

BOOKSHELF

by George L. George

Historic Perspectives

Movie historian Arthur Knight has revised and expanded his classical panorama of movie history, **The Live-liest Art**, undoubtedly the best available one-volume chronicle of film's progress. The updating has been done most skillfully, confirming Knight's soundness of judgment and his knowledgeable appreciation of the art's evolution (Macmillan \$15.95).

A well-documented and informative study, **A Critical History of British Cinema** by Roy Armes offers an in-depth appraisal of films and filmmakers that sets in perspective the contribution of several generations of directors. In addition, the book supplies production statistics, a chronology, a bibliography, and a thoughtful forecast of the British film history's future (Oxford U. Press \$17.50).

Cobett Steinberg's **Reel Facts** is a convenient and comprehensive reference work, compiling statistics, figures and data about movies, awards, "ten best" lists, money-making films, major Hollywood studios' history and production records, codes and regulations (Vintage/Random House \$3.95).

The high points in the continuing development of cinema art are aptly surveyed by Stephen C. Early in **An Introduction to American Movies**. The book assesses perceptively the main currents and attitudes of American filmdom in its survey of films, filmmakers and stars (NAL/Mentor \$2.25).

In **Aspects of American Film History Prior to 1920**, Anthony Slide casts a scholarly eye at many areas of period filmmaking in the U.S. Directors, producers, and performers are discussed, books and magazines are compiled as well as an informative bibliography of early film companies (Scarecrow \$7.50).

The development on the U.S. motion picture industry is viewed in extensive detail in Prof. Robert H. Sterling's **The Celluloid Empire**. He analyzes with broad scholarship the corporate structure and management control of the producing companies, whose pictures were most influential in shaping the lifestyle of millions of spectators (Hastings House \$15.75/7.95).

Academy Award winning George L. George is a film director who does film book reviews in Canada, France and the U.S.

Surrealist filmmakers may have contributed to cinema art only a handful of movies, but they have all been significant in terms of the time they appeared on the screen and the impetus they provided for a re-evaluation of the movies' esthetic potential. In **The Real World of the Surrealists**, a superbly illustrated large format volume, Malcolm Haslam skillfully integrates their work within the larger scope of the movement (Rizzoli \$35).

A Treasury of Directors

Two classical studies of directors have been re-issued in expanded and updated editions by the U. of California Press. **John Ford**, a critical study as well as a personal memoir by Peter Bogdanovich, includes a full and detailed filmography. **Luis Bunuel** by Raymond Durnat follows with insight and scholarly objectivity the evolution of Bunuel's career. An excellent filmography (up to but excluding that "Obscure Object of Desire") is appended (\$4.95 ea).

Still considered a top screenwriter 25 years after his death, Herman Mankiewicz's claim to fame is his work on "Citizen Kane", Orson Welles' fulgurant Hollywood debut. In **Mank**, Richard Meryman pens an affectionate biography of the scripiter, whose caustic with, outspokenness and dissolute ways of life brought him more admirers than critics (Morrow \$12.95).

Joan Fontaine's autobiography, **No Bed of Roses**, is a candid and touching testimony to the pitfalls of excessive sensitivity. The actress relates the emotional problems that beset her since childhood and that the tense Hollywood milieu only aggravated into utter despair (Morrow \$9.95).

The life of a he-man of the films, **Robert Mitchum On the Screen** is reviewed by Alvin H. Marill in his highly readable record of the actor's 95 movies during a successful 30 years' career (Barnes \$19.95).

In **Actress: Postcards from the Road**, Elizabeth Ashley (and co-author Ross Firestone) depict the dramatic events in her impulsive life, where personal happiness was too often the victim of career-motivated compulsions (Evans \$10).

The original singing cowboy of film, Gene Autry has written (with Mickey Herskowitz) an engaging and unassuming autobiography, **Back In the Saddle Again**. A whole era of movies is evoked in this book where memories are backed by a keen sense of historic determinism (Doubleday \$8.95).

Names in the News

Under the general editorship of Prof. Ronald Gottesman, G.K. Hall & Co. (70 Lincoln St., Boston, MA 02111) has issued 6 volumes in its Reference Publications In Film series. Each of these books, all subtitled "A Guide to References and Resources," deals with a top director and offers an abundant source of facts about his life and work.

Written by different authors, the texts follow a common overall method of dealing with its subject in a manner intended to foster and facilitate study, and provide a valid uniform approach. The scholarship of these books is consistently high, all displaying serious original research, extensive knowledge of film history, and excellent literary style.

Each book, following the author's preface, offers first a biographical background. This is followed by a critical survey of the oeuvre, analyzing the director's particular style, work methods, and cinematic preferences. A film-by-film survey comes next, including a synopsis, credits and relevant notes. Writings about the director are then extensively compiled, listing books and magazine articles. Follows a section of the director's other activities, such as acting, producing, writing, etc. Finally film distributors are listed who handle the director's available movies. Indices of authors and films conclude the volume.

Here are the titles comprising this valuable and scholarly series: **Federico Fellini** by John C. Stubbs with Constance Markey and Marc Lenzini (\$30); **Ken Russell** by Diane Rosenfeldt (\$14); **Ernst Lubitsch** by Robert L. Carringer and Barry Sabath (\$20); **Richard Lester** by Diane Rosenfeldt (\$15); **John Schlesinger** by Nancy J. Brooker (\$14); and **Robert Flaherty** by William T. Murphy (\$18).