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Jerry Roberts

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#526537 in Books Applause Books 2003-05-01 2003-05-01Original language:EnglishPDF # 1 9.00 x 1.33 x 5.50l, 1.91 #File Name: 1557835128576 pagesThe Great American Playwrights on the Screen Applause

Books Series Softcover Written by Jerry RobertsThe Great American Playwrights on the Screen is a complete, up-to-date record of movie and television productions of classic and contemporary works of the great playwrightsRich in historical value and detail, this reference book not only tracks Tony Award and Pulitzer Prize winners, but also unearths unheralded treasures and forgotten performances by great actors and the great directors they servedTo show the ongoing influences and legacies of the great plays, Roberts compares and contrasts the adapted versions, and includes colorful reviews by prominent critics of tv and

film (beginning with those of the silent era)The profound expansion of television into American homes in the 1950s brought a flood of adapted plays to the small screen, and resulted in the rebirth of the careers of many significant playwrights | File size: 63.Mb

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before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised *The Great American Playwrights on the Screen: A Critical Guide to Film, TV, Video and DVD*:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A Frustrating, Wildly Mixed BagBy PDCI have so many nits to pick with this book that I hardly know where to begin, but the title seems like as good a place as any. The phrase "Great American Playwrights" immediately puts on in mind of names such as Eugene O'Neill, Tennessee Williams, Arthur Miller, Edward Albee, August Wilson, Neil Simon and Sam Sheppard, among others. But this book also covers such theatrical "luminaries" as Harry Brown, Wilson Collison, Tom Topor, Emily Mann, and Muriel Resnik. "Who?" you may ask. My point exactly. And why I have no objection to the inclusion of lesser known playwrights, do NOT then title your book 'The Great American Playwrights On The Screen'.Secondly, the author's eclectic and variable rating system seems to be inordinately focused on the negative. Such film adaptations as 'The Boys In The Band' and '1776', while having received mixed reviews upon their release, did, nevertheless, receive their share of very positive reviews as well, not that one would know it from this book which rates both films with only two stars and quotes only the snarkily vitriolic notices of Pauline Kael and no balancing point of view from other critics with widely differing opinions. And this seems unfair to me. Also, the casts of both films were kept virtually intact from the original stage productions, both of which were huge commercial and critically acclaimed successes, with '1776', for example, sweeping the Tony Awards that year. And while the direction of the film version may have been workmanlike rather than inspired -- unlike William Friedkin's cinematically skilled and powerful helming of 'Boys In The Band' -- the final product still faithfully brought the essence of the stage experience of '1776' (a major inspiration for Lin Manuel Miranda in his brilliant creation of 'Hamilton') to the screen with its memorable songs and marvelous cast intact. And yet both of these film adaptations -- just to name a couple -- are basically dismissed as clumsy and shallow artistic failures. Again, not fair in my estimation.And, lastly, there are some weird and frustrating omissions, such as there being no mention whatsoever in the section on Arthur Kopit of his highly acclaimed play 'Wings' for which Constance Cummings won the Best Actress Tony Award for the Broadway production -- a brilliant performance which she repeated, along with most of the original stage cast, in the subsequent PBS television adaptation directed by the play's original director. So to find only 'Indians' and 'Oh Dad Poor Dad Mama's Hung You In The Closet and I'm Feelin' So Sad' being the only Kopit adaptations being dealt with here seems an odd omission, unless the author's lapse is somehow justified because 'Wings' was ONLY adapted to video via television and never filmed for the big screen.Basically, despite a certain percentage of the author's coverage and estimations being "fair and balanced" (to quote the notorious Fox News motto) an equally sizable portion of the book's content seemed wildly unfair and unbalanced. Why not give the reader a wider selection of critical reactions to peruse in addition to your own personal evaluations? But, on the plus side, the book IS impressively comprehensive (aside from the kind of sporadic lapses I've already described) and a LOT of research obviously went into this. Which only makes it all the more annoying when Mr. Roberts (the author, not the Broadway show/film) drops the ball along the Great White Way to the Silver Screen.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Great Critical Survey of Plays on Film and TelevisionBy RadCritical evaluations of plays that have been filmed and televised. Excellent. Unfortunately, it is very difficult to find a way to view many of the televised plays.3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Comprehensive and Fun.By Steven DaedalusJerry Roberts has written a guide to the works of American playwrights and their treatment on the stage, on television, and on the great big movie screen. More than 200 writers are covered. Most of the names will be familiar but many aren't. Included are Arthur Miller, Lillian Helman, Eugene O'Neill, Neil Simon, and Tennessee Williams. Some are old timers like George M. Cohan. Others are one-shot wonders.I decided that the coverage was reasonably comprehensive when I was able to spot the original Broadway presentation of George Axelrod's "The Seven Year Itch", starring Tom Ewell and Vanessa Brown, which I saw as a kid. It was so long ago that I felt uncomfortable having a date, Peggy McNeill, especially when trying to conquer the roast duck in a nearby restaurant afterward. Did you ever try to look debonaire while dissecting a duck? Don't try. Anyway, I give Roberts a bonus point for getting Vanessa Brown's name in there. I believe she was replaced after a short while by a couple of other actresses, but she was the first to play the girl upstairs.When I said it was "fun" to read, what I meant was that it's not like a dictionary. You don't necessarily have it around to "look things up."For each author, Roberts begins with a brief biography, then his own evaluation of the work he's about to describe, and then a complete list of cast and crew for any productions on TV or film. A surprising number of familiar movies were first performed on television during the so-called Golden Age of live TV in the 50s. I'll mention "Marty" in passing, as an example.So you can sit back, as I did, and skim through it for critical evaluations of the works, both by Roberts and by the couple of dozen critics from whom he quotes a few

lines, the sources being as different as "Variety" and Pauline Kael, as well as the salaried critics of major newspapers like the New York Times and the Los Angeles Times. Roberts' opinions are fairly reasonable in my estimation. He's pretty objective. Some of the people he quotes take more chances. He deals with silent movies too. Roberts' prose isn't elegant or witty, but all in all, it's a fairly satisfying read and must represent an awesome amount of research.

(Applause Books). *The Great American Playwrights on the Screen* is a complete, up-to-date record of movie and television productions of classic and contemporary works of the great playwrights. Rich in historical value and detail, this reference book not only tracks Tony Award and Pulitzer Prize winners, but also unearths unheralded treasures and forgotten performances by great actors and the great directors they served. To show the ongoing influences and legacies of the great plays, Roberts compares and contrasts the adapted versions, and includes colorful reviews by prominent critics of tv and film (beginning with those of the silent era). The profound expansion of television into American homes in the 1950s brought a flood of adapted plays to the small screen, and resulted in the rebirth of the careers of many significant playwrights. *The Great American Playwrights on the Screen* provides fans with a video and DVD guide to the adapted works of the playwrights, and shows which versions are available for home viewing and in which media (VHS, Beta, Laser, DVD, Letterbox). Simultaneously, this book is a unique, one-stop source for academics, students of the theatre arts, actors, directors and producers. Organized in an easy-to-use A-Z format, the book features over 200 playwrights including Arthur Miller, Marsha Norman, Eugene O'Neill, Aaron Sorkin, Neil Simon, Wendy Wasserstein, and Tennessee Williams. In addition, *The Great American Playwrights on the Screen* resurrects the memories of television productions of plays at a critical time, when many of them including Emmy Award winners and nominees are deteriorating in vaults.