings and films. US\$34.95 (cloth).

This volume is the latest in a wave of encyclopedic treatments of urban histories that have appeared over the past decade, beginning with *The Encyclopedia of Cleveland History* (1987, 2nd ed. 1996), *The Encyclopedia of Indianapolis* (1994), and *The Encyclopedia of New York City* (1995). All differed in details of format but are similar in breadth of coverage which, if the trend continues, will make it possible to do comparative studies of urban developments.

Los Angeles: A to Z is a handsomely designed volume with over 300 black-and-white illustrations, just under 2000 articles, appendices, maps, a bibliography for further reading, a chronology, and even a select list of films about Los Angeles. The articles range from topical overviews on such subjects as agriculture and architecture, ethnic groups and earthquakes, murders and, of course, the motion picture industry. The rest of the volume is filled with interesting, brief articles ranging from 50 to several hundred words in length, sketching histories of individuals, neighborhoods, landmarks and agencies, all encompassed within 603 pages. This is a remarkable achievement, for apparently all of the research, assembling and writing was done by the authors themselves, although they did, of course, consult a vast array of books, libraries, archives, and

individuals in a process that began in 1991 and was completed in 1996.

This is a handy desk reference work that will be indispensable to librarians, local teachers, journalists and speech writers, as well as the general reader who is interested in the history of Los Angeles. But the researcher will want something of more depth and richness of detail, even as a first cut, than this volume furnishes. For example, the topical article on architecture is tantalizingly lacking in examples of buildings, architects, architectural firms, with the result that it is a chronicle of architectural styles that might be found in almost any American city. The biographical sketch of Ellen Stern Harris gives no dates. Presumably she is still living, because the last sentence is written in the present tense. It should be said, however, that this is by no means true of most of the biographical sketches. Hollywood and the motion picture industry are well-represented, though, to be sure, the film buffs will find many stars and directors omitted, but the giants are there. Business and industry seem to be under-represented.

There are some suggestions for inclusion in the second edition (the authors hint that there might be one), to make the work even more useful and user-friendly. First and foremost, include an index, which would allow the reader access to the names, events or topics covered within the text of multiple articles; cross-references to related articles, particularly to topical articles; key sources under articles, particularly to manuscript collections, public documents and reports — all would ease access to the rich materials in this volume.

Los Angeles: A to Z is, nevertheless, a great achievement, a boon to citizens of Los Angeles, and will hold its own with the small but growing collection of metropolitan encyclopedias.

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Gerhard, Anselm. *The Urbanization of Opera: Music Theatre in Paris in the Nineteenth Century*. Trans. Mary Whittall. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998. [Originally published as *Die Verstädterung der Oper: Paris und das Musiktheater des 19. Jahrhunderts*. Stuttgart: J.B. Metzlersche Verlagsbuchhandlung und Carl Ernst Poeschel Verlag GmbH, 1992.] Pp. xxi, 503. Black and white illustrations, bibliography, index.

During the middle decades of the nineteenth century when Italians talked about opera, their first thoughts frequently centered on the quality and dynamics of the human voice. For Germans, caught up in the excitement of Wagnerian music drama, it was the orchestration and the multilayered nature of the symphonic underpinning that captured the public imagination. But in France, despite the presence and success of theatres performing Italian and German operas, not to mention the *Opéra Com-*

ique where French operas were interspersed with considerable spoken dialogue, a new and uniquely French operatic tradition was evolving.

Although called, *grand opéra*, that term meant more than "grand opera" in the popular sense. It referred to a work that was sung throughout, with no spoken dialogue, and unlike most Italian and German operas it was usually five acts long rather than the traditional three. In addition the chorus was expected to play a large role, often as a way of advancing the dramatic plot. Most importantly, a full-length ballet, often lasting longer than forty minutes, was to take place either during the third or the fourth act. Finally, the opera was to include a noteworthy and cataclysmic spectacle, such as the slaughter of several hundred Protestants by militant Catholics at the end of Meyerbeer's *Les Huguenots*. When Wagner challenged several of these conventions in his reworked Paris version of *Tannhäuser*, set to a French libretto, but in three acts and with the ballet coming early in the first act, public indignation ended the performance before it was half over.

