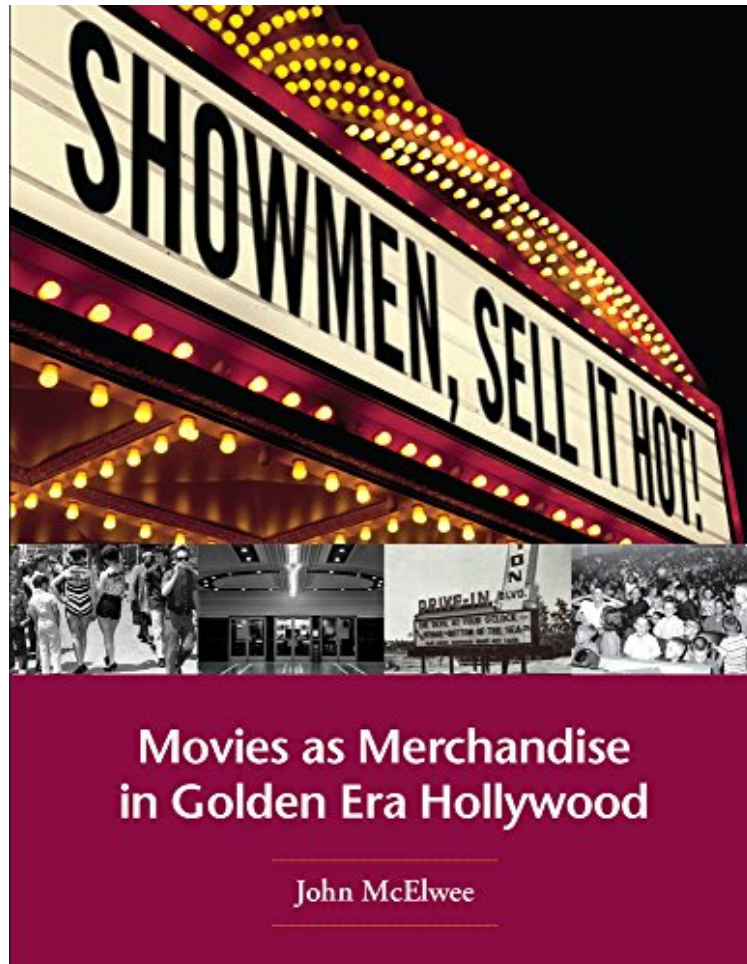


Showmen, Sell It Hot!: Movies as Merchandise in Golden Era Hollywood

John McElwee

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John McElwee : Showmen, Sell It Hot!: Movies as Merchandise in Golden Era Hollywood before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Showmen, Sell It Hot!: Movies as Merchandise in Golden Era Hollywood:

6 of 6 people found the following review helpful. Too short!By Kenneth R. Von GundenThis is an insightful, well-researched book. Actually, much of it ISN'T research -- it's the memories and experiences of an exhibition professional who knows the ropes of movie house advertising and promotion. Great "behind-the-screens" information. Debunks a lot of rumors and false beliefs: that certain films were duds when they came out when they really weren't, and that some releases were big hits when it took them years to grow into profitability.The author provides insanely rare photographs and advertising materials and theater cards from his vast private collection.If I have one bad thing to say

about this book, it is that it is too darn short! I wanted another hundred pages! If, like me, you read trades like "Variety" for the weekly grosses when you were young and they were difficult to find in the mass media, you'll love this. If you just started paying attention to the weekend grosses because of all the Internet media now devoted to them, then this tome will deepen your knowledge of the "old days." A wonderful purchase, worth every penny.

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. When Individual Theatre Owners--not the Studios--Controlled the Marketing of Each Film - Highly Recommended. By Customer This book should be "required reading" for all students of movie history. I have been an avid fan of John McElwee's "Greenbriar Picture Shows" motion picture history blog for several years. Mr. McElwee's book is well-researched, full of pictures, snappy "Variety"-style trade jargon and keen insights into a bygone era. This is the first book that I have found that explores the intricacies of what was once known as "motion picture showmanship." Today, virtually all advertising and publicity for a film is created, controlled, implemented and funded by motion picture studios. That was not always the case. For more than 40 years, movie studios provided theatre owners (then known as "exhibitors") with studio-prepared press kits containing a wide selection of ads, press releases and promotional ideas for each film. Movie press kits were supplied for every booking--from "The Bowery Boys Meet the Monsters" to "The Ten Commandments." It was up to the exhibitors to take these marketing aids and create their own promotional campaigns. Mr. McElwee examines how small and large theatre owners struggled to attract local moviegoers to the good films and the bad films which the studios made available to them. Mr. McElwee has recorded a chapter in motion picture history which--until now--has largely been untold. Highly recommended.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. The Smell of the Popcorn, the Roar of the Crowd By James D. Long Movies are product, thus need to be marketed and John McElwee's well-researched work is an entertaining reminder of why it's called the Film Industry. That's not a complaint, in fact some of those boxoffice dollars put food on our table when I was kid growing up in the late 50s. My father was an "Exhibitor"--industry speak for a theater manager. The name was a good fit since the men and women who ran the movie houses, in those days, often resorted to "ballyhoo", another colorful term describing the imaginative tactics used to promote an upcoming release. McElwee details some of their antics but most importantly dispels many of the myths surrounding classics like The Wizard of Oz. The author relates how Oz was not shunned by audiences and actually pulled in impressive crowds, however, MGM didn't recover the film's negative costs during its first-run release--thus branding it a flop. Possibly, I'm prejudiced, having grown up in the business, but I found the book thoroughly engrossing. Guess it's the reason that the aroma of fresh popcorn still makes me nostalgic.

A noted Hollywood historian takes a first-ever marketing look at the selling of classic motion pictures generated by Hollywood's fabled movie factories in this lush coffee-table retrospective. Movie buffs will enjoy seeing the effects of the Depression, censorship, world war, the Cold War, television, and the counter-culture movement on the changing tastes of moviegoers, and the way showmen responded with creative and sometimes zany ad campaigns. Chapters include the sexy and salacious pre-Code pictures; the launch of the new dance team of Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers in *Flying Down to Rio*; MGM's gamble on the Marx Brothers with *A Night at the Opera*; lavish campaigns for *The Wizard of Oz* in original release and reissue; creation of a new star, John Wayne, in *John Ford's Stagecoach*; Orson Welles failed *Citizen Kane* campaign; Billy Wilder's unusual and dark Hollywood statement picture, *Sunset Boulevard*; the selling of *Rebel Without a Cause*, *Giant*, and *East of Eden* following the death of James Dean; Alfred Hitchcock's personal gamble with *Psycho*; and much more!