

Book Review

Film News Index 1939-1981

Rohama Lee, Editor
Highsmith Press, Fort Atkinson,
Wis., 1992. Paper Cover, 740 pp.

Looking back over half a century at the history of 16mm films, also called nontheatrical, can be a treat for those who played an active role in this vital component of the information explosion. Students of cinema history can gain valuable insight into the role of nontheatrical film in the modernization of education.

This is possible now that Rohama Lee, long-time editor of *Film News*, has made her dream a reality through much perseverance. It is a fitting tribute to her to have this exceedingly valuable reference book make it into print.

What a gold mine! More publishers and editors should emulate Rohama Lee. Every serious periodical deserves as much attention to history as Lee has given to the 42 years of *Film News* life.

While 16mm film as a presentation system is yielding to newer technologies, recognition of this film medium's role in the information explosion is growing. *Film News Index 1939-1981* is a rich resource covering four decades at the core of the visual revolution. Nontheatrical

16mm films are the forerunner of today's love affair with television and its outgrowths of video, videotape, the computer, and the latest, multimedia II.*

The huge volume summarizes more than 300 issues of *Film News* with reviews and articles that mirror life in the heart of the century. Primary are thumbnail reviews of some 5000 motion pictures — educational subjects, classic Hollywood films, television documentaries, and industrial and government-sponsored films, all used in the classroom.

That alone makes the volume a must for every serious library the world over. America's place in the world of cinema is undisputed. This index chronicles the important films produced over half a century of the Hollywood and film heyday.

Just as valuable are the descriptive sketches of more than 1100 articles that have appeared over four decades of publication. Collectively they depict a developing visual medium, especially important for the instruction process. Giving further value are index sections by author, producer, and subject.

Behind this index are years of effort on the part of many people. Helping Lee were co-editors Elizabeth D. Lloyd and Eileen Allen, Syracuse University graduate research associates. The critical job of summarizing the 5000 film reviews and

over 1000 articles was accomplished by 16 library school students. What a valuable experience. I envy them.

The three-page preface is, in effect, an autobiography of the editor, who witnessed the vital period of media growth as an instruction staple. Lee's acknowledgment also thanks a dozen individuals, two companies, and a film council for monetary support plus the work of six librarians and three friends. This underlines the importance of this volume in many people's minds.

For me, seeing dozens and dozens of familiar names through the book was a delight. It is a veritable *Who's Who* of persons who have made significant contributions to the world of educational media. It is recommended reading.

—Tom Hope

* Multimedia II, incorporating two or more media with a computer, is the current system, but it cannot claim first use of the world. Multimedia I, often combining such media as the overhead transparency, audiocassette, and videocassette, plus printed material, has been an educational instruction tool for more than 35 years. The numerical I and II clarification has been offered by this reviewer in the editorial for the *Hope Reports 1993 AV Media Events Calendar*.

New Products

The MAX-9000 Series, an expanding family of digital distribution and conversion modules, has been introduced by The Grass Valley Group, P.O. Box 1114, Grass Valley, CA 95945, (916) 478-3141. The company is now shipping two types of serial digital distribution amplifiers, the M9131 Serial Digital Fanout DA and the M9132 Serial Digital Reclocking DA. Both modules have been designed to handle either composite or component serial digital signals. They feature modular construction and can be used in the same frame along with other MAX-9000 digital or MAX-900 Series analog modules. The M9131 Fanout DA is designed for applications where cable runs are 30 m or less and where no processing of the serial digital signal is required. It may be configured as a single 1-input by 8-output amplifier or as a dual 1-input by 4-output amplifier. When operated in the latter mode, one

input may be composite and the other component. The M9132 Reclocking DA is designed for applications where cable runs are longer than 30 m and where jitter may be present on the input signal. The M9132 provides automatic cable equalization for up to 300 m of high-quality cable (Belden 8281 or equivalent). The module's reclocking feature reduces jitter on the input signal, which is important for multiple passes.

Circle Reader Service No. 101

A software application for users of the Chyron CODI™ character generator was introduced by Synesis, Inc., 174 Jerome Pl., Bloomfield, NJ 07003. CGTools™ provides highly flexible, full-featured control of CODI. The software application is an intuitive DOS-based user interface that insulates the user from CODI's built-in intelligent interface com-

mand language while providing easy-to-use keyboard and mouse control. The software features a built-in command and text file editor, which can be used to create text files or import text from most PC-compatible word processors. Complete control over text positioning, color, font, and transparency is provided. Text files created within the software may be used to create pages of text or messages with CODI. The product provides a rich set of tools for creating and updating tab fields or templates and supports the downloading of Chyron-supplied Bitstream™ fonts, multicolored logos, and PCX graphics files to the character generator.

Circle Reader Service No. 102

Media Composer Model 210 was announced by Avid Technology, Inc., One Park West, Tewksbury, MA 01876, (508) 640-6789; Fax: (508) 640-1366. The prod-