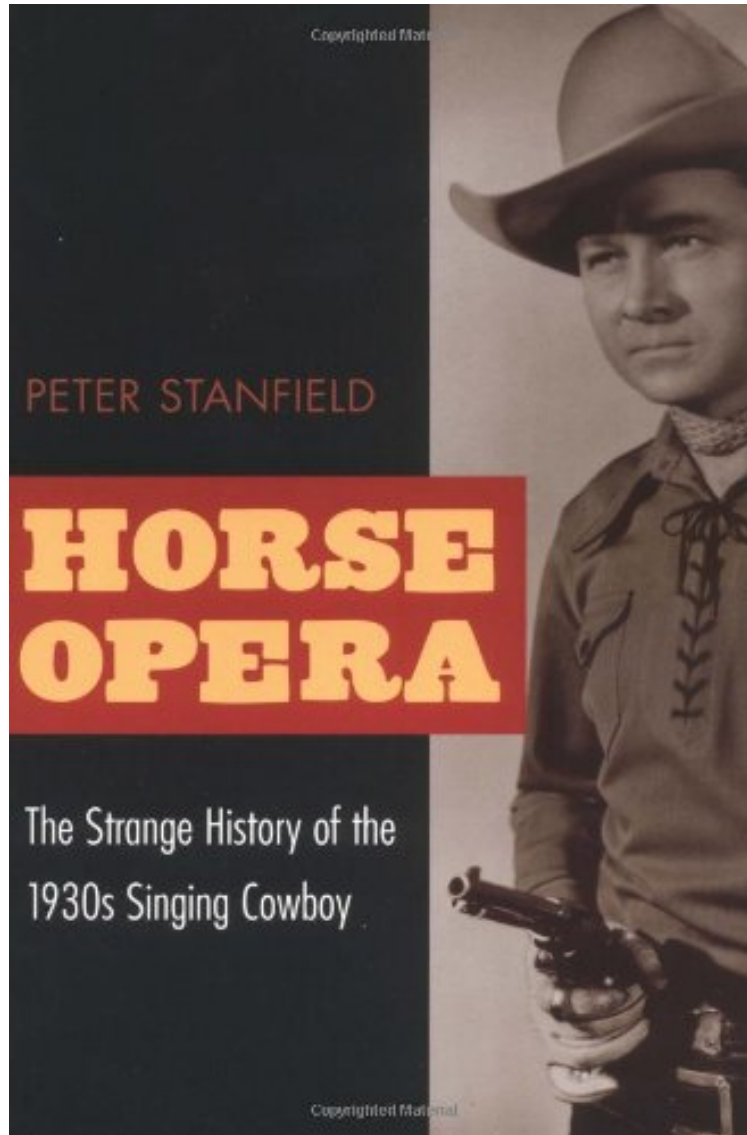


[Free download] Horse Opera: The Strange History of the 1930s Singing Cowboy

Horse Opera: The Strange History of the 1930s Singing Cowboy

Peter Stanfield

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Peter Stanfield : Horse Opera: The Strange History of the 1930s Singing Cowboy before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Horse Opera: The Strange History of the 1930s Singing Cowboy:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Essential Reading!By Richard J. OravitzI disagree with the previous reviewer. Why would (or did?) he read a book that he obviously has no interest in? I found HORSE OPERA well written and insightful. The author has a true love of singing cowboy movies and clearly understands why audiences

flocked into theaters during the Depression era to spend their hard earned coinage on low brow escapism. The author also correctly places the roots of series Westerns with the earlier dime novel and not Owen Wister's THE VIRGINIAN. One of the best books ever written concerning the B-Western/Serial genre and I have over 150 of them (yes, there are that many!). Highly recommended. 0 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Not recommended even to them. By Bill Muhr. Weird psychological and sociological study of why singing cowboys! Not my cup of tea and certainly not for the younger generation (anyone under 50) who doesn't give a.....whit (rhymes with the word I really wanted to use) about singing cowboys unless one thinks of oneself as a Freud or one of those creeps! Not recommended even to them.

In this innovative take on a neglected chapter of film history, Peter Stanfield challenges the commonly held view of the singing cowboy as an ephemeral figure of fun and argues instead that he was one of the most important cultural figures to emerge out of the Great Depression. The rural or newly urban working-class families who flocked to see the latest exploits of Gene Autry, Roy Rogers, Tex Ritter, and other singing cowboys were an audience largely ignored by mainstream Hollywood film. Hard hit by the depression, faced with the threat - and often the reality - of dispossession and dislocation, pressured to adapt to new ways of living, these small-town filmgoers saw their ambitions, fantasies, and desires embodied in the singing cowboy and their social and political circumstances dramatized in 'B' Westerns. Stanfield traces the singing cowboy's previously uncharted roots in the performance tradition of blackface minstrelsy and its literary antecedents in dime novels, magazine fiction, and the novels of B.M. Bower, showing how silent cinema conventions, the developing commercial music media, and the prevailing conditions of film production shaped the 'horse opera' of the 1930s. Cowboy songs offered an alternative to the disruptive modern effects of jazz music, while the series Western - tapping into aesthetic principles shunned by the aspiring middle class - emphasized stunts, fist fights, slapstick comedy, disguises, and hidden identities over narrative logic and character psychology. Singing cowboys also linked recording, radio, publishing, live performance, and film media. Entertaining and thought-provoking, "Horse Opera" recovers not only the forgotten cowboys of the 1930s but also their forgotten audiences: the ordinary men and women whose lives were brightened by the sights and songs of the singing Western.

"Isn't just a lively and entertaining round-up of movies about warbling cowboys, it's also a comment on how such a bizarre trend began... Stanfield expertly plumbs the subject, presenting a view on these films from the perspective of keen moviegoer and adept media commentator. In penning such a thought-provoking volume, the author stands in for the viewer, giving the reader an opportunity to be an audience member by proxy, and to hear, faintly, the twang of guitars and Gene Autry's yodeling." -- Elizabeth Millard, Foreword Magazine "Stanfield's deft analysis expands the detailed descriptions of singing cowboys in Bill Malone's various books... Recommended." -- Choice "Stanfield provides a strong foray into this topic, one that should be considered requisite for any cultural scholar of the early twentieth century." --The Velvet Light Trap