

BOOKSHELF

For Reference and Research

Books dealing with film, television and the performing arts that were published during the last 105 years are listed in *Performing Arts Books 1876-1981*. Some 50,000 entries catalogued and cross-indexed in this massive volume provide an invaluable and authoritative reference source, a virtual must for librarians, scholars and students (*Bowker \$150*).

David Robinson's *The History of World Cinema*, a highly readable and comprehensive work, follows the course of film progress from its beginnings through the '70s. Robinson's scholarly overview, his appreciation of the artistic, technological, industrial and social development of cinema, his flowing narrative and his balanced approach mark his book as a reliable and lively text (*Stein & Day \$25*).

Under John Culhane's expert guidance, we are taken through the magic world of visual illusions in his *Special Effects in the Movies*. A large size, extensively illustrated volume, it provides clearly written, detailed explanations of every optical, photographic and mechanical effect, three-dimensional model animation, matte painting, and many other fantastic devices, plus profiles of their creators (*Ballantine \$9.95*).

Aspects of the Art

Drawing on their 40 years with the Disney Studios, Frank Thomas and Ollie Johnson pool their experience and artistry in a superb volume, *Disney Anima-*

tion: The Illusion of Life, where their technical expertise and creative imagination combine in an absorbing text and spectacular illustrations (*Abbeville \$49.95*).

Stanley Green's *Encyclopedia of Musical Films* offers an extensive and well-researched survey of the genre, with full credits and synopses of some 150 films, 800 entries of individual songs, a lengthy list of stars, directors, composers, choreographers, etc., and other relevant information (*Oxford U. Press \$25*).

A definitive history of the American motion picture, *The Movies*, is issued in a revised and updated edition. This classic work by Richard Griffith and Arthur Mayer, with Eileen Bowser's added material, is a large format, abundantly illustrated survey whose authoritative and scholarly approach reviews the industry's progress in a factual and entertaining manner (*Simon & Schuster \$24.95*).

Garson Kanin narrates in *Together Again* the saga of the great Hollywood teams—Tracy and Hepburn, Astaire and Rogers, Bogart and Bacall, Laurel and Hardy—a behind-the-scenes look at how they got together, what made them tick, and why they struck such fervent popular response (*Doubleday \$24.95*).

A unique view of Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer and its former omnipotent chief dominates Gary Carey's impressive and entertaining *All the Stars in Heaven: Louis B. Mayer's MGM*, a valuable docu-

ment on a long gone era (*Dutton \$18.50*).

David Bordwell, in *The Films of Carl-Theodor Dreyer*, stresses the imaginative and novel aspects of the late Danish director's films, particularly his use of discontinuous space and time, so striking in "The Passion of Joan of Arc," and his complex and highly personal style (*U. of California Press \$29.50/11.95*).

Recent French Books

A continuing series of topical and often provocative studies of cinema is being issued by CinemAction, a serious quarterly edited by Guy Hennebelle (106, boul. St-Denis, 92400 Courbevoie). Four new volumes in this series are reviewed below.

Les cinémas du Maghreb deals with film production in North Africa, namely Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia. It discusses knowledgeably the problems facing local filmmakers in terms of form, content and technique, as well as the ever-present legacy of colonialism (F30). In *Les cinémas paysans*, the evolution of the French farmer's world as seen in films is examined by ten top directors, following a detailed historic documentation of the genre (F55).

Also, *Cinéma homosexuels* assesses the variety of approaches and themes that characterize these movies. Theatrical features, underground shorts, explicit or subtle, all express a similar effort of liberation from societal and cultural constraints, whether they were made in Paris, Berlin, San Francisco, New York or Montreal (F39).

Vidéo des années 80, a world-wide survey of independent TV, describes the activities of non-commercial videomakers. Starting with Canada, it reports on notable progress and recurring problems in Quebec and Vancouver, France, Japan, Belgium, Australia, Holland, Great Britain and the U.S.A. are also examined in expert appraisals and factual information (F30).

Published by Textimages (28 bis, rue d'Alsace, 92300 Levallois Perret), in the Pierre Lherminier series *Le Cinéma et son Histoire, Les Cinémas de l'Amérique latine* is an encyclopedic survey of production in 26 Latin American countries. It is a truly monumental achievement, encompassing in its 570 pages a wealth of revealing data on films, personalities, prospects and structures of the film industry in Central and South America (F192).

Vittorio De Sica's wife, the Spanish actress Maria Mercador reflects, in *Un amour obstiné*, on her life with the Italian filmmaker and actor. De Sica's charismatic personality and his multifaceted talent made her life a crazy quilt of film-like situations, with dramas turning into farces, adulterous escapades and tender reconciliations in the midst of frantic production schedules (*Textimages F65*).

George L. George ●

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