



The Encyclopedia of Popular Music (Encyclopedia of Popular Music (10 Vols))

By Colin Larkin

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First published in 1992, *The Encyclopedia of Popular Music* is the largest project ever undertaken for the subject. This authoritative biographical encyclopedia of rock, pop, and jazz artists covers popular music from 1900 to the present, including folk, blues, world music, rock, heavy metal, techno, reggae, and hip hop. Edited and largely written by Colin Larkin, it is exhaustive, meticulous, authoritative - and incredibly fun to read.

Critically lauded in its previous three editions, the *Fourth Edition* will not disappoint fans seeking authoritative and reliable information about popular music from around the world. Expanded to ten volumes, the new edition contains 6,000 new entries, and extensive revisions and updates throughout, yielding 50% more material than the 1998 *Third Edition*.

In addition to thousands of biographical entries, this A-Z reference also includes entries covering popular music genres, trends, styles, record labels, venues, and festivals. Key dates, biographies, and further reading are provided for artists covered, along with complete discographies that include record labels, release dates, and a 5-star album rating system. From Grateful Dead to The Killers, from Whitesnake to White Stripes, from R.E.M. to Blink-182, from *The Jazz Singer* to *Jerry Springer - The Opera*, and from *Bye Bye Birdie* to *Rent*, *The Encyclopedia of Popular Music, Fourth Edition* has something informative and clever to say about everyone's favorite band.

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Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #2388920 in Books
- Published on: 2006-11-20
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 10
- Dimensions: 15.30" h x 12.10" w x 10.60" l, 38.90 pounds
- Binding: Hardcover
- 8904 pages

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Editorial Review

From School Library Journal

Grade 7 Up—The creation of this edition was clearly a monumental task and a labor of love for the editor, whose passion for and knowledge of popular music are first made evident in the introductory material. Within its alphabetical, cross-referenced arrangement, this ambitious work provides over 27,000 entries, including 6,000 that are new to this edition. Every aspect of popular music is covered, from Broadway show tunes and rap to heavy metal and big band, from the 1900s to today. The set provides information on artists and other important figures such as producers and songwriters. Entries encapsulate their subjects well even given length limitations. The six-page entry on the Beatles, for example, is concise yet comprehensive, as is the entry on Bob Dylan, which gives readers a clear sense of the man. Larkin and his contributors provide evaluations, using phrases such as "superbly crafted," to describe an album. The writing is always entertaining even when covering less-exciting career details. Each entry concludes with a comprehensive, rated discography covering all mediums and formats produced by the artist, and some also have further-reading lists. The main entries take up eight of this encyclopedia's volumes. The ninth volume provides a healthy quantity of selected album reviews, again presented alphabetically by artist, along with a bibliography, and the final volume is a set index. This title will be invaluable for research.—*Tim Wadham, Maricopa County Library District, Phoenix, AZ*

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From Library Journal

Those who have followed the progress of this excellent work (an LJ Best Reference Book in 1992 as *The Guinness Encyclopedia of Popular Music*; 2d ed., 1995) assume that Larkin will not disappoint, and here he delivers a monumental and quite handsome update. Anyone unfamiliar with this guide to 20th-century "nonclassical" music—rock, pop, rap, reggae, jazz, country, musical theater, etc.—will be staggered at the breadth and depth of the material. The third edition features 18,500 unsigned entries, normally 150 to 3000 words in length, including 4500 entirely new articles, with updates throughout. In comparison, the 14,500-entry 1992 edition now seems minuscule. Larkin continues to include performers, composers, producers, labels, companies, events, venues, films, and videos. One-hit wonders abound, and the international coverage is a model for all musical reference works. The index is now over 350 pages, with a song index of 50,000 titles, a relief for those confronting "who sang what?" questions. As with earlier editions, this is remarkably up-to-date, although additional "where are they now?" information would be welcome in future editions. Two other significant modifications have been made since 1995. For the first time, accompanying discographies list record labels and feature a five-star rating system; release dates of all recordings continue from earlier editions. The expansion into eight volumes also means that each volume is less unwieldy than before, although more shelf space is required for the set. Even without these new features, this is an acquisition without equal for all academic and public libraries and will easily replace either earlier edition.—*Anthony J. Adam, Prairie View A&M Univ. Lib., TX*

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From [Booklist](#)

Starred Review Larkin's new edition contains more than 27,000 entries, including 6,000 new ones and updates of many existing ones. The most comprehensive guide to popular music, this work includes virtually all well-known artists as well as thousands who are lesser known. The set has grown from 4 volumes to 10 since the first edition appeared, in 1992. The third edition was published in 1998.

Although the set is international in scope, the majority of the featured artists are from the U.S and the UK, arguably the most important sources of what we call "popular" music. In addition to providing biographical

and artistic information about musicians, entries list album titles with release dates, recording labels, and a five-star rating system. The ratings indicate a comparison between the various works of one artist or group, not between the works of different artists. Larkin also includes entries for specific musical styles, record companies, Broadway musicals, and music-related films, such as *This Is Spinal Tap*. Most entries are one or two paragraphs in length, with longer ones for the most popular and prolific performers and broader topics.

This is an exhaustive survey of popular music. Larkin has spent nearly 40 years writing about, producing, and performing music, and his expertise is well respected. Keeping track of a continually changing industry is not an easy task. Decisions about whether to add or delete artists are based on years of familiarity with music of different styles and the ability to discern the important from the fleeting. Genres included are pop, country, reggae, jazz, Broadway, world music, and light classical, with diverse entries ranging from composer George Auric (1899-1983) to the more recently famous Simon Cowell, of *American Idol*.

Some other changes from the previous edition are worth noting. Both the song/album title and general indexes have increased by at least half. Larkin demonstrates his ability to remain current by more than doubling the artist and genre bibliography, from 91 to 230 pages, and he also added more than 4,500 short reviews of albums that he was not able to detail in the main artist entries. In 2007 the work will be added as a subscription product to the *Grove Music Online* database, putting it side-by-side with the most important music reference works. Highly recommended for public and academic libraries. *Steven York*
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Users Review

From reader reviews:

Jennifer Jones:

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Stella Neal:

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