



## 100 Entertainers Who Changed America [2 volumes]: An Encyclopedia of Pop Culture Luminaries

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This fascinating and thought-provoking read challenges readers to consider entertainers and entertainment in new ways, and highlights figures from outside the worlds of film, television, and music as influential "pop stars."

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**From Brand: Greenwood Bibliography**

- Sales Rank: #3969142 in Books
- Brand: Brand: Greenwood
- Published on: 2013-08-08
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 2
- Dimensions: 10.00" h x 7.25" w x 2.25" l, 4.25 pounds
- Binding: Hardcover
- 738 pages

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### Editorial Review

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It is readily apparent that culture in the U.S. is deeply impacted by the actions and abilities of our celebrities. Although a number of people fall into Andy Warhol's "15 minutes of fame" category, others deeply impact the times in which they live. Some even leave a long-term impact. Editor Sickels notes that the deciding factor in inclusion was the question of influence over the times in which a person lived; and this method of determination seems to have been used relatively faithfully. Thus, this two-volume set gives fairly detailed biographical entries on celebrities as various as Mark Twain and Tina Fey. Dealing with the arts, dance, sports, music (largely popular—Leonard Bernstein, for example, does not make the cut, while Jay-Z does), literature, and acting, the scope is fairly broad, and the definition of entertainer generous. Each article covers the subject's early life, career, and impact over the duration of his or her career (and after, in the case of those who are deceased). Articles run generally between 5 and 10 pages, include a clear black-and-white photo of the subject, and conclude with a bibliography of print works for more in-depth research.

Unfortunately, the writing is extremely uneven. Most contributors have some university affiliation—quite a few are doctoral students—and a significant percent of them are independent scholars; accordingly, the writing style runs the gamut between informed and readable and nearly unbearable, peppered with unclear sentences and in need of serious editing. Some of the articles are practically hagiographic—a poor practice when the subjects are still living and clearly less than perfect. A bit more editorial discretion may have resulted in a stronger work. The second volume concludes with notes on the contributors and a detailed, accurate index. Much more up-to-date (and definitely for an older audience) than Molly Severson's *Performing Artists* (UXL, 1995), this is an additional purchase for college and university libraries. --Ann Welton

### Review

"The entries are engaging and well-written. They do a good job of presenting in condensed form the significant aspects of each subject's contribution to American life." - **Reference Reviews**

"This two-volume encyclopedia of pop culture luminaries will be a delightful addition to most reference collections. Recommended." - **Choice**

### About the Author

**Robert C. Sickels**, PhD, is both director of and professor in the Film and Media Studies Program at Whitman College, and an independent filmmaker whose works have played at festivals around the world. The editor of Praeger's three-volume collection *The Business of Entertainment*, Sickels has authored numerous essays and reviews as well as Greenwood's *American Popular Culture through History: The 1940s* (Greenwood) and Praeger's *American Film in the Digital Age*.

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