

BOOKSHELF

by george l. george

Aspects of Cinema

Edited by Peter Cowie with customary competence and accuracy, **International Film Guide 1980** proves again to be the essential comprehensive survey of world production of theatrical films. This 17th annual edition surveys 53 countries from Afghanistan to Yugoslavia with informative appraisals of their most notable feature films, selects five "Directors of the Year," and covers many other production-related areas (Barnes \$7.95).

Some 12,000 films are listed in the 2nd edition of **Halliwel's Film Guide**, a record of the last 50 years to which Leslie Halliwel lends his expertise and erudition. This invaluable source book offers basic credits, data, thumbnail synopses of plots, a valid rating system and occasional quotes from critics' reviews. In an appended essay, Halliwel takes an informative though overly dim view of current film trends, younger filmmakers and, in general, the future of film (Scribners \$36).

Richard Maurice Hurst's well-documented survey of Hollywood's historic source of "B" pictures, **Republic Studios: Between Poverty Row and the Majors** discusses the role it played from the '30s through the '50s. Its comprehensive overview of action films, cowboy epics and popular serials also deals with the studio's financial structure and its contribution to the movie industry (Scarecrow \$13.50).

In **Caligari's Children**, S.S. Praver explores the public's fascination with terror films and the techniques used to stimulate it. His broadly based and scholarly study establishes the link between German silent horror movies and their current counterparts, affording an in-depth appraisal of the genre's spoken and visual aspects and its cultural contents (Oxford U. Press \$19.95).

Christopher Faulkner's authoritative study, **Jean Renoir**, is a thorough reference and resource guide to the life and career of the late director. The biography is the most complete ever published, the

filmography rich in exhaustive detail. Included also are data on Renoir's work with other directors, the plays he staged, scripts, books and articles he wrote, as well as writings about him, plus a record of his films in libraries and archives, commercial distribution outlets, and various indices (G.K. Hall \$40).

Three additions to G.K. Hall's Twayne Theatrical Arts Series offer valuable portraits of notable directors: **William Wyler** by Michael A. Anderegg, **Douglas Sirk** by Michael Stern and **Peter Watkins** by Joseph A. Gomez. Each director is presented in knowledgeable perspective of his favorite themes and cinematic sense, with annotated analyses of his films, a bibliography, a filmography, and an index. Aably edited by Warren French, these books' scholarship is exemplary, and their writing commendably factual (\$9.95).

Dore Schary who, as MGM production head (1948-50) manifested understanding and a collaborative spirit towards his staff, recalls in **Hayday** the turbulent, bewildering and creative period of his Hollywood career. This candid, intimate and mellow autobiography is especially interesting as an honest evaluation of the struggles — corporate, political, personal — that agitated the film capital during those hectic years (Little, Brown \$14.95).

Three biographies of Gary Cooper, published almost simultaneously, afford us complementary slants of the late star's life and career. **Coop** by Stuart M. Kaminski, in addition to reprising the better known facts of Cooper's life, offers an intriguing analysis of his perceived androgyny (St. Martin's Press \$10.95). Hector Arce's **Gary Cooper** attractively plays up the star's sentimental involvements with numerous ladies (Morrow \$10.95). In **The Last Hero**, Larry Swindell paints a well-rounded picture of the performer and his Hollywood milieu (Doubleday \$12.95).

Wells Root, an established film/TV scenarist, has written a highly effective guide to his craft, **Writing the Script**. He examines the diverse elements of screenwriting — story, conflict, character, dialogue, and suspense — with references to celebrated films, and offers valuable advice about finding an agent, developing sales procedures, etc. (Holt, Rinehart, Winston \$12.95/5.95).

Brian Henderson's **A Critique of Film Theory** is a scholarly exploration of the concepts and methods of movie analysis, in which he seeks a rational basis for a reconciliation of mutually exclusive cinematic doctrines (Dutton \$15.95/8.95).

In **The World Viewed**, Stanley Cavell appraises the nature of cinema, essentially through a perceptive consideration of significant passages in various films and the perspectives of notable directors (Harvard U. Press \$12.50/5.95).

Recent French Books

An important and comprehensive study, **La musique du film** by Alain Lacombe and Claude Roclé seeks out and defines the ways in which music "brings an increasing significance to the chemistry of cinema." This understanding of music as a prime motivating element in the dramatic structure of film is based on the authors' long personal involvement, expanded in an extensive international catalogue of relevant bio/filmo/disco-graphies (Van de Velde FF195).

The contribution that Soviet director Sergei Eisenstein made to the esthetics of cinema, both through his writings and his films, is discussed in a basic volume, **Montage Eisenstein** by Jacques Aumont. In this systematic study of the director's theoretical texts and their reflection in his filmic oeuvre, Aumont extracts the key concepts that guided Eisenstein's work, giving deeper meaning to his montage theory and exploring its component parts: film "fragments," framing and visual conflict (Albatros FF52).

In its collection "Têtes d'affiche," Éditions PAC publish valuable bio/filmographies of leading film performers that illuminate the continental perception of their work. Particularly significant is **Jane Fonda** by Gilles Gressard, whose analysis of the actress as a faithful — even premonitory — reflection of the socio-political evolution of her native land is as perceptive as it is well researched (FF50). The same can be said of Michel Lebrun's **Woody Allen**, a stimulatingly original assessment of his work (FF47). Other volumes in the series deal with **Klaus Kinsky** and **Telly Savalas**, both by Philippe Setbon, and **Alain Delon** by Alain Rode.

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