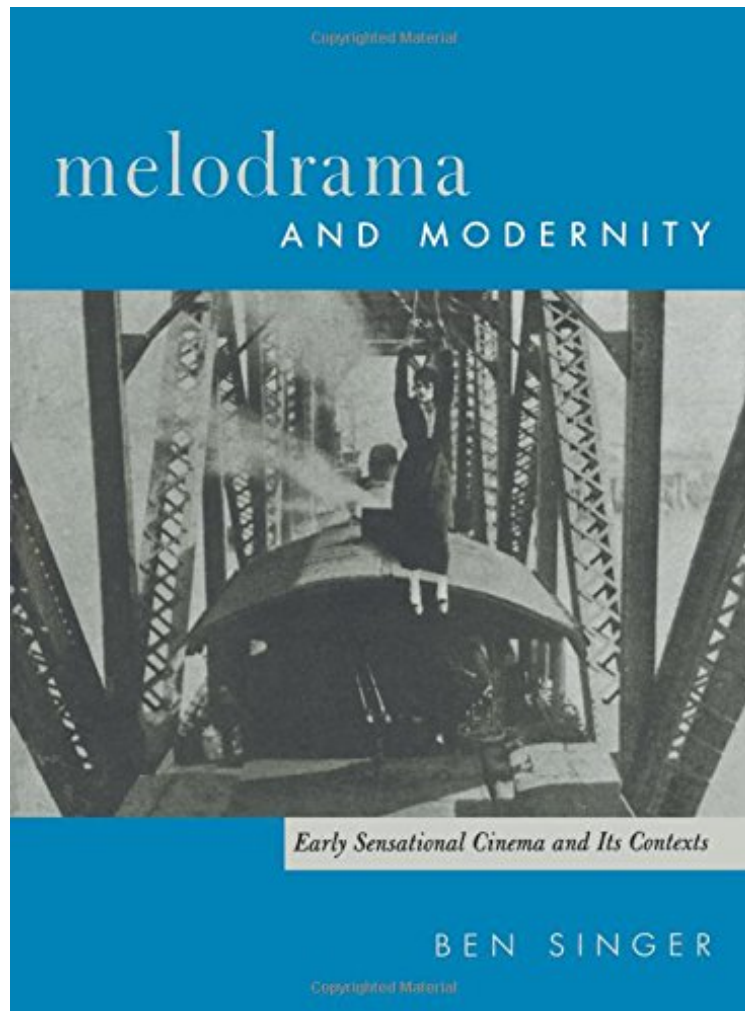


Melodrama and Modernity

Ben Singer

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Ben Singer : Melodrama and Modernity before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Melodrama and Modernity:

8 of 11 people found the following review helpful. Readable introductionBy Samuel C.This study has many of the earmarks of a Ph. D. dissertation--muted claims and qualifiers, allusions to the Frankfort School, periodic summaries--but it's a lucid, jargon-free beginning of a conversation that's long overdue. Many great American texts (literary as well as cinematic) have been excluded from academic canons and college reading lists on the grounds that they don't belong in the ironic, modernist tradition. By showing that melodrama is modernity's child, not its antithesis, Singer invites us to pay serious attention to texts whose only crime may be full disclosure of meaning and undeniable influencing of the witness.0 of 5 people found the following review helpful. a good bookBy Volha KlimavaIt came

very fast! A great book for people who are interested in film genre. 4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Fantastic book on silent cliffhanger serials! By Dr. Daka This book is a well written description of the origins and history of the silent cliffhanger serials. The author explains how the chapter plays are similar to and an expansion on the "melodrama" genre of stage plays and 1 reel films popular in the early 1900's. The second half of the book is the heart of it, focusing on the serials themselves. The book has a number of old trade magazine advertisements for serials that show the excitement and drama serials conveyed to those theater patrons so many years ago. This is a good companion to the books on silent serials by Kalton Lahue published back in the 1960's.

In this groundbreaking investigation into the nature and meanings of melodrama in American culture between 1880 and 1920, Ben Singer offers a challenging new reevaluation of early American cinema and the era that spawned it. Singer looks back to the sensational or "blood and thunder" melodramas (e.g., *The Perils of Pauline*, *The Hazards of Helen*, etc.) and uncovers a fundamentally modern cultural expression, one reflecting spectacular transformations in the sensory environment of the metropolis, in the experience of capitalism, in the popular imagination of gender, and in the exploitation of the thrill in popular amusement. Written with verve and panache, and illustrated with 100 striking photos and drawings, Singer's study provides an invaluable historical and conceptual map both of melodrama as a genre on stage and screen and of modernity as a pivotal idea in social theory.

A remarkably readable work on the contextual relationship of modernity to stage and screen melodramas in the early 20th century.... He accompanies his text with one of the best and most unusual selections of illustrated materials this reviewer has ever seen... He elucidates the cluster ideas of both melodrama and modernity with uncommon good sense and clarity. Highly recommended. (T. Lindvall Choice) A fluent, precise, and excellently historicized account of the interaction between early narrative film and the processes of industrial modernization. (Modernism/Modernity) Singer's excellent monography *Melodrama and Modernity* operates firmly within this historiographic field. (Melanie Nash *Cinema and Its Context*) A challenging, alternative history... Singer's book is nothing less than sensational. (Richard Abel, Ellis and Nelle Levitt professor of English, Drake University) From the Back Cover In this groundbreaking investigation into the nature and meanings of melodrama in American culture between 1880 and 1920, Ben Singer offers a challenging new reevaluation of early American cinema and the era that spawned it. Singer looks back to the sensational or "blood and thunder" melodramas (e.g., *The Perils of Pauline*, *The Hazards of Helen*, etc.) and uncovers a fundamentally modern cultural expression, one reflecting spectacular transformations in the sensory environment of the metropolis, in the experience of capitalism, in the popular imagination of gender, and in the exploitation of the thrill in popular amusement. Written with verve and panache, and illustrated with 100 striking photos and drawings, Singer's study provides an invaluable historical and conceptual map both of melodrama as a genre on stage and screen and of modernity as a pivotal idea in social theory.