

Icons of Hip Hop [2 volumes]: An Encyclopedia of the Movement, Music, and Culture (Greenwood Icons)

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The extraordinary impact of hip-hop music on American culture over the past three decades is undeniable. At the forefront of this global phenomenon stand artists who broke new ground, both musically and politically. This unique reference provides substantial entries on the most revolutionary hip-hop artists and innovators, past and present, and offers in-depth coverage of each icon's influence in shaping hip-hop music. An essential reference for high school and public libraries, this encyclopedia will help students and interested readers uncover the historical and cultural framework of hip-hop as it extends to more recent artists.

From Run DMC, the legendary group credited with bringing rap to the mainstream, to Salt N Pepa, the first all-female groups to stake their claim in the male dominated world of hip-hop, to Kanye West's breakout career as a producer and rapper, this encyclopedia recovers the histories of important artists both inside and outside the hip-hop mainstream, all while examining the varied and ever-changing forms of the music. Comprehensive profiles are enhanced by sidebars highlighting such topics as rivalries between artists, the importance of geographic region, musical innovations (including sampling technologies), legal issues, media scandals, and wider phenomena, movements, or styles of hip-hop that were sparked by a particular artist or group.

Hip-hop fans will appreciate the critical analysis of the icons' social and cultural impact as well as issues of enduring significance, such as the influence of gangsta rap on youth culture. A timeline, a comprehensive introduction, numerous photos, and an extensive bibliography of print and electronic sources for further reading are included, making this encyclopedia a crucial reference for teachers and students interested in understanding the history and future of hip-hop music.

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Editorial Review

Review
"In this set the profiles review the selected artists' recording careers and explain their special contributions to the evolution of this extremely popular music genre. Some of the artists covered are Run DMC, Public Enemy, Queen Latifah, Beastie Boys, MC Lyte, Dr. Dre, Snoop Dogg, Outkast, Eminem, Tupac Shakur, and Kanye West. The main essays are interspersed with numerous shorter pieces on other artists, hip-hop's cultural influences (e.g., fashion, vocabulary, and sitcoms), and controversial issues such as obscenity and anti-semitism. A single black-and-white photograph of each profiled artist and a time line of hip-hop's development are included. While it would be easy to pull up flashier information about the various artists from the Internet, these profiles, especially the shorter accent essays, are worth reading….It will be useful for libraries with collections on popular music. Recommended. Lower-level undergraduates and above; general readers." - **Choice**

"The two-volume set consists primarily of twenty-four biographies ranging from the early pioneers of the movement through recent innovators. Information in the biographies provides a forty-year history of this important movement that has so influenced modern music today….This set is a delightful creative reference tool that provides information on the hip hop movement as well as a feel for the participants. It is recommended for academic music library collections and public and college libraries with an interest in hip hop." - **Reference & User Services Quarterly**

"This volume reveals to students and general readers the strong impact hip-hop music has had on American culture over the past three decades. *Icons of Hip Hop* provides numerous entries on the most revolutionary hip-hop artists and innovators, past and present, arranged alphabetically. The editor offers in-depth coverage of each icon's influence in shaping hip-hop music. Complementing the entries are black-and-white photos, a foreword, a preface and introduction, a timeline of hip-hop history, a selected bibliography, and an index." - **MultiCultural Review**

"Mickey Hess' 640-page, 2-volume set takes readers on a journey through the evolution of hip-hop by way of 24 in-depth profiles of the biggest names and shapers of this musical and cultural art form. Hess and 29 other contributors showcase names such as founding DJs Kool Herc and Grandmaster Flash, and iconic interpreters of hip-hop, from Run-DMC to The Beastie Boys, to more contemporary names such as the more middle class Kanye West. Each profile is accompanied by a black-and-white image. Throughout, important terms such as sampling and cutting are explained, as techniques such as these evolved alongside the innovators who developed them….Hess' new 2-volume encyclopedia will be well-used by public, school, and academic libraries, as well as by individual scholars of popular music culture." - **American Reference Books Annual**

"[F]or libraries with strong reference collections and where hip hop is a regular research topic." - **School Library Journal**

"The portraits are the contributions of scholars of literature, music and anthropology as well as a mix of journalists and hip hop artists. The contributors' passion for their subjects, the length of the essays, and the mix of criticism, history and biographical detail combine for unusually intimate portraits of these creative figures….The revealing look at the development of a popular movement will serve a wide range of audiences in public and academic libraries." - **Lawrence Looks at Books**

"Profiles of the twenty-four most important hip hop artists of all time include a diverse group of North American artists covering the past four decades, with DJs, MCs, and new innovators. Run-DMC and the first all-woman group, Salt-N-Pepa, are credited with taking the genre into the mainstream and opening doors for new artists, particularly women. Lengthy, well-researched entries offer in-depth coverage of each icon's influence in shaping hip-hop music. Sidebar essays tackle such topics as censorship, videos and the representation of women, fashion, homophobia, even vegetarianism. Articles end with a list of works cites, additional resources, and selected discographies….[r]ecommended for high-school and public libraries as well as academic libraries with popular-culture collections." - **Booklist**

"Hess highlights the careers and contributions of 24 artists and groups in this two-volume, chronological encyclopedia of hip hop. Inset amid the detailed profiles of Kool Herc, Run-DMC, MC Lyte, Queen Latifah, Dr. Dre and Snoop Dogg, Public Enemy, Tupak Shakur, Missy Elliot, Kanye West, and the other figures, readers will find small articles on other hip hop topics such as the mixtape, the concept of a beef, the 808 drum machine, and anti-Semitism in rap, to name a few. A timeline of hip hop history is also included." - **Reference & Research Book News**

"[E]xcellent….From influences and achievements to lasting legacies left by each, *Icons of Hip Hop* promises to be an excellent documentation of the movement as well as the music, and is a pick for any library where patrons harbor more than a casual interest in modern music trends in general or hiphop in particular. Many a college-level collection strong in music studies will find it attracts both researchers and leisure browsers." - **The Midwest Book Review**

"Those interested in the study of hip hop, rap or popular music generally, will see this as a worthy and highly useful contribution. It will be of value in public and school libraries, and to undergraduates and students across a range of disciplines at further education levels." - **Reference Reviews**

"[E]xplores how the music has broken new ground musically and politically. From Run DMC, the legendary group credited with bringing rap to the mainstream, to Roxanne Shante, one of the first women to stake her claim in the male dominated world of hip hop, to Kanye West's career as a producer and rapper, the encyclopedia includes artists both inside and outside the hip hop mainstream." - **US States News**

About the Author

Mickey Hess is Assistant Professor of English at Rider University. His scholarship on hip-hop music has been published in *Critical Studies in Media Communication, Mosaic: A Journal for the Interdisciplinary Study of Literature, Popular Muis and Society*, and *Computers & Composition*.

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