100 Entertainers Who Changed America: An Encyclopedia of Pop Culture Luminaries.
Ed. by Robert C. Sickels.
2v. 2013. 738p. illus. Greenwood, $189
(9781598848304). 920.07.

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, as the monastic experience in the medieval period and life in post-Roman conquest Britain (the fifth and sixth centuries). More has been written about monastic life, so Medieval Monastery mainly serves as a concise historical overview of life in a religious order throughout the entire medieval period. This work would make a suitable reference for a student in need of a starting point for a paper about life in a monastery in 500 CE through 1100 CE. Similar information could be found in the New Catholic Encyclopedia (2003) or the Encyclopedia of Religion (2004), among other sources, but a reader would have to cobble the information together from several entries. Some information, such as the section on child oblates, is not easily found in other reference sources.

Arthurian Britain delves into harder-to-find basic information on economic changes and social and ethnic identity as well as general information about daily living (such as where people worked, what they ate) and dying (common causes of death, burial rituals, etc.). Much of what is known (or believed) about the period is based on legend, as a lack of primary texts leaves many gaps in understanding life in that time. Shepherd, who specializes in early medieval archaeology, has made use of recent archaeological finds as well as the usual primary sources. She spends time within the narrative discussing the importance of the findings of these excavations and how the materials found—including pottery, flora and fauna, and DNA—give us a new window into life during this time. This unique feature makes the work distinctive from other reference sources about the time period. Both works contain a lengthy bibliography and are indexed. These are not go-to sources for discussion of major battles or historical events but a useful starting point for high-school and undergraduate students working on research within these two areas. Recommended for most high-school, academic, and public libraries. —Julie Elliott

Encyclopedia of Major Marketing Strategies, v.3.
Ed. by Matthew Miskelly.

From television and radio to Facebook and YouTube, we are now bombarded by constant messages from advertisers. Most of those messages are ignored and quickly forgotten, but a few rise to become part of our collective culture. This new update to Gale’s Encyclopedia of Major Marketing Campaigns set provides information on 100 of the most innovative and memorable advertising campaigns between 2010 and 2013. From “The Priceline Negotiator Lives” to the “Most Interesting Man in the World,” this work documents the motivation and logic behind some of the most recent successful advertising campaigns—and it explains why the campaigns were so successful.

Each campaign receives a situational analysis of why the campaign was needed, the target market that the campaign was intended to address, how the company introduced and promoted the campaign, and the campaign’s outcome. Although most campaigns are from...
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