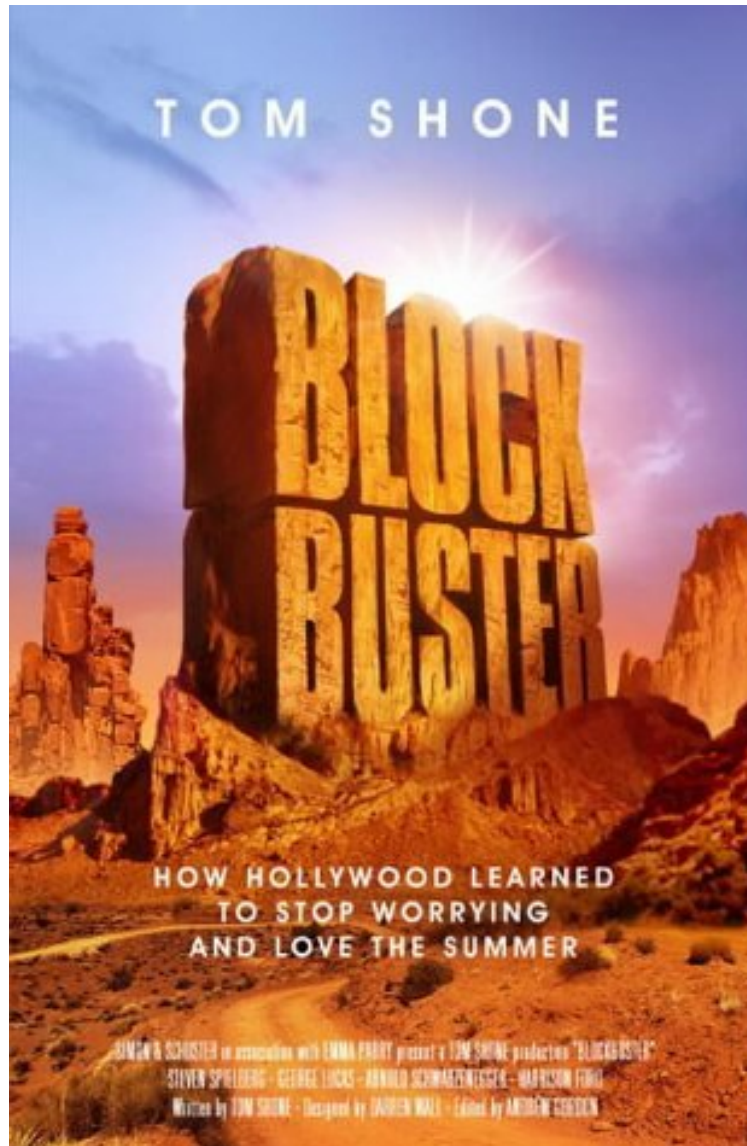


(Ebook free) Blockbuster: How Hollywood Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Summer

Blockbuster: How Hollywood Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Summer

Tom Shone

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Tom Shone : Blockbuster: How Hollywood Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Summer before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Blockbuster: How Hollywood Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Summer:

4 of 5 people found the following review helpful. Interesting and amusing analysis of the "Jaws Jedi" generation of

film-making
By Backdrifter
Some reviewers here accuse Shone of being simplistic in his rebuff of Peter Biskind's *Easy Riders* etc but in fact it's simplistic to view the book in this way. I think Shone just wishes to continue the story beyond the point at which Biskind chose to end his; the Biskind-bashing very evident in the early chapters comes off the back of this but one of Shone's main points is that *Jaws* and *Star Wars* should/can be seen as artistically rich and groundbreaking in their own right, just in a different vein to the films of Biskind's heroes. The view glibly asserted by an earlier reviewer here, that Spielberg and his ilk are "dull" and therefore unsatisfying as subject matter, is exactly the somewhat sniffy received opinion that Shone attacks, and it's a pleasure to read, as is the long-overdue puncturing of some sacred icons. He isn't simply defending anything that gets called a blockbuster - he calls into question our use of that term when it's often used to describe over-hyped films that open big and then vanish. What is definitely simplistic is the notion that this is a phenomenon that can be blamed purely on *Jaws* and *Star Wars*. I also like a good, genuinely informative list and his highest-earning films list adjusted for inflation I found very interesting (most of the very recent biggies vanish). And any book that has a graph of audience reactions during *Jaws* gets my vote.
2 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Ignore the mistakes, don't think too hard... and enjoy!
By J KI've always liked Tom Shone's writing: it's pithy, insightful and often funny. He's also good with a clever argument, as long as you don't think it through too much. So it is here, indeed the general thrust of his thesis on how the blockbuster movie came to dominate Hollywood is brilliant at a glance; perforated when you give it any detailed consideration. There are also some howlers of mistakes - for example, he lists *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom* as being released in 1989 (I assume he means *Last Crusade*; *TOD* came out in 1984). And sometimes the writing strays the wrong side of the line of hyperbole: trying to compare the making of *Titanic* with what soldiers experienced in the trenches of WW1 is a bit much. But if you can put all of this aside, don't concentrate too much on the details, this is a fun history of moviemaking since the 70s.
9 of 11 people found the following review helpful. Fascinating, even if you're not a film buff
By A. Chatham
I watch a fair amount of movies, but I would hardly call myself a "film buff". I was a little skeptical of the book, but I bought it anyway on Nick Hornby's recommendation in *Polysyllabic Spree*. It turns out that this is a pretty fascinating subject. I wouldn't have thought I'd be very interested in the making of *Batman* or *Titanic*, but I couldn't put the book down. Shone has a very engaging writing style, and the book is as much a history of people as much as of movies. He starts with the first big blockbusters of 25 years ago -- *Jaws*, *Star Wars*, *ET*, *Alien* -- and recreates the excitement we felt when we first saw them. The latter half of the book examines Hollywood's hubristic blockbusters -- *Gozilla*, *Last Action Hero* -- and how we all went to see them anyway. I always thought of the big summer action films as something Hollywood slapped together to make a buck, but sometimes they represent somebody's dreams (*Back to the Future*). Then again, sometimes they really are something slapped together to make a buck, maybe crushing some dreams in the process (*Batman*, *Godzilla*). If you're a movie snob, you may not like this book. Shone is going to take Spielberg over Scorsese, and you know if you're not going to like that. But if you can take that, I think you'll really like this book, and I say that as someone who hasn't even seen *Jaws*.

The unmistakable opening bars of John Williams' score for *JAWS* heralded not just the arrival of a man-eating shark, but the appearance of a new type of movie. Fast, visceral, and devouring all in its path, the summer blockbuster had arrived. But having brought audiences back to theatres in record numbers, the beast then took on a life of its own, and by the 1990s had run completely out of control. Are the studios even in the movie business any more? Or are they just in the blockbuster business? Written with a passion of a true movie fan, and the wit of one of our best critics, Tom Shone's book is the first to try to make sense of this global phenomenon. He has interviewed all the key participants -- from directors like Spielberg and Lucas to the executives who greenlight these behemoths, down to the effects boffins who detonated the *Death Star* and blew up the *White House* -- and produced what is easily the most incisive and entertaining book about film since Peter Biskind's *EASY RIDERS*, *RAGING BULLS*.