



Pleasing Everyone: Mass Entertainment in Renaissance London and Golden-Age Hollywood

Jeffrey Knapp

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Shakespeare's plays were immensely popular in their own day -- so why do we refuse to think of them as mass entertainment? In *Pleasing Everyone*, author Jeffrey Knapp opens our eyes to the uncanny resemblance between Renaissance drama and the incontrovertibly mass medium of Golden-Age Hollywood cinema. Through fascinating explorations of such famous plays as *Hamlet*, *The Roaring Girl*, and *The Alchemist*, and such celebrated films as *Citizen Kane*, *The Jazz Singer*, and *City Lights*, Knapp challenges some of our most basic assumptions about the relationship between art and mass audiences. Above all, Knapp encourages us to resist the prejudice that mass entertainment necessarily simplifies and cheapens whatever it touches. As Knapp shows, it was instead the ceaseless pressure to please everyone that helped generate the astonishing richness and complexity of Renaissance drama as well as of Hollywood film.

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