

Singin' in the Rain



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出版者:British Film Institute

出版时间:1992-12-27

装帧:Paperback

isbn:9780851703510

Forty Years after it first appeared, "Singin' in the Rain" remains one of the best loved films ever made. Yet despite dazzling success with the public, it never received its fair share of praise from the critics. Gene Kelly's genius as a performer is there for all to see. What is less acknowledged is his innovative contribution as director. Peter Wollen has finally done justice to this landmark film. In a brilliant shot-by-shot analysis of the famous title number, illustrated by specially produced frame stills, he shows how skillfully Kelly binds the dance and musical elements into the narrative, and how he successfully combines two distinctive traditions within American Dance, tap and ballet.

Scriptwriters Betty Comden and Adolph Green, and indeed Kelly himself, were all under threat from the McCarthyism which menaced Hollywood at this time. The ethos in which the film was conceived could not long survive in the era of blacklisting. Wollen argues convincingly that "Singin' in the Rain" was the high point in the careers of those who worked on it.

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