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Not a subset of Baker's Biographical Dictionary of Musicians (CH, Sep'01), this biographical dictionary focuses on biography and evaluation. Nearly 600 entries provide birth and death data, genre categories, the performer's best-selling recordings since 1990, a selected discography, and text entries averaging 800 words (with no cross-references) covering career highlights. This snapshot of popular musicians since 1990 (45 percent in the rock/pop category, 20 percent in rap/hip-hop/rhythm and blues, the rest scattered among a dozen other categories--country, classical, jazz, Latin, etc.) is idiosyncratic. Some performers gain entry because of their influence (the Beatles, a 3,600-word entry), their innovation (Nirvana), their commercial success (Britney Spears), or their critical rather than commercial impact (Stereolab). Most readers will identify notable exclusions (e.g., Beta Band, Concrete Blonde, Travis). Commentary does not focus in particular on the 1990s, although four concluding essays and sidebars throughout the work give a flavor of the decade. One would hope for a more cohesive vision of the period; All Music Guide (CH, Sup'00) or The Encyclopedia of Popular Music (3rd ed., ed. by Colin Larkin CH, Sep'99) both provide broader coverage. Summing Up: Recommended. General readers; undergraduates.

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