



Silent Movies: The Birth of Film and the Triumph of Movie Culture

By Peter Kobel

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A gorgeous, lavish history of silent movies - with more than 400 amazing images - captures the birth of film and icons like Chaplin, Garbo, Clara Bow, and Valentino.

Drawing on the extraordinary collection of The Library of Congress, one of the greatest repositories for silent film and memorabilia, Peter Kobel has created the definitive visual history of silent film. From its birth in the 1890s, with the earliest narrative shorts, through the brilliant full-length features of the 1920s, SILENT MOVIES captures the greatest directors and actors and their immortal films. SILENT MOVIES also looks at the technology of early film, the use of color photography, and the restoration work being spearheaded by some of Hollywood's most important directors, such as Martin Scorsese and Francis Ford Coppola.

Richly illustrated from the Library of Congress's extensive collection of posters, paper prints, film stills, and memorabilia-most of which have never been in print-SILENT MOVIES is an important work of history that will also be a sought-after gift book for all lovers of film.

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Silent Movies: The Birth of Film and the Triumph of Movie Culture By Peter Kobel Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #839143 in Books
- Published on: 2007-11-01
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 12.50" h x 1.13" w x 9.50" l, 4.66 pounds
- Binding: Hardcover
- 320 pages

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

For decades, silent films have been disintegrating in warehouses or lost to indifference. Director Martin Scorsese, who wrote the foreword to this book, has spearheaded the preservation movement, warning with every foot of film that is lost, we lose a link to our culture. Kobel, longtime writer about movies, demonstrates the power of silent movies in this spectacular compilation of stills, promo materials and breathtaking posters from the Library of Congress's memorabilia collection. The visual artistry is stunning. Kobel uses these evocative images as a foundation to examine the international film industry from 1893 to 1927. Instead of a chronological treatment, he examines genres such as horror, westerns and comedy, while paying homage to the superb work of art directors, cinematographers and directors. Understandably, a significant section is devoted to actors. As Norma Desmond neatly observes in *Sunset Boulevard*, We had faces then. Although early producers were loath to highlight specific actors, fearing their popularity would translate into higher salaries, fans were hungry for information about them. In this treasure trove for film buffs, Kobel details the press campaigns that created stars like Theda Bara and Rudolph Valentino, while fan magazines and newspapers deemed them American royalty. (Nov.)

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Review

"If you ever wondered why film buffs get weak in the knees about the movies made before talkies, this book can help you understand. . . . it is beautifully designed with a dazzling array of movie stills, posters and promo material drawn from the Library of Congress' memorabilia collection." *San Francisco Chronicle*

"The definitive visual history of silent film." *New York Daily News*

"A handsomely designed and illustrated pictorial history of the voiceless cinema." *Los Angeles Times*

"A ravishing, oversize, million-pound study of the silent movie era, not just its films, but its promotion, its culture and the way these movies changed how we think about the world." *Washington Post Express*

"Kobel has lovingly detailed this world—from the zany publicity campaigns to the lavish scripts to the decadent star lifestyles. SILENT MOVIES is an essential addition to any film or design lover's library." *Encore magazine*

Spectacular. *The New York Times*

This isn't a coffee table book, though any coffee table would be lucky to be graced by it. The excellent text manages the trick of being exhaustive without being exhausting, while the photos--and stills, and posters, and lobby cards--are enchanting. *Joe Morgenstern, Wall Street Journal Online*

About the Author

Peter Kobel is the former managing editor of *Premiere* magazine, and has written for *The New York Times*, *The Los Angeles Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, and *Entertainment Weekly*. Martin Scorsese is one of the most respected and influential directors working today. He also serves as president of the Film Foundation, a non-profit organization dedicated to film preservation. Kevin Brownlow is a noted film historian and has written extensively on early film, including *THE PARADE'S GONE BY* and *BEHIND THE MASK OF*

INNOCENCE.

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