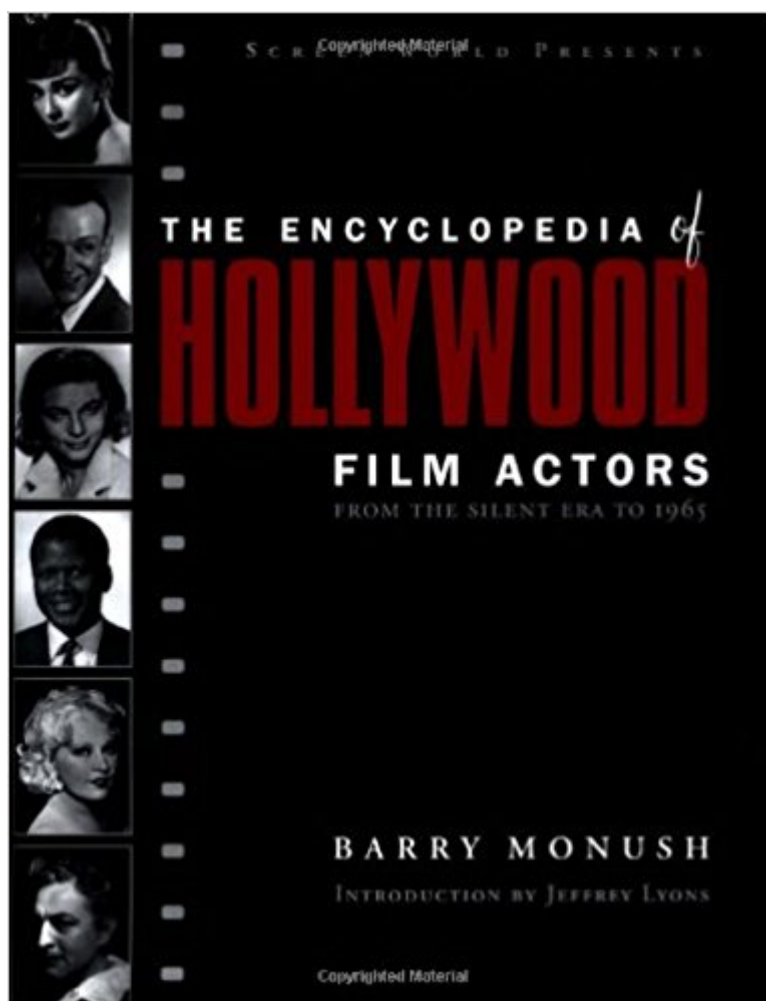


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Encyclopedia Of Hollywood Film Actors, Vol. 1: From The Silent Era To 1965



Synopsis

(Applause Books). For decades, Screen World has been the film professional's, as well as the film buff's, favorite and indispensable annual screen resource, full of all the necessary statistics and facts. Now Screen World editor Barry Monush has compiled another comprehensive work for every film lover's library. In the first of two volumes, this book chronicles the careers of every significant film actor, from the earliest silent screen stars Chaplin, Pickford, Fairbanks to the mid-1960s, when the old studio and star systems came crashing down. Each listing includes: a brief biography, photos from the famed Screen World archives, with many rare shots; vital statistics; a comprehensive filmography; and an informed, entertaining assessment of each actor's contributions good or bad! In addition to every major player, Monush includes the legions of unjustly neglected troupers of yesteryear. The result is a rarity: an invaluable reference tool that's as much fun to read as a scandal sheet. It pulsates with all the scandal, glamour, oddity and glory that was the lifeblood of its subjects. Contains over 1,000 photos!

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Customer Reviews

This volume, appropriate for film buffs and novices alike, covers actors from Abbot & Costello to George Zucco. Monush, associate editor of the annually published book of filmographies, Screen World, here profiles actors who graced the silver screen through 1965 (a second volume, picking up where this one ends, is in the works). Monush includes information on each actor's career in his or her homeland (since some of the subjects aren't American), shares a photo from the Screen World archives and notes each actor's stage, television and film credits. Though the book lacks of an

index, the brief bios are thorough and organized alphabetically. Monush has a distinct writing style that, while not always objective, lets his personality and sources-mainly Screen World and Films on Review magazine-shine through. Copyright 2003 Reed Business Information, Inc.

