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Live From New York: The Complete, Uncensored History Of Saturday Night Live As Told By Its Stars, Writers, And Guests



Synopsis

When first published to celebrate the 30th anniversary of Saturday Night Live, *Live from New York* was immediately proclaimed the best book ever produced on the landmark and legendary late-night show. In their own words, unfiltered and uncensored, a dazzling galaxy of trail-blazing talents recalled three turbulent decades of on-camera antics and off-camera escapades. Now a fourth decade has passed - and best-selling authors James Andrew Miller and Tom Shales have returned to Studio 8H. They raucously and revealingly take the SNL story up to the present, adding a constellation of iconic new stars, surprises, and controversies.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Tom Shales and James Andrew Miller have revised their 2002 oral history of SATURDAY NIGHT LIVE and once again have failed to capture the rich details and historical insight of Doug Hill and Jeff Wiengrad's SATURDAY NIGHT, a 1986 account of the first cast through the Billy-Martin-Christopher season. Now THAT is a book that needs revised. LIVE FROM NEW YORK, now updated through the current cast, features an extra two-hundred pages or so with the post Will Ferrell crew, concentrating, for the most part, with the Tina-Sarah year. The book, however, culminates in 50+ pages of former and current writers, cast members, executives, agents, hosts and other pontificating on the working style and eventual legacy of Lorne Michaels (who, at this point is worthy of a biography like recent studies of Disney, Schultz, Carson and Hefner). The problem with the book is that the historical significance is underplayed and the rambling personal anecdote is

overplayed. While all the voices are there (with the exception of those who have past as well as Eddie Murphy) there is no mention of the sketches that make the show so great, although a lot of pages are devoted to the comings and goings of the Weekend Update changes. Do yourself a favor and check out Hill and Wiengrad's study of SNL, and after that feel free to check out books by and about Michael O'Donoghue, Gilda Radner, Jay Mohr, John Belushi and others.

Pleasant read, being reminded of some of the forgotten "players" and hazy years was nice. The idea of having so many different people's perspective gave a really good picture of just how difficult this has been to pull off for so many years. Spared no one's feelings when they were mentioned but also gave praise for the hard work most put in. Having a lot of different people's opinion about the same thing or the same person was really an interesting read. The writers had some of the toughest comments but they have the hardest job and it all fit together very nicely. The common theme of the players seeking Lorne's favor or just any crumb of attention he could toss them was just about pitiful at times and he is apparently one stingy guy with compliments, then the ones who claimed an easy "we were really close" relationship with him were almost as pitiful, the way they spoke made you think it was just what they were hoping was true. Found out new things about the players I thought I had probably read everything about, turns out there were still things to be told.

This book gives you a great sense of how the show gets made. I will never watch the show in the same way now that I understand the mechanics. But of course the best thing about the book is the opportunity to "hear" alums and hosts dissect the show, and analyze its cultural significance and the various personalities that have made it an incredible institution. About 95 percent of the book is just direct recollections by these personalities. There is very little original analysis by the authors. I have never read a book that used this format, but now I wonder why more are not written in this fashion on a variety of subjects. Finally, I generally don't read books that are 750 pages long but this was compelling enough that I got through it in about 2 weeks.

Told in chronological order from before the first idea of the show, in first person snippets from anyone and everyone ever involved: network executives, writers, players, family members. A fascinating look at a slice of television history - especially if you remember watching the very first show and thinking "What the hell is this," like I did.

I don't know how these guys got everybody to talk on this book but it's totally fascinating the fact that it's Lorne, the writers, performers, executives, staff, hosts, telling the tale. The only relevant guy that doesn't talk is Eddie Murphy. I can't imagine anybody not LOVING this book if they're true SNL fans. I couldn't stop reading it. Get it now. It's SO updated that even the 2014 cast is there.

If you're looking for the uber detailed, exhaustive historical master work on this history of SNL - this is it. I consider myself a lifelong fan and fairly knowledgeable about the show...but this book has information and a level of detail that gave me tons of information I had no idea about. Truth be told, the sheer level of detail made it seem like a little bit of a slog at times (I figured I was in for a quick and lighthearted read...but this book takes you beyond that). So from that perspective, it wasn't what I was looking for. But I give it five stars simply because it is the ultimate information resource about the show.

Fantastic read. Author James Andrew Miller takes the concept of an oral history and extrapolates it with a painstaking amount of research and interviews. Pretty much every cast member, crew member, network executive and even guest hosts are interviewed about their experiences on the show and their thoughts on the legacy of one of the most iconic shows in television history. A must read for any SNL fan.

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