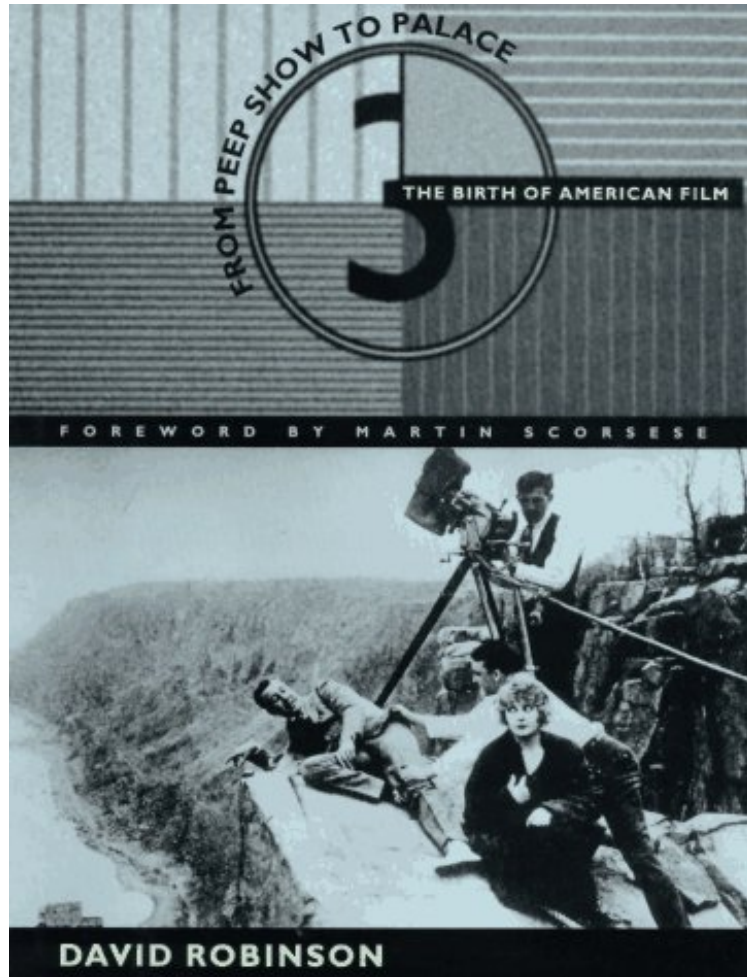


[Mobile book] From Peep Show to Palace

From Peep Show to Palace

David Robinson

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David Robinson : From Peep Show to Palace before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised From Peep Show to Palace:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Good OverviewBy VaughanThis book is hardly new, having been published in 1996. However, given that it is a potted history of the first two decades of since cinema, 1833 through 1913, this should hardly be troublesome.Since I have just read the book for the second time, and given there are no other comments (and taking into account that the title can be bought secondhand for under \$2!) I thought a word or two might help encourage someone to pick it up.The main text of this book runs for a little over 170 pages. There are many lavish illustrations and pictures, including color inserts in the mid-section.The book sets out to document the rise of moving pictures from their very earliest origins (such as magic lanterns) to the epics of GW Griffith. Since the first documented Magic Lantern appears to be from 1420, you can see that the book starts at the very beginning of what can be considered moving projected images for entertainment.By 1893 the likes of Edison and his company were set on

their way to defining, and refining what we know as cinema today. The book covers developments quite well, and while there are books out there that have more detail, it can be advantageous to have a title such as this that condenses the topic for an educated overview. The stories told here include technological developments, patent litigations, the rise of the Nickelodean, the rise of multi-reel films, the development of a star system, the Director, the photographer, experiments in sound and color, the development of marketing campaigns, the cinema poster, the import of movies from and to Europe, and the effects of the First World War on film production. It's quite a canvas to cover in so few pages, but for me that is the beauty of this volume, short, concise, and to the point. I'd recommend this as a starting point for people interested in the development of motion pictures. If you want more detail you can get other titles later, but as an introduction, this serves well.

One hundred years ago, the crude realism of early cinematic exercises caused shockwaves among audiences - some even panicked. "On one occasion", read a news report from the time, "an old lady in the audience, quite unable to suppress a scream, started up in her seat and tried to scramble out," knocking over others on her way. This sort of reaction was not uncommon - on a screen that might have featured nothing more than minute-long dips of a running horse or a moving train, what modern viewers might see as a pale shadow of the explosive, full-colour blockbusters of 1995. This work recounts the enchantment of the early years of film, a trajectory which began with the "magic lantern" in the 17th century and progressed rapidly from 1893 to 1913, when the modern motion picture was born. It offers an account of the haphazard process which was the birth of American film. Including more than 150 drawings and photographs of the earliest devices of cinematic prehistory - colourful names like the thaumatrope, the phenakistiscope, the stroboscope, the Wheel of Life - the book leads readers along the winding path of missteps and innovation that led to the filmmaking technology we know today. In his pictorial essay, the author shows readers how these early gadgets actually worked and describes the shortcomings that led inventors to try, try again. He chronicles the early use of film as vaudeville sideshow, where it ran alongside contortionists, strongmen, performing animals and jugglers. He documents an age when the sheer spectacle of moving images precluded any notion of plot development or drama. The text goes on to describe fledgling dramatic efforts, ranging (without much variation of treatment) from prize-fights to Passion plays, which brought audiences back to the theatres in record numbers after they became bored with clips like "Moving Train". It takes a look at the nickelodeon theatres - the rise of venues with names like Nickolette, Dreamland, Theatorium, and Bijou Dream - the first places where cinema was the feature presentation.

From Kirkus sA well-detailed examination of the early cinema, from the magic lantern to the watershed year of 1913. While crude slide projecting devices and toys that mimicked cinematic motion have been around since the 18th century, the problem of actually projecting motion remained elusive. Thomas Edison's Kinetoscope of 1891, essentially a film in a box, was only a partial solution--especially since the first films ran only 15 seconds and could be seen by only one viewer at a time. But as with many technological leaps, a number of other inventors were working along similar lines, and vast improvements soon followed. By 1895, the French Lumire brothers had developed the first real projector, the Cinematographe (it was also a camera and a film developer and is still regarded as a masterwork of machinery). What had seemed a fading fad quickly became a major new industry. As Robinson (Chaplin--His Life and Art, 1985, etc.) ably chronicles, the next two decades saw an enormous outpouring of increasingly sophisticated films. Theaters were opened, D.W. Griffith invented the medium's visual language, shorts became features, stars were born, there were experiments with sound and color, and Hollywood took its place as the world's leading film producer. By 1913 almost every major aspect of movies as we know them today was in place or in development. While there is much that is new in this account, there is also some material that, inevitably, is overly familiar as Robinson strays into the same rutted paths as every standard history of cinema. But his extensive research, level of detail, and shrewd, fresh insights make this a useful addition to any film library. An intelligent reappraisal of an important but undervalued period of film history. (175 bw and 16 color illustrations) -- Copyright 1996, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved. A diligent overview from the moment cinema was just a flicker in a magic lantern to the golden years between 1893 and 1913, when scientists and technicians laboriously fitted together the 'pieces in a puzzle' and created feature films. -- New York Times Book This concise history takes us from footage of an Edison employee sneezing to multireel features with a sophistication appropriate to the lavish theaters in which they were shown -- New Yorker About the Author David Robinson is a film historian and critic.