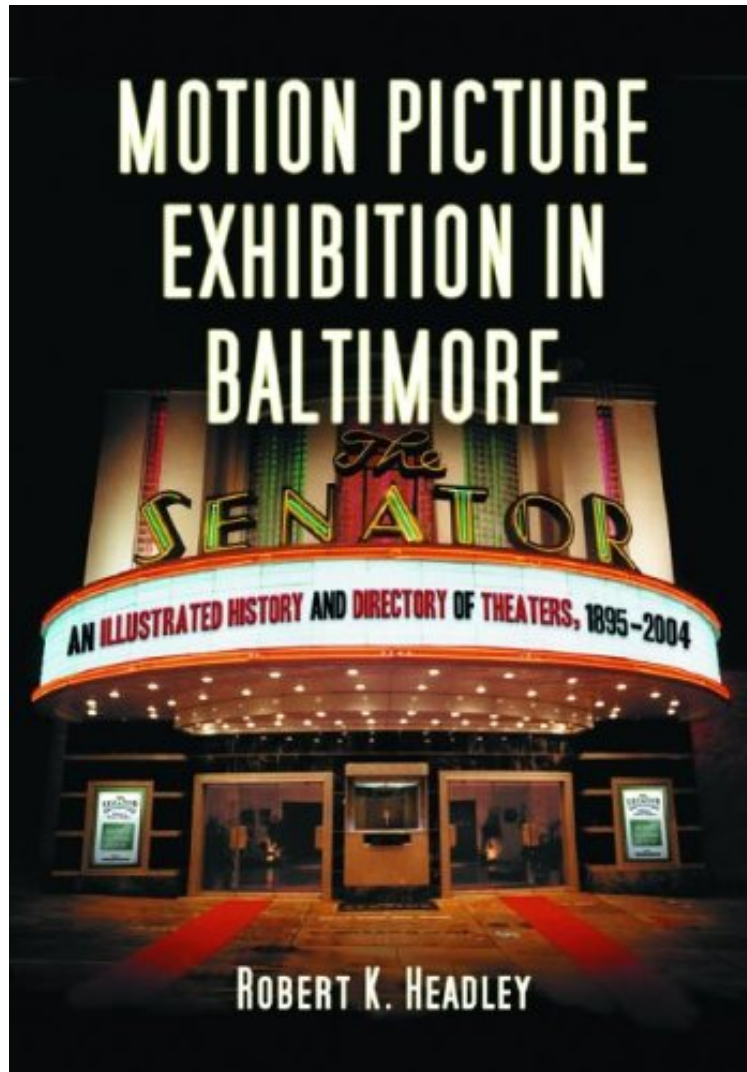


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Robert K. Headley

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for your coffee table or bathroom! Thanks Robert K. Headley !9 of 9 people found the following review helpful.

Wonderful Flashback To The Good Old Days By Cowboy Buddha I found this book virtually by accident and, when it arrived, instantly neglected everything else for several hours as I dipped and flipped through its delightful pages. This book is a thorough history of all the movie theatres that ever were in Baltimore and, since I grew up there and spent (or misspent) most of my youth in seeing nearly every film that came to town, this was a wonderful wallow in nostalgia as well as an education of the "Gee, I didn't know that" variety. As the book's unfortunately dry title implies, it traces the history of motion picture exhibition in Charm City from 1895 to 2004. The first part of the book is an era-by-era general history. But the second, and more fascinating, part gives a description and history of each individual theatre from the lowly Howard to the mighty Stanley. Arranged alphabetically, it was easy to look up my old favorites and, along the way, find others that I once knew but had totally forgotten about. It has been more than twenty years since I left Baltimore so I was surprised and a tad shocked to discover how many theatres - both neighborhood and downtown first-runs - no longer exist. There are a number of nice black and photos (of course, in a book like this, there are never enough photos) and information on the architecture and size and seating capacity, as well as the highlights of each theatre's existence. Some entries are, understandably, more detailed than others. If I were to nitpick, it would be to say that the writing style is sometimes a bit too academic. There are occasional anecdotes that give the book a more personal touch and more of these would have been welcome. I certainly re-discovered a wealth of fond memories that were brought back while paging through the book. I expect it will be a book that I will be frequently picking up for a casual browse that will turn into a more extended re-read. Of course, because I am from Baltimore and knew many of the theatres from personal experience, I find the book fascinating. How much interest there will be for non-Baltimoreans is hard to say. The history of movies theatres in Baltimore is probably similar to that in most large American cities. But, for myself, I am grateful to Robert Headley for all his research, hard work, and obvious love for the subject. It almost makes me want to book a flight back to Baltimore just so I can spend another enchanted evening in the magical darkness of the Senator.

The movie house is an integral part of the physical and cultural American landscape. From the modest nickelodeons of the early twentieth century to the audacious palaces of the 1920s to the mighty megaplexes of today, changes in theater design over the last 100 years coincide with America's understanding of entertainment and how it is delivered. A comprehensive look at the movie houses of one large American city can reveal much about motion picture exhibition in the country as a whole. This book covering the city of Baltimore offers such revelations, as well as fascinating details on a local level. Part I is a narrative history of the motion picture exhibition business and the moviegoing experience in Baltimore from 1895 to the present. Part II lists theaters alphabetically and describes them in sumptuous detail. Appendices offer a list of the theaters by street address; a roster of the architects; some comments on theater architecture in general; and a discussion of theater personnel. A bibliography completes the work.

About the Author Retired linguist Robert K. Headley of University Park, Maryland, lectures on theatre history, and consults on documentaries and theatre restoration. He is also the author of *Motion Picture Exhibition in Washington, D.C.* (1999).