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[Review of] The Billboard Illustrated Encyclopedia of Rock

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Orig

The Billboard illustrated encyclopedia of rock. Billboard Books, 1998. 384p bibl disc index ISBN 0823076970, \$45.00

Billboard, in conjunction with Virgin Publishing, has made available this "edited down, updated" version of Colin Larkin's concise edition of *Virgin Encyclopedia of Popular Music* (1997). Much of this material also appears in *The Virgin Encyclopedia of Rock* (1996) and *The Ultimate Encyclopedia of Rock* (1993). The full, multivolume version first appeared as *The Guinness Encyclopedia of Popular Music* (CH, Mar'93; 2nd ed., CH, Sep'96; 3rd ed., *The Encyclopedia of Popular Music*, CH, forthcoming'99). The present version emphasizes 600 glossy, uncaptioned pictures ("the creation of an illustrated version out of a much bigger, words-only reference work has necessitated some, not always desirable, shortcuts"). Some 1,800 entries cover songwriters, musicians, and producers and include bandmember names, birth dates, and instruments played. Boldfaced cross-references are included in brief essays (e.g., 2 p. for Bob Dylan). Sidebars include primary albums (with star ratings), collaborators, videos, and page references to complete discographies. Typos are not uncommon: the Three Dog Night sidebar runs together two album titles (*Captured Live at the Forum* and *It Ain't Easy*) to create "Captured Live It Ain't Easy". Some entries are very current, while others (e.g., Graham Parker's) end with 1992 events. Van Morrison's *Astral Weeks*, one of the most influential albums in rock history, is barely mentioned. A number of good guides are available: the excellent *The New Rolling Stone Encyclopedia of Rock & Roll* (1995) has more substantial entries with occasional black-and-white photos. Recommended only for collections that need glossy photos of rock artists.

--R. A. Aken, University of Kentucky

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