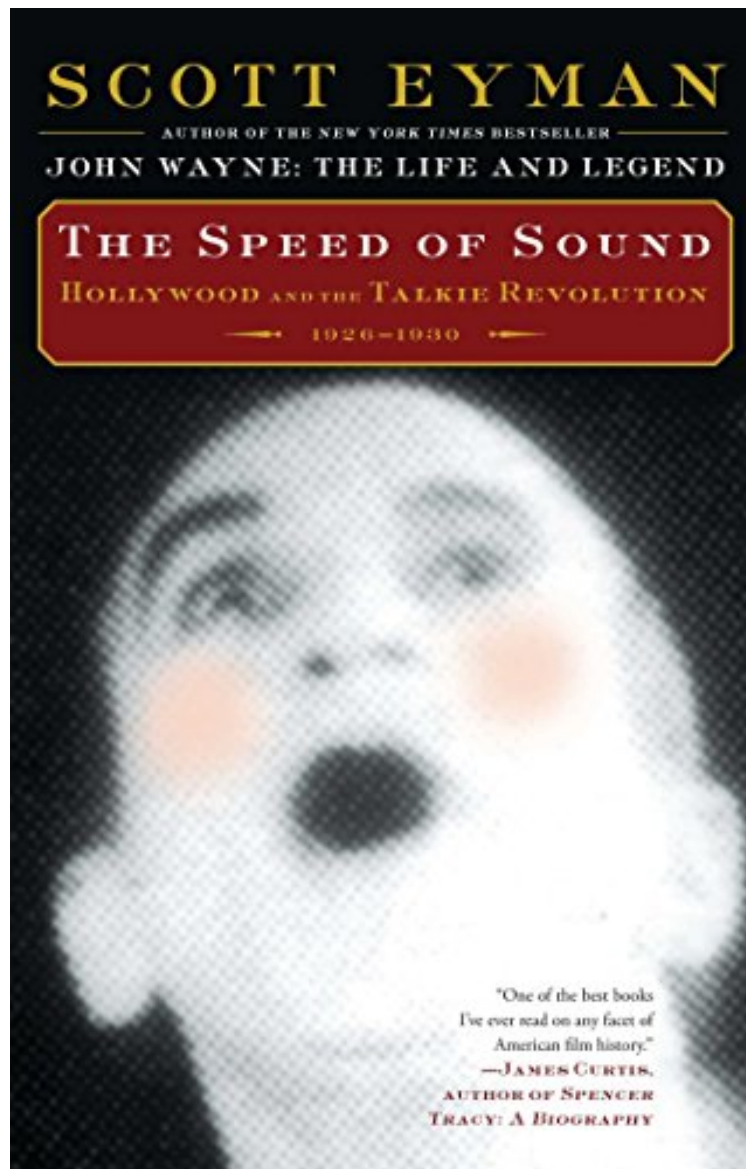


(Library ebook) The Speed of Sound: Hollywood and the Talkie Revolution 1926-1930

The Speed of Sound: Hollywood and the Talkie Revolution 1926-1930

Scott Eyman

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Scott Eyman : The Speed of Sound: Hollywood and the Talkie Revolution 1926-1930 before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Speed of Sound: Hollywood and the Talkie Revolution 1926-1930:

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of work by it. Good research without being bogged down by too much trivia. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Excellent overview of a neglected era By William D. Ferry This title is an excellent look at an important transitional era in Hollywood history. It's a very detailed overview of what were perhaps the most critical years in the development of sound films. It covers the early experiments of Edison and other pioneers of the earliest days of movies, moves on to the adversarial joint efforts of Case and DeForest, and culminates in the battles between Vitaphone and Movietone. This makes an excellent companion piece to *A SONG IN THE DARK* by Richard Barrios (detailing the birth of the musical film during basically the same time period). This book is very highly recommended. I've recently become more interested in this period of film history, and efforts like this really provide a treasure trove of information. The changeover to sound hasn't been very well-documented in the past, so a book like *THE SPEED OF SOUND* is greatly appreciated. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. How all progress is suspected to be a fad By Donald S. Explanation of how something that would seem very well organized was a haphazard politically influenced progression in our history. And all those beautiful people who just had to look good were found unsuited to this new technology however, some political pay backs were alive and well too. A great book on an exciting and trying time. Very enjoyable.

It was the end of an era. It was a turbulent, colorful, and altogether remarkable period, four short years in which America's most popular industry reinvented itself. Here is the epic story of the transition from silent films to talkies, that moment when movies were totally transformed and the American public cemented its love affair with Hollywood. As Scott Eyman demonstrates in his fascinating account of this exciting era, it was a time when fortunes, careers, and lives were made and lost, when the American film industry came fully into its own. In this mixture of cultural and social history that is both scholarly and vastly entertaining, Eyman dispels the myths and gives us the missing chapter in the history of Hollywood, the ribbon of dreams by which America conquered the world.

.com Nowadays the "talkie" seems, like some other technological breakthroughs, to have obliterated its less-advanced predecessor, the silent movie, in one fell swoop. The reality, of course, is more complex. As Scott Eyman writes in his prologue to *The Speed of Sound*, "To examine this period of unparalleled industrial change, it is necessary to reverse the perspective, to give a fair, detailed idea of what silents were like to the people who made and watched them, and how talkies permanently changed the creative and personal equations." Eyman's eye-opening book fulfills this mission. He focuses on just five years--1926 through 1930--but tells the story on many levels. We learn about the technology, the details of actors' and technicians' lives, the elaborate business machinations associated with the rise of sound, and the resulting transformation of not just the movies but Hollywood itself. *The Speed of Sound* fills a gap in any film buff's library. From Library Journal The transformation of the movies from silent to talking pictures is a fascinating subject. For the serious film devotee, there is a profusion of information in Eyman's work (LJ 2/15/97), and narrator Adams Morgan moves it along briskly. There are moments when Eyman engrosses us in situations evoking the human face behind the events of this turbulent time, and legendary names such as Edison and Eastman, Griffith and Vidor, Fox and Warner, and Jolson and Barrymore emerge as vital personalities. Too often, however, we are subjected to a description of some technical innovation and are sidetracked by repetitious detail concerning frames per second, memos to projectionists, numbers of reels and discs, and directions for keeping equipment clean. Regrettably, the information is confusingly organized. For the general listener, it cannot be recommended. Barbara Mann, Alephi Univ., Garden City, Copyright 1998 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Booklist Cinema's transition from silents to talkies has inspired many myths, but Eyman maintains that no aspect of film history has been so slighted. Al Jolson's explosive performance in *The Jazz Singer* (1927, and silent with a few sound sequences) is usually credited with ushering in sound, but it was the all-talking *Lights of New York* (1928)--"a dreadful little movie," Eyman says--that threw the industry into a tizzy (primitive synchronized sound devices date from as far back as 1905). Eyman captures the tenor and the terror of the times, as panicked studio executives and theater owners made the investment in sound, huge stars underwent humiliating voice auditions (fewer careers were shattered than legend claims), and technicians searched for ways to conceal microphones and otherwise adjust to the technology. The transformation was total, from the escalation in importance of writers to the appearance of food in theaters. A fascinating account of what Eyman terms "the destruction of one great art and the creation of another." Gordon Flagg