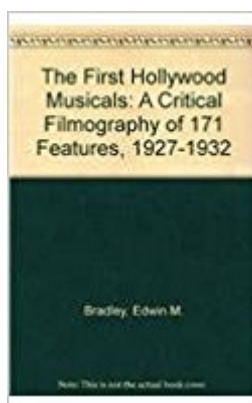


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The First Hollywood Musicals: A Critical Filmography Of 171 Features, 1927-1932



Synopsis

As Hollywood entered the sound era, it was rightly determined that the same public fascinated by the novelty of the talkie would be dazzled by the spectacle of a song and dance film. In 1929 and 1930, film musicals became the industry's most lucrative genre--until the greedy studios almost killed the genre by glutting the market with too many films that looked and sounded like clones of each other. From the classy movies such as *Sunnyside Up* and *Hallelujah!* to failures such as *The Lottery*, *Bride and Howdy Broadway*, this filmography details 171 early Hollywood musicals. Arranged by subgenre (backstagers, operettas, college films, and stage-derived musical comedies), the entries include studio, release date, cast and credits, running time, a complete song list, any recordings spawned by the film, Academy Award nominations and winners, and availability on video or laserdisc. These data are followed by a plot synopsis, including analysis of the film's place in the genre's history.

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Customer Reviews

"Bradley's thoroughness is commendable.... Recommended" -- Choice "a splendid resource, and it makes for good reading.... A thorough work which will likely remain the standard for years to come" -- ARBA "an excellent job of researching.... The book's strength is its reevaluation of underrated gems" -- Big Reel "informative...the amount of documentation is impressive.... Recommended" -- Classic Images "insightful commentary.... Unlikely that one could find in any other book more detailed information about obscure films" -- Show Music

Edwin M. Bradley is the associate curator of film at the Flint (Michigan) Institute of Arts. He has published two previous books on early Hollywood film. --This text refers to the Paperback edition.

THE FIRST HOLLYWOOD MUSICALS by Edwin M. Bradley covers the period from 1927 to 1932, when sound films supplanted silents in Hollywood. THE JAZZ SINGER (1927) is celebrated as the first talkie and Bradley traces the first group of Hollywood musicals through Al Jolson's pioneering effort, early operettas, stage adaptations, college musicals, and the All-Star revues which most of the major studios mounted. For each of the 171 entries, Bradley provides full cast and credits, a summary of the plot, critiques of them based on his own viewing contemporary reviews, and makes an effort to place each film in its historic context. This volume is a good companion to Richard Barrios' SONG IN THE DARK (1995, Oxford University Press) which covers more or less the same subject and period; Barrios provides more social insight, but Bradley provides more hard information. One feature of THE FIRST HOLLYWOOD MUSICALS which is particularly welcome is a listing for each film giving every song and the performers who sang them. He also provides valuable information about non-musical performances in revue films. Included are a couple of appendices, the most interesting listing musical short films from the period covered. Much musical film history was made between THE JAZZ SINGER and 42ND STREET, and Bradley's fine volume helps the enthusiast and the casual fan sort out much of it.

For any true lover of early Hollywood Musicals, this book is the best organized and updated work around. In particular the author not only reviews the early works, but also relates whenever possible the availability of the work, whether it in fact may be a lost work or if there are any remaining copies left (even in private hands). This book is a must have for any movie lover seriously interested in the early hollywood musical

Mr. Bradley shoots and scores with this wonderfully researched work. It's the kind of book that I didn't want to put down, and when I did I looked forward to the time when I could pick it up again. It is now a major reference book which holds a prominent place in my library. I am eagerly awaiting his latest, The First Hollywood Sound Shorts, to arrive from my postman. Thanks Mr. Bradley.

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