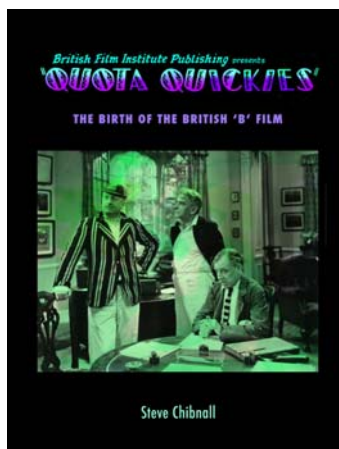


Books press release



Quota Quickies The Birth of the British 'B' Film Steve Chibnall

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David Lean, John Mills, Laurence Olivier, Vivien Leigh, and a host of other famous names from British film surprisingly began their screen careers on 'Quota Quickies'. These low-budget second features of the 1930s have become notorious as the films that American distributors used to bring British cinema into disrepute and ruin its prospects of international expansion. But is this sorry reputation really deserved?

Steve Chibnall's carefully researched study questions the received wisdom about these modest films, which so often offered a slice of British life to audiences waiting for the Hollywood main course. It looks at the conditions of their production, the politics of the attempts to censor and suppress them, and, by examining detailed evidence from one provincial city, supplies insights into their distribution and exhibition.

The quickies emerge from this examination as a significant source of cultural representations, a vital training ground for actors and filmmakers, and, occasionally, as innovative and even radical pictures in their own right, that stand up well to contemporary viewing and are deserving of critical re-evaluation.

Quota Quickies: The Birth of the British 'B' Film at the NFT: 2-27 Jan 2007

Coinciding with the book's publication, during January the NFT presents four double-bills of rarely seen British 'B' films from the BFI National Archive including the cult favourite **Tiger Bay** (1933), starring Anna May Wong (**Piccadilly**) and edited by a young David Lean, Maurice Elvey's **The Water Gipsies** (1932) and Brian Desmond Hurst's **The Tell-Tale Heart** (1934). On Tuesday 16 January, Steve Chibnall will introduce a screening of **Tiger Bay**.

About the author

Steve Chibnall is Professor of British Cinema at De Montfort University. He has written books on **Brighton Rock**, **Get Carter**, J. Lee Thompson, and Pete Walker, as well as co-edited collections of British Crime and Horror Cinema. A companion volume to *Quota Quickies* co-authored with Brian McFarlane and analysing the post-war history of the British 'B' movie, will be published by the BFI in 2008. **Steve Chibnall is available for interview.**

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