

Seductive Cinema: The Art of Silent Film

James Card

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James Card : Seductive Cinema: The Art of Silent Film before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Seductive Cinema: The Art of Silent Film:

18 of 18 people found the following review helpful. Worthy addition to any film lover's library!By clucyIn "Seductive Cinema," the late author James Card provides an intriguing glimpse into the silent film era. Card, a film historian, professor, and preservationist, saw many of these films in his youth, and he dedicated his entire life to preserving silent films and introducing them to new generations. The book provides insight into the careers of several specific actors and directors. "Seductive Cinema" is not as much a history of silent films as it is a perspective. Card picks and chooses his subjects, and he doesn't refrain from disputing opinions that do not agree with his own experience and/or insights. The book begins slowly, but the pace rapidly increases. Several wonderful photographs accompany the text. For those already immersed in the fascinating world of silent film, this is a great companion book written by someone from the era who personally knew many of the subjects in his book. For others not as well versed in silent films, this book will hopefully instill a lasting desire to learn more, and seek out other books as well as the specific films Card discusses.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Historical contentBy James MelloniInteresting!0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Enjoyable and helpfulBy cemeterymindaThis book was helpful to me in my research and is also very interesting. I like the personal feel of the book, which can be conversational. He knew a number of the stars personally, so that gives a special life to the book.

In Seductive Cinema, James Card -- pioneer collector of silents since the twenties, founder of the motion-picture

archive at the George Eastman House, and co-founder of the Telluride Film Festival -- offers an exhilarating and richly illustrated celebration of silent movies. His lively reevaluation sheds new light on the art, directors, cinematographers, and stars of the great silent films.

From Publishers Weekly In this lively, opinionated, delightful chronicle of the silent film era, film historian Card deflates the "near-hysterical devotion" to D. W. Griffith, arguing that his Biograph movies were not revolutionary in comparison with European silents. Moreover, asserts Card, the oft-repeated claim that Griffith invented the closeup and film editing is false; that honor here goes to British filmmaker James Williamson. Card, a pioneer collector and founder of the George Eastman film archive, praises the underrated pretalkie achievements of King Vidor and Cecil B. DeMille, while panning director Josef von Sternberg's "incredible lapses." Studded with glimpses of Clara Bow, Joan Crawford, John Barrymore, Greta Garbo, plus dozens more, and marvelously illustrated with photos and stills, this engaging blend of criticism, history, autobiographical reminiscence and film lore will captivate even those with only a passing interest in the silents. Copyright 1994 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Library Journal With television sitting on the brink of the 500-channel universe, will the silver screen someday go dark? Card, a true lover of cinema and a lifelong devotee of the art of filmmaking, presents numerous arguments on why such a situation should never occur. Card takes the reader on a historical journey through the archives of silent film. All historically relevant film world findings are discussed, including the discovery of motion on a piece of film, the advent of the zoopraxiscope, and the essential close-up shot. The book is such a good read that one can almost smell the nitrate of cellulose. Highly recommended for specialized motion-picture film collections. Marty D. Evensvold, Magnolia P.L., Tex. Copyright 1994 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Kirkus s An uneven but often delightful tribute to the world of predialogue films. Pioneer film collector Card, founder of the Eastman film archive and the Telluride and Montreal film festivals, may be the leading authority on his subject. This revisionist history of silent film, though erratic, is studded with moments of insight and critical understanding. Card calls attention to hundreds of important silents, many overlooked-- in part due to the Museum of Modern Art's hegemony over the legacy of early American film. Card has rescued thousands of rare works from oblivion and worked to bring attention to those who produced them. Here he sheds light on the work of directors John Collins, Monta Bell, and Marshall Niehlan; debunks critical overestimation of the contributions of Edison, Eastman, Von Stroheim, and Griffith; and demands reappraisal of neglected work by Cecil B. DeMille and others. His take on the issues is striking: how critics can miss the boat when they see films just once; the undetected influences of filmmakers on one another, such as that of King Vidor on Italian neo-realists; how overemphasis on cinema's auteurs leaves many contributors to great films unappreciated; and how discoveries of early cinematic wonders from Japan, Russia, and elsewhere compel revision of film history. From such acute concerns Card sails into long chapters detailing the careers of favorite stars; here far less critical rigor prevails. He reserves a chapter for an out-of-hand dismissal of semiotics, never really locking horns with the subject. Still, the book's best moments demand reckoning with, and Card's is the beckoning tone of the true addict; his history makes us itch with desire to see the films he describes. Despite its uneven qualities, *Seductive Cinema* will prove a field day for aficionados and an education for those who remain unaware of early cinema's glories. -- Copyright 1994, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved.