

★**VON ESCHEN, PENNY M.** *Satchmo Blows Up the World: Jazz Ambassadors Play the Cold War.* Harvard Univ. Dec. 2004. c.336p. photogs. index. ISBN 0-674-01501-0. \$29.95. MUSIC

During the Cold War era—when halting the spread of communism in existing and emerging countries was a prominent goal of the U.S. government—jazz was a potent force in both the musical and the political worlds. Dizzy Gillespie, Louis Armstrong, and Duke Ellington, among others, were sent on worldwide goodwill tours to scores of locales, from Africa and the Middle East to the Soviet Union, portraying an image of greater American racial freedom than actually existed. The resulting musical and social influences had a more far-reaching impact than could initially have been imagined. Von Eschen (history & African American studies, Univ. of Michigan) recounts the tours and reveals the intertwining political and social complexities in an absorbing, dynamic narrative. She has created a history with a unique perspective—the performers, places, events, and issues. Her intensive research and analysis make this an exceptionally original book that should be read and reread. Readers will come away with a new vision of jazz, culture, politics, and history. Essential for academic and circulating libraries.—Carol J. Binkowski, Bloomfield, NJ

## PHILOSOPHY

**SEARLE, JOHN R.** *Mind: A Brief Introduction.* Oxford Univ. Nov. 2004. c.208p. illus. ISBN 0-19-515733-8. \$22. PHIL

Searle (philosophy, Berkeley) offers a chatty gloss on the traditional arguments for separating the human mind from its biology and his own account of this same mind as occurring as a part of nature itself. From Descartes's dualism to materialism's contemporary struggles to cope with artificial intelligence, he limns concepts that shape not only philosophic thinking but also inform—for better or for worse—social science and scientific theories involving the mind. Conceptions of consciousness, “proofs” of intentionality and free will, and the problems of perception and identity are taken up in turn, sometimes with more casual treatment than a rigorous scholar might want of the arguments Searle proposes to demonstrate as “right.” However, the intention of this book is to give general readers some understanding of where the philosophy of mind stands at the present and an invitation to think about the mind for themselves. The treatment offered here does indeed suit such a purpose, which marks this as a timely book for general collections.—Francisca Goldsmith, Berkeley P.L., CA

## POETRY

**The Iowa Anthology of New American Poetries.** Univ. of Iowa. Dec. 2004. c.330p. ed. by Reginald Shepherd. index. ISBN 0-87745-908-8. \$49.95; pap. ISBN 0-87745-909-6. \$22.95. POETRY

“I never wish to sing again as I used to.” With this observation, Karen Volkman characterizes the spirit of this anthology, for which Shepherd (*Otherhood: Poems*) has selected poets who transcend mainstream and avant-garde practice, moving into new poetic territories. These 32 poets have appeared in established journals, published no more than two books (none before 1990), and won prestigious prizes. A distinctive element here is the inclusion of artists' statements, in which the authors explicate specific poems, taking a critical look at their own aesthetics. Many refer to the influence of John Donne, Emily Dickinson, T.S. Eliot, Wallace Stevens, and John Ashbery, not as vehicles for imitation but as open doors to experimentation. Each poet reveals a common lyric tendency, an intensity that Shepherd calls “lyrical investigation.” Cynthia Cruz refers to her poems as “broken lyrics,” while Volkman speaks of the sonnet as “an angry little machine.” Christine Hume often finds herself “speeding among phonic associations.” While most of the poems are difficult, all encourage the notion that American poetry is an evolving, transcendent entity. Recommended for larger contemporary poetry collections.—Karla Huston, Appleton Art Ctr., WI

**KNOTT, BILL.** *The Unsubscriber.* Farrar. Oct. 2004. c.144p. ISBN 0-374-26415-5. \$20. POETRY

“I wish to be misunderstood;/ that is/ to be understood from your perspective.” In his first collection in nearly a decade, Knott reminds us of his bizarre, singular vision. Since making his mark in the Sixties with *The Naomi Poems*, blending the political with the erotic in a surrealist, romantic, and sometimes angry play of free association, Knott has evolved with the pop culture and social bearings of the times. His voice is both playful and ominous, resonating with a smartness, a kind of mulligan wisdom, that nearly slips by: “Doesn't each tree throw/ its shade to show/ boundary to the others'/ thirsting thrust?/ Only the roots are brothers./ the roots are the forest.” Love and war, nearly 40 years later, are still at the center of his designs. He makes no apologies for his difficult, demanding work—“I am a messenger sent to find/ the genius in everyone here”—but these poems are worth the trouble. Knott may be an acquired taste, but larger contemporary poetry collections would do

well to include his new work.—Louis McKee, Painted Bride Arts Ctr., Philadelphia

**KOMUNYAKAA, YUSEF.** *Taboo: The Wishbone Trilogy, Part One.* Farrar. 2004. c.96p. ISBN 0-374-29148-9. \$20. POETRY

The latest from Pulitzer Prize winner Komunyakaa is a personalized, interior mosaic of black history and culture. In poems composed of spare, descending tercets, he assimilates the spirits of mythic heroes, ancient kings and queens, slaves, writers, artists, and musicians—some household names, some obscure—into his own urban present: Imhotep averts a possible suicide in New Orleans; Benedict the Moor asks for spare change on a city sidewalk. Komunyakaa's muscular verbs (“names tumored under new languages”; “cops blackjack/ the night till it confesses”) lend some sense of immediacy, as does the occasional topical reference (“Now, when I hear Horace/ Silver's 'Baghdad Blues'/ the sandy sky blooms// smart bombs”). Though many personae are invoked, as channeled through the poet they speak in virtually the same cadence, and despite the blizzard of allusions and references, the encyclopedic reach, the staccato cross-cutting from past to present, and the mix of first-, second-, and third-person narration, Komunyakaa's cool tonal modulation and too-firm sense of closure sometimes conspire to flatten the narratives and limit their emotional range. For larger poetry collections.—Fred Muratori, Cornell Univ. Lib., Ithaca, NY

**LERNER, BEN.** *The Lichtenberg Figures.* Copper Canyon. 2004. c.56p. ISBN 1-55659-211-6. pap. \$14. POETRY

Lichtenberg figures are fernlike patterns that occur in matter struck by lightning, and Lerner, the 25-year-old winner of Copper Canyon's prestigious Hayden Carruth Award, seems to have been struck more than once. Charged with wit and abstraction, these 50 untitled, mostly unrhymed sonnets mix aesthetic discussion and post-adolescent suburban angst like overheard conversations in a college town bar: “There is suffering somewhere else,/ but here in Kansas our acquaintances/ rape us tenderly and remain unchanged.” Lerner's sense of humor evokes John Ashbery's work, but he also borrows from European symbolism and surrealism. He recalls his own death and dedicates several poems to himself; one sonnet includes cataloging publication data for this book, stating the poet's lifespan as 1979–45 and assigning the Dewey classification number 911 (Geography and Travel) instead of 811 (Poetry). But what could be construed as a stream of highbrow wisecracks (“You say ‘ablution,’ I say ‘ablation,’”