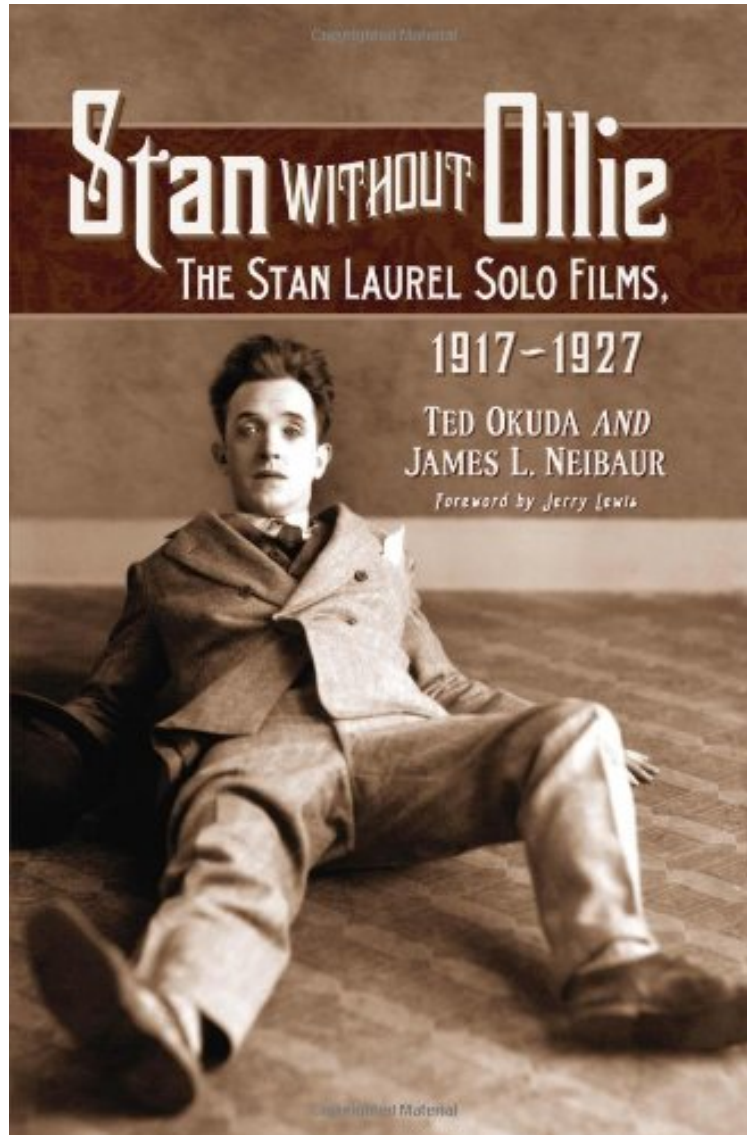


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Stan Without Ollie: The Stan Laurel Solo Films, 1917-1927

Ted Okuda, James L. Neibaur
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Ted Okuda, James L. Neibaur : **Stan Without Ollie: The Stan Laurel Solo Films, 1917-1927** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Stan Without Ollie: The Stan Laurel Solo Films, 1917-1927:

0 of 1 people found the following review helpful. A look at an unfinished comedian...By Nick Santa MariaThey did it again. Like their excellent book on the Jerry Lewis films, this is a terrific look into the solo work of beloved comedian, Stan Laurel. We all think of him as one half of the indelible Laurel and Hardy, the greatest of all film comedy teams,

