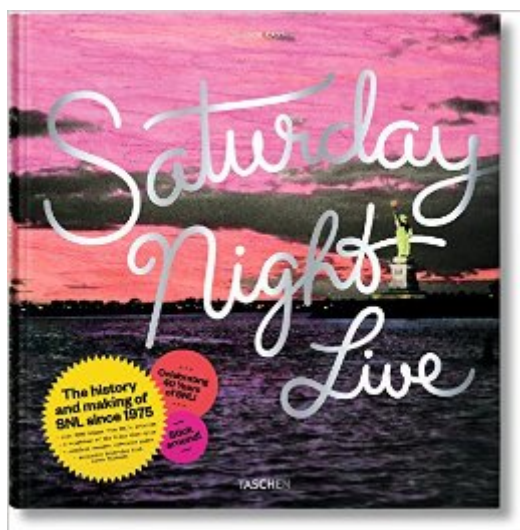


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Saturday Night Live: The Book



Synopsis

Live from New York, it's Saturday Night! The complete history, on stage and behind the scenes

On October 11, 1975 at 11:30 p.m., NBC viewers who tuned in to the network's new late night show saw a sketch featuring John Belushi repeating, in a thick foreign accent, nonsensical phrases about wolverines being read to him by head writer Michael O'Donohue. Abruptly, O'Donohue clutched his heart and collapsed onto the floor. Belushi paused, raised his eyebrow, and then did the same. Posing as the stage manager, Chevy Chase entered the set and feigned confusion before breaking character and announcing to the camera: "Live from New York, it's Saturday Night!" In that instant, television, which had long been out of touch with the young and hip, experienced the first seismic tremors of a major paradigm shift. TV comedy as we know it today owes it all to Saturday Night Live, the show that dared to take risks (not least the fact that it's broadcast live), challenge the censors, and celebrate the work of offbeat writer-performers. Hundreds of gifted and dedicated people have contributed to Saturday Night Live over the years, and this book pays homage to their groundbreaking work. The list of esteemed alumni, most of whom were complete unknowns when they debuted on SNL, reads like a Who's Who of the past 4 decades in comedy: John Belushi, Dan Aykroyd, Gilda Radner, Chevy Chase, Bill Murray, Al Franken, Eddie Murphy, Martin Short, Billy Crystal, Dana Carvey, Phil Hartman, Chris Farley, Mike Myers, Adam Sandler, Conan O'Brien, Chris Rock, Will Ferrell, Tracy Morgan, Jimmy Fallon, Tina Fey, Amy Poehler, Kristin Wiig, Seth Meyers, Fred Armisen, and Bill Hader to name just a few. Now, as SNL celebrates its 40th anniversary, TASCHEN brings you the ultimate tribute to the show. To research this book, editor and author Alison Castle was given not only full access to SNL's archives, but also the rare opportunity to watch the cast and crew at work. She spent the better part of season 39 in the trenches, learning how everything comes together in just six days for the live performance. Part encyclopedia and part behind-the-scenes tour, Saturday Night Live: The Book covers both the making of the show and its remarkable history. Features include:

- Over 2,300 images from SNL's archives, many previously unpublished
- An illustrated breakdown of the 6-day week at SNL through the years, with an expanded section for the live show
- Seasons reference guide with complete cast, host, and musical guest lists
- Exclusive interview with founder and executive producer Lorne Michaels

Book Information

Hardcover: 500 pages

Publisher: Taschen; Reprint edition (February 25, 2015)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 3836552418

ISBN-13: 978-3836552417

Product Dimensions: 11 x 11 inches

Shipping Weight: 5.7 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.5 out of 5 stars Â Â See all reviews Â (34 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #204,684 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #49 in Â Books > Humor &

Entertainment > Television > Reference #173 in Â Books > Humor & Entertainment > Television >

Shows #3372 in Â Books > Arts & Photography > Performing Arts

Customer Reviews

There have several books published over the years about Saturday Night Live but for me the gold standards have always been 1978's "Host: Francisco Franco" (Spoilers: he didn't show up on account of being dead), and 1994's valedictory coffee table "The First Twenty Years". That book gave a pretty thorough overview of the Golden (1975-1980) and Silver (1986-somewhere around '93-'95 depends on who you ask) Ages of SNL while still managing to cover the Dick Ebersol Wilderness Years and a few token references to season 11 (Season 7? Screw that!). Surprisingly nothing else came outside of the odd BTS tell all until this phonebook sized tome, twice as long as its immediate predecessor (no surprise, two decades and a whole ton of "minieras" have occurred on SNL since), yet surprisingly containing half the content. I am not exactly sure what went wrong here but textually it's a disaster, loaded with factual errors, misidentified pictures, and hard to read font choices. Then again I'm not exactly sure you're supposed to read this book. I mean, it's a picture pure and simple, using the photos of longtime show photographers Edie Baskin and Mary Ellen Matthews (plus whoever was taking snaps in the years when Baskin got kicked up to the art department in the mid-80s) to show the evolution of the show from a chaotic drug soaked orgy that may or may not make it on the air that week, to a well oiled comedy machine that may or may not make it on the air that week. Probably the best part is the slew of original bumper slides (some of which appear to be taken from the original photos used and are presented in "HD") that accompany each season's breakdown.

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