Anselm Gerhard is professor of musicology at the University of Bern in Switzerland. Although he is fascinated by the development and evolution of the French *Grand Opéra* tradition his study places that tradition within a larger and more compelling canvas. Along the way he raises several intriguing and important questions, one in particular. Given the fact that Paris was one of the few truly cosmopolitan cities in mid-nineteenth-century Europe, perhaps the most sophisticated city in Europe, did urbanization play a role in the evolution of the *grand opéra* tradition? This question, and his attempt to answer it, raises an important area for exploration in European thought and culture, one seldom researched.

There were hundreds of opera houses in Europe, but the Garnier Theatre in Paris was the home of French *grand opéra*. Internationally recognized composers like Meyerbeer, Rossini, Verdi and Spontini were invited to contribute to the advancement of this genre. Mr. Gerhard investigates not only the relationship between urbanization and grand opera, but he asks and tries to answer another significant question. Why did opera characters and plots take the forms they did, reeking with psychological overtones and fraught with numerous examples of neuroses? Why did librettists write multifaceted and complicated works? He then relates this question to his primary focus: what role did urbanization and the complications of city life play in the evolution of *grand opéra*?

Professor Gerhard concentrates on eight major works composed by Rossini (*Le Siège de Corinthe* and *Guillaume Tell*), Auber (*Le Muette de Portici*), Meyerbeer (*Les Huguenots* and *Le Prophète*), Verdi (*Les Vêpres siciliennes* and *Un ballo in maschera*) — although why this opera got into the story rather than *Don Carlos* is only partially explained — and finally, the virtually unknown Louise Bertin (*La Esmeralda*). The fact that a female wrote an opera would be newsworthy enough, but Bertin

was the only composer to collaborate directly with Victor Hugo and this fact alone makes her unique.

Although *The Urbanization of Opera* runs in excess of five hundred pages, Gerhard provides an effective introductory time line from 1826 to 1859, the years of his study, thereby clarifying and focusing on the principal issues of the day. Each of the major works is treated with an effective plot summary so those unfamiliar with the operas need have little fear. Mary Whittall has had a long and distinguished career as a translator and this monograph is graceful to read.

For anyone interested in questions and problems associated with mid-nineteenth-century urbanization, with all its associated miseries and complications, this complex but important study adds a new dimension to European thought and culture, and Gerhard's monograph is highly recommended.

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Lorente, J. Pedro. *Cathedrals of Urban Modernity: The First Museums of Contemporary Art, 1800–1930*. Historical Urban Studies. Aldershot, Hampshire, UK/Brookfield, Vermont, USA: Ashgate, 1998. Pp. xiii, 322. Black and white plates, bibliography, index.

Although the title of J. Pedro Lorente's book alludes to the well-known metaphor of the museum as a temple of art, it is not as a site for religiosity that this book deals with its subject, but as a site for the social discourse of culture. Lorente's history of the early establishment of museums of contemporary art is a history of ideas about art, of taste and of the politics of art patronage in the period 1900–1930 and, in fact, beyond. The author acknowledges his debt to the historical tradition of art and its methods, but this study is more of a post-structuralist attempt to describe the dynamics of power in the institutionalisation of the modern during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Although references are made to Haskell's studies of the history of taste and art collecting, Lorente probably owes more to Foucault's concept of "human archeology." He presents us with a convincing deconstruction of the first museums of modernity in Europe and North America, and of the cultural construction of the history of art itself through the selective preservation of certain works. The political issues, historical tensions, economic conditions and personalities are all dealt with even-handedly and sometimes with humour as well. Unfortunately, this otherwise well-organized and clearly conceived study is plagued by occasional lapses in English language usage. Nonetheless, the intellectual value of the analysis presented here is not diminished by its weak prepositions. Lorente's book offers insights into the ideologies that produced, and were themselves produced, by the establishment of the first museums of modern art.