but Stan had a 10 year career as a star of short silent comedies. Most of the films are minor and not very funny (IMO), but they reveal a fascinating look at a talented comedian in search of a personality. I personally think that Stan needed Ollie's talents just as much as Ollie needed Stan's creative input. The only reason I withheld a star is because of certain tiresome repetitions. I'm not sure how the book was split up between the two authors (both favorites of mine), but too many chapters ended with a variation of, "Not a great comedy, but a stepping stone toward the lovable Stanley character he became with Hardy.", I definitely recommend this book to all who love Laurel, Hardy, and classic comedy in general. Jerry Lewis provides a very insightful and affectionate foreword. 2 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Great Book for anyone interested in Stan By John Caputo This book was a purchase for my brother who is a huge Laurel and Hardy fan. As soon as he opened this for Christmas his eyes lit up and I saw he was very happy. My only nitpick is that it is a lot of money for a over sized paperback book plus I thought it would have more pages. But I do understand that these books are a niche market and therefor smaller print runs and slightly higher cost. It's still all good and plus I know I will eventually read this too. 4 of 5 people found the following review helpful. A thorough and thoroughly delightful look at a great comedian's formative years By Hal Erickson Ted Okuda and James L. Neibaur, who have probably forgotten more about movie comedians than most of will ever remember, once again hit the jackpot with this superb study of the films made by the great Stan Laurel for such producers as G.M Anderson, Joe Rock and Hal Roach in the ten years prior to Stan's historic 1927 teaming with Oliver Hardy. While most of these one-, two- and three-reel silent comedies still exist, many have been inaccessible to casual comedy fans for decades, and those that HAVE made the VHS and DVD rounds (such as Stan's 1923 one-reeler WHITE WINGS) are neither particularly good nor truly representative of Laurel's comic genius. Through careful and loving scrutiny of the presently available films, coupled with reams of fascinating research information, the authors have not only painted a vivid portrait of a true cinematic artist, but have also illustrated how many of Stan Laurel's familiar gestures, mannerisms and bits of business were auditioned and developed during his decade as a solo performer. In so doing, Okuda and Neibaur make it crystal clear that none of these Laurel trademarks were truly utilized to full comic advantage until Stan found the perfect teammate in Oliver Hardy--and not until Stan ceased doing variations on the fresh young poltroon he so often played in his early films and achieved immortality with delightfully dimwitted "Stanley" characterization. I say "perfect" teammate in light of the fact that on several occasions Stan was paired with other performers during his formative filmic years. In 1918-19 he made three films with star comedian Larry Semon, where he managed a few shining moments despite Semon's strenuous efforts to be the only funny man in the room. Throughout his solo years--and especially during his tenure with producer Hal Roach in 1923-24--Stan was somewhat reluctantly teamed with his former vaudeville partner and erstwhile lover Mae Laurel, whose lack of charisma and comic knowhow often threatened to drag poor Stan down to her level. On a more positive note, from 1923 forward Laurel frequently found himself cast opposite the fabulous James Finlayson, he of the squinty-eyed double take and Homer Simpson-ish expletive "Doh!" While Stan and "Fin" worked well together, they weren't really teamed in the accepted sense, and Stan was always the more dominant of the two--and he certainly worked hard to achieve that dominance! Though they clearly adore the subject of their book, the authors do not shy away from observing that the early Stan Laurel sometimes came on much too strong, scampering about like a madman, glaring at the camera like a frightened deer and even laughing at his own jokes--something that the later Laurel would have abhorred. In the tradition of John McCabe's pioneering biography MR. LAUREL AND MR. HARDY, the authors do not delve too deeply into Laurel's private life or personal problems except in relation to his films. The pure historical information provided is in itself so fascinating--notably the "backstory" for the 1924 comedy ZEB VS. PAPRIKA, a spoof of the first horse-racing world championship at Belmont Park--that one never feels cheated by the lack of intimate details regarding Laurel's offscreen demeanor. The book concludes with a survey of the Hal Roach-produced films that Stan Laurel made with Oliver Hardy prior to their official teaming, carefully noting that these were still essentially Laurel comedies with Hardy in support, and that the duo still had quite a way to go before achieving the seamless symmetry that made them the greatest comedy team of all time. Oh, did I mention that no less than Jerry Lewis provided the book's affectionate and insightful foreword? All the more reason to buy a copy of STAN WITHOUT OLLIE. As the boys themselves would say: "That's a VERY good idea."--Hal Erickson, author of ENCYCLOPEDIA OF TV CARTOON SHOWS and MILITARY COMEDY FILMS.

Long before his momentous teaming with Oliver Hardy, comedian Stan Laurel (1890-1965) was a motion picture star in his own right. From his film debut in Nuts in May (1917) through his final solo starring effort Should Tall Men Marry? (1928), Laurel headlined dozens of short comedies for a variety of producers and production companies, often playing characters far removed from the meek, dimwitted "Stanley" persona that we know and love. This is a film-by-film look at the pictures Stan made as a solo artist, as well as those he wrote and directed for other stars, shows his development as a movie comedian and filmmaker. Comedy legend Jerry Lewis, a longtime friend and admirer of Stan Laurel, provides an affectionate and eloquent foreword. Included are several rare photographs and production stills.

"Highly recommended." --Midwest Book "One of the best film books of 2012." --Thomas Gladysz, Huffington

PostAbout the AuthorTed Okuda is a Chicago-based film historian whose articles have appeared in such publications as Nostalgia Digest, Filmfax and Classic Images. James L. Neibaur is a film historian and a professional educator.