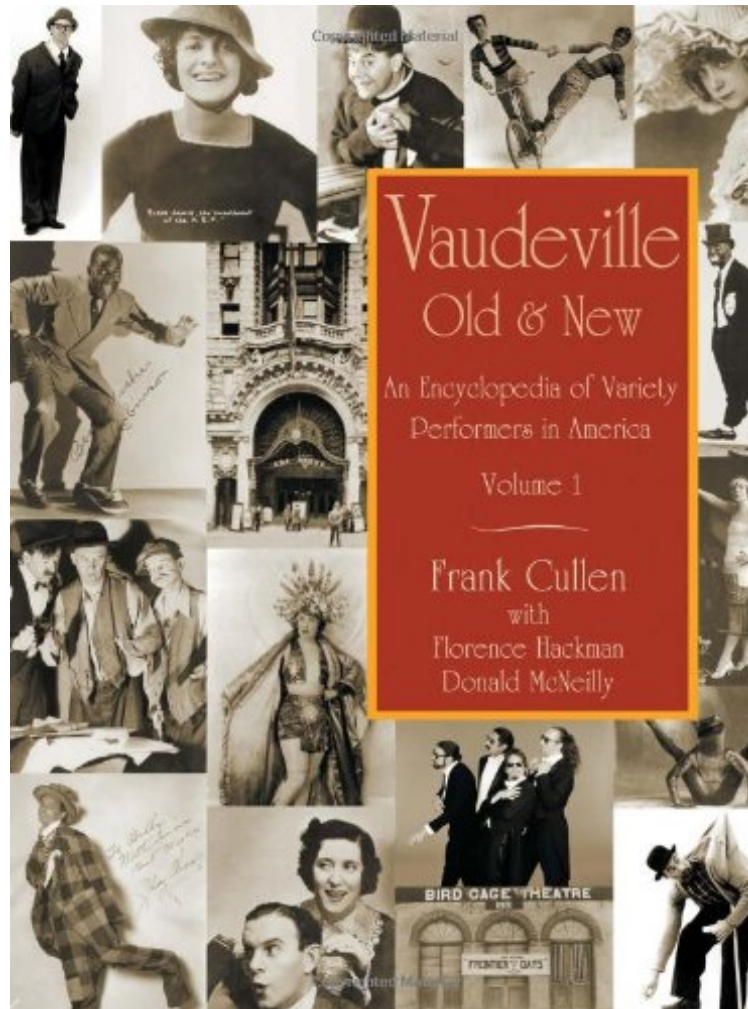


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## Vaudeville, Old and New: An Encyclopedia of Variety Performers in America, 2 volumes

Frank Cullen

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**Frank Cullen : Vaudeville, Old and New: An Encyclopedia of Variety Performers in America, 2 volumes** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Vaudeville, Old and New: An Encyclopedia of Variety Performers in America, 2 volumes:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Top Notch By C. Edward Ford "Vaudeville, Old and New: An Encyclopedia of Variety Performers in America," is well worth its expensive price. Essentially, this is a history of show business listing virtually all the performers of this early medium. It also explains how this foundation of entertainment continues to provide the building blocks of today's presentations in the theater, television and motion pictures. You'll learn about the heart breaks and physically demanding efforts required and the thick skin necessary to

withstand all of the barbs and criticisms. Vaudeville was a tough, but thrilling world. Anyone interested in the ups and downs of the performing arts will find these two volumes so fascinating they'll have a difficult time putting them down. I highly recommend this encyclopedia.

0 of 3 people found the following review helpful. didn't like By Hermione Lanoir Book may be useful for academics, or written research. I was looking for visual research, and had read that this book is "lavishly illustrated". Though it has some illustrations, they are few and far between.

5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. A Lifetime of Research on Vaudeville -By Steve Ramm This is from my review published in "In The Groove" Magazine - April 2007 Frank Cullen LOVES Vaudeville in all its forms, whether it's the baggy pants comics of burlesque, the "specialty acts" like strongman or eccentric dancers who graced the stages of New York and around the circuits in the 1920s, or the singers who went on to make some of the most popular records of their day. This passion is obvious in the recent publication of the huge two-volume 1300-page compilation *Vaudeville Old New: An Encyclopedia of Variety Performers in America* (Routledge). Now in his 70s, Cullen saw his first Laurel Hardy film at the age of nine and was hooked. (Yes, Laurel and Hardy both appeared on the vaudeville stage early in their careers and Cullen devotes six pages to them.). He started reading and watching and listening in his high school years and had a brief acting career as well. In the mid-1980s he formed the American Vaudeville Museum in CT and began publishing the quarterly *Vaudeville Times* (which I mentioned here last year). Now relocated to New Mexico, Cullen has put his energies into this fascinating book. The peak years for "Vaudeville" were 1905-1925, with over 2,000 theaters around the US. As many as 50,000 performers were in the business during that period. Obviously, not all are in the book but a good mix of the known and the "lesser known" are here. Record collectors will recognize many of them. There are the recording Bakers (Belle, Josephine and Phil) as well as the Smiths (Mamie, Bessie and Kate). Other recording artists covered in much detail include, Eddie Cantor, Sissle Blake and Moran Mack. The performers are listed alphabetical from A (Abbott and Costello) to Z (Zetts Weekly, a rival to *Variety*, published in 1921). There are sections devoted to each of the "circuits" and the impresarios as well. Photos of the performers and sheet music covers are on many pages. In fact, you'll find a lot of performers who you've only known from sheet music covers. The very handy Bibliography and a 30-page Index, make the book even more useful. Whether you start from the beginning and read it straight through, or use to look up an artist you found on a recording, you'll find this book a great resource. It's a tribute to the hard work and passion of the author. Highly recommended! Steve Ramm "Anything Phonographic"

This is a one-of-a-kind reference work to the history of vaudeville, performance art, burlesque, revue, and comic opera. Most of these artists are not profiled in other reference books and the author has done deep research, including archival work and personal interviews, to uncover the rich history of this American artform. This will be a must-have for students of theater history and performance art, but it is also essential for anyone interested in the cultural history of America.

Written by the winners of the Theatre Museum of New York's 2011 award for Excellence in the Preservation of Theatre History! "Whether you start from the beginning and read it straight through, or use to look up an artist you found on a recording, you'll find this book a great resource. It's a tribute to the hard work and passion of the author. Highly recommended!" - Steve Ramm, "Anything Phonographic," *In The Groove Magazine* "Two decades in the making, this ambitious resource is unique for its scope, details, and illustrations. Cullen and his coauthors cover the full range of the subject, including contemporary variety entertainers and performance artists...It is destined to become a standard." - CHOICE A readable and entertaining text. Within the covers of both volumes are many delights (and some terrifically offbeat listings) and much pleasure. Certainly no reference work to date is comparable to the exhaustive, two-volume effort by Frank Cullen. Truly the riches of this extraordinary work are numerous, the entertainment factor sizeable, and the lack of pretentiousness welcomed. - Professor Emerita Don B. Wilmet, *Theatre Survey*, Fall 2007 Bottom Line: Whether it's used as a starting point for research or a fascinating glimpse into our theatrical history, this resource deserves top billing. Highly recommended for large reference as well as performing arts and popular culture collections. - Carolyn Mulac, *Library Journal*, 2007 [F]or sheer scope, scale and ambition nothing holds a candle to *Vaudeville, Old New: An Encyclopedia of Variety Performers in America* by Frank Cullen, Florence Hackman and Donald McNeilly the book surpasses the previous authoritative work on the subject an appreciation (beyond usual scholarly perspectives) for what precisely makes certain performers successful with audiences it is the ultimate cornucopia for show business fanatics. - Trav S. D., *The American Theatre*, March 2007 All that you could ever want to know about vaudeville is contained in a monumental two-volume work, *Vaudeville Old and New: An Encyclopedia of Variety Performers*. It surpasses anything previously written about the American equivalent of British music hall and will stand as the major reference work on the subject for many years to come fine writing evinces some deft and delicate touches. The extensive knowledge and deep love of vaudeville by the author, Frank Cullen [working with Florence Hackman and Donald McNeilly], shine through in each of these tomes' 1,300 magnificent pages. - Richard Anthony Baker, *The Stage* (UK), February 2007 "[S]ubstantially researched and well written." - College Research Libraries From the Back Cover "Vaudeville was more than an assembly of ragtime

pantaloon, topical monologists, eccentric dancers, barrel-house songbirds, magicians, tumblers and jugglers, more than a coast-to-coast network of once-gilded theatres shambling into plaster dust. Vaudeville was a peoples culture. What has remained of vaudeville is the acta distillation of a performers best material into a near-perfect performance piece: the product of personality, talent and skillthe vaudevillians reason for living." - Frank Cullen

About the AuthorFrank Cullen, a former actor and director for the stage, co-founded the American Vaudeville Museum and is the primary researcher and writer for Vaudeville Times. Florence Hackman, Chartered Financial Analyst (retired) and writer, has taught economics and political history at the university level and edits Vaudeville Times. Donald C. McNeilly, AVM manager and co-founder and former designer and director for the stage, designs and publishes Vaudeville Times.