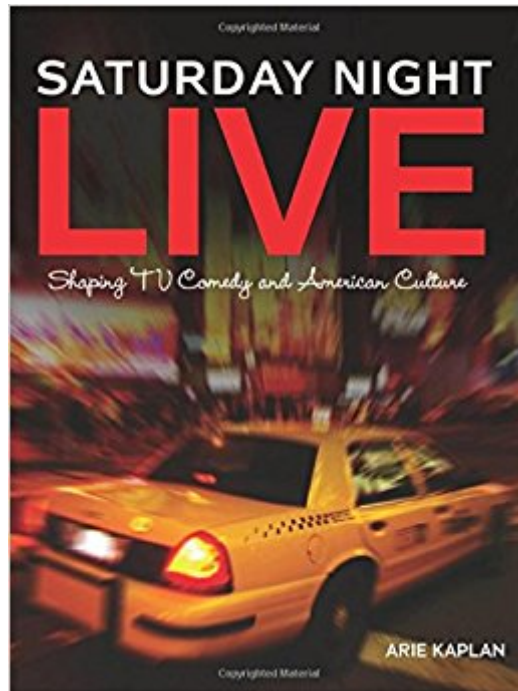




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Saturday Night Live: Shaping TV Comedy And American Culture



Synopsis

In 1975 Saturday Night Live came out of the gate swinging, with a daring, bold, and rebellious vibe that was new to television back then. With a cast of comedic actors known as the Not Ready for Prime Time Players, television producer Lorne Michaels launched a style of live television comedy that appealed specifically to young viewers with a taste for questioning authority and that style stood the test of time. From hilarious characters the Conehead family, Wayne Campbell, the Spartan cheerleaders, the Target Lady, and Stefon to impressions of US presidents and politicians performed with spot-on precision, the late-night comedy show has shaped American comedy for four decades. With millions of loyal fans across a wide range of viewership demographics, Saturday Night Live has made a significant impact on American culture. It introduced catchphrases such as "Well, isn't that special?" and "More cowbell!" It influenced public opinion through satirical political sketches and news commentary. It provided rich material for box office hits such as *The Blues Brothers* and *Wayne's World*. It created megastars out of dozens of comedians. And in the process, the show earned an impressive roster of accolades including thirty-six Primetime Emmy Awards, a Peabody Award, and three Writers Guild of America Awards. It's been ranked as one of the greatest shows of all time and has been inducted into the National Association of Broadcasters (NAB) Broadcasting Hall of Fame. Discover how the SNL brand of raucous humor has stayed meaningful and fresh over the years and continues to draw audiences today.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Gr 5-8 — In its 39 seasons, NBC's Saturday Night Live has both shaped and

skewered American pop culture and politics, transformed little-known comedians into household names, and inspired the development of similarly edgy sketch comedy programs. Launched in 1975 by producer Lorne Michaels, the show has changed the way we think about comedy, television, and ourselves. It remains as relevant today as it has to viewers for almost four decades. Kaplan presents an overview of the late-night show by focusing on its more memorable characters, the ongoing challenge of cast diversity, its satirical political commentary, and its career-launching capacity. Including SNL content as recent as January 2014, this title provides a too-brief look at the show's rich history, highlighting recent cast members and characters whom the intended audience will be sure to recognize. As such, many former cast members and their characters are noticeably absent. Despite this shortcoming, the book design is attractive and accessible and features pertinent photographs and useful sidebars that expand the narrative. Among the additional resources is a catchphrase quiz. While Tom Shales's *Live from New York: An Uncensored History of Saturday Night Live* (Little, Brown, 2002), aimed at an adult audience, remains the most comprehensive account to date, Kaplan's slim volume provides currency and may encourage young fans to seek out more information about this cultural and comedic phenomenon.

—Audrey Sumser, Cuyahoga County Public Library, Mayfield, OH

Arie Kaplan has written jokes and comedy sketches for the television series *TruTV Presents: World's Dumbest*. He has also written humor articles for *MAD Magazine*. Aside from his work as a comedy writer, Arie has written numerous nonfiction books for young readers on subjects ranging from the life of Vlad the Impaler to the history of pop music. As a comics writer, he has written comic book stories and graphic novels for DC Comics, Archie Comics, Bongo Comics, IDW Publishing, Penguin Young Readers Group, and other publishers. He is the author of the acclaimed nonfiction book *From Krakow to Krypton: Jews and Comic Books*, which was a 2008 finalist for the National Jewish Book Award. He lives with his family in New York City.

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