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The Dark Side Of The Screen: Film Noir



Synopsis

A revised and updated edition of the definitive study of film noirâ "the most original genre of American cinemaâ "with a new afterword by the authorSince The Dark Side of the Screen first appeared over two decades ago, it has served as the essential take on what has become one of todayâ ™s most pervasive screen influences and enduringly popular genres. Covering over one hundred outstanding films and offering more than two hundred carefully chosen stills, it is by far the most thorough and entertaining study available of noir themes, visual motifs, character types, actors, and directors. This landmark work covers noir in full, from the iconic performances of Burt Lancaster, Joan Crawford, and Humphrey Bogart to the camera angles, lighting effects, and story lines that characterize the work of directors Fritz Lang, Billy Wilder, and Orson Welles. With a new afterword about the lasting legacy of noir as well as recently rediscovered films deserving of their own screenings alongside the classics, The Dark Side of the Screen reestablishes itself as both an unsurpassed resource and a captivating must-read for any fan of noir. Â

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Customer Reviews

First published in 1981, "The Dark Side of the Screen" was among the first books in English on the subject of film noir. Author Foster Hirsch revisits that time before film noir was a fashionable subject in his introduction to this 2001 edition. More than 2 decades after its publication, "The Dark Side of the Screen" is still a solid introduction to film noir history, although it lacks discussion of the neo-noir films that have been made since its publication and has not been influenced by more recent theories. If you are new to classic film noir, this book is not a bad place to start. It is very readable,

discusses or mentions over 100 films, and the large format (8.5"x11") allows for over 180 black-and-white photographs. "The Dark Side of the Screen" contains basic information on the film noir movement that you are likely to find in any good introductory text, so it's not intended for those already well-versed in the subject. In eight chapters, Hirsch follows the film noir movement through its classic period, 1941 to the late 1950s, until its self-conscious revival in the 1970s. "The Dark Side of the Screen" starts out with an overview of typical noir themes and summary of the style's evolution, then takes a step back in time to film noir's sources, obvious and alleged, in American hard-boiled crime literature, German Expressionist art, and Italian Neo-Realist cinema. Hirsch summarizes noir's narrative and visual style before discussing key directors, mainly German émigrés and Americans, and many of the important names among film noir actors, with analysis of the typical film noir acting style. The book concludes with a useful, though occasionally forced, attempt to categorize film noir's basic narrative patterns and central figures and a brief discussion of neo-noir.

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