The first of a projected two-volume set, this encyclopedia provides biographical profiles of actors who worked in Hollywood between 1915 and 1965 (presumably the second volume will cover 1965 to the present). Author Monush, an associate editor of the annual publication Screen World, includes all Oscar-winning actors as well as performers who became prominent in film before the late 1960s, which is when, he notes, the demise of the studio star system occurred. Entries are arranged in alphabetical order (Bud Abbott and Lou Costello to George Zucco), include vital statistics, and note any higher-education institution the actor attended. Narrative capsules of the actor's career are accompanied by black-and-white photographs obtained from Screen World archives. Monush has done extensive research to compile the biographies, and the entries convey his love of moviemaking. Did you know that Yul Brynner was a trapeze artist before he became "the King"? That the "Wicked Witch of the West," Margaret Hamilton, ran a nursery school before heading to Hollywood? That "Kojak" (Telly Savalas) was once a writer for the State Department? There are fun anecdotes included in every entry, and readers will learn new trivia each time they peruse the encyclopedia. The capsules are followed by chronological listings of the actor's screen and stage work as well as credits for select television appearances. Data were compiled from a number of sources, and the Encyclopedia includes a bibliography of reference works that readers can use for additional research. There is no index. Although there are other reference sources that include film actors, such as the International Dictionary of Films and Filmmakers (Saint James, 2000) and The New Biographical Dictionary of Film (Knopf, 2002), this is an item that academic libraries and specialized film libraries will want to add. It would also no doubt find an audience in public libraries. RBBCopyright © American Library Association. All rights reserved

A wonderfully detailed and informative book covering all the major (and some not so major) stars up to mid-60s. We keep this at hand and are constantly referring to it when watching films from this time period. Best book of the kind we've found.

Lots of interesting information based on vast research. Laudable. The bios were well written for the most part, but I was put off by the author's snarky comments having mostly to do with political points of view. He would be well advised to take Sgt Joe Friday's immortal advice: "Just the facts, m'am."

An encyclopedia is no place for personal opinions.

When I ordered this book I thought it would give me some background on a few actors in Hollywood. Boy was mistaken, This book is full of the old time stars. I you order this book you will be glad you did when you start reading it.

Got this as a gift to my father who sits and scratches things down on all the different old time actors. He just loves it and he can't keep his nose out of it. Love it !

I collect autographs and sometimes I need to know the actor or actress. Other times I need help guessing and this is the book to information. One of the best in my library for Hollywood.

Recommend

At first, I was very pleased with this directory, and I gave it a glowing review with 4 stars. I had deducted a star because of the bad editing, i.e. lots of typos and factual errors. There seems to be not one page where there aren't lots of typos, and the factual errors reflect a biogrsapher who seems to be just faking it. For example, Nina Foch's entry states that she played the secretary to a "suicidal businessman" in Executive Suite. This is incorrect - the businessman died of a heart attack, the daughter, played by Barbara Stanwyck, was suicidal. And this popped up on the first browse through the book. Now, I must deduct still another star. I had compared this book favorably to the David Thomson "Biographical Dictionary," because Thomson's is neither biographical nor a dictionary, filled with the unauthoritative, opinions of a phony movie critic, and a mean spirited one at that. Well, alas, upon further reading, I found Monush's work to be equally mean spirited. For example, Mounsh gratuitously mentions a particular actor's homosexuality - something which had absolutely no bearing on his career or work. Of another actor's homosexuality which was was notorious and indeed affected his career, Monush makes no mention. Why Monush chooses to stigmatize one actor and then cover up for another I can only explain as personal favor. Equally mystifying is are the omissions. Why does Monush include obscure character actors but exclude well-known feature players? For example, why does he exclude Erik Rhodes, who gained immortality in the Astair-Rogers classics Top Hat and Gay Divorcee ("Your wife is safe with Tonetti, he prefers spaghetti.") Why does Monush exclude Bruce Bennett? Bennett wasn't just a player - he was a star - a minor star, but a star, one of those Olympic Athletes who, as Herman Brix, played Tarzan (some say superior to Weismuller), then changed his name and eventually became a

headliner, co-starring with the likes of Crawford and Bogart. Couldn't Monush find a photo? This directory claims to be encyclopedic, but it definitely is not. It has bad editing, poor fact-checking and unexplained omissions. Still, it is the only directory I know of, extant, which contains photos with the entries, and it does attempt to flesh out the entries. It is superior to the pretentious Thomson and perhaps less dry of a read than the essential and comprehensive (fewer omissions) "Filmgoer's Encyclopedia" by Ephraim Katz. This is a useful reference, but let us hope a better one comes along. So far, if you can dispense with the photos, the Katz is the best.

Barry Monush's "Encyclopedia of Hollywood Film Actors" is the best volume of its type. Other guides to performers tend either to be mean spirited or incomplete. This book is witty, informative and comprehensive. Each entry has some unusual or fascinating fact. This book has more complete credits information than most reference works, but this one is also fun to read. All the stars who became famous before 1965, including many of today's great stars, are here. Actors who came to prominence 1965->present will be covered in Vol. 2. The rare "headshot" photos alone are worth the price of purchase. If you know anyone who enjoys movies, they'll love this amazing book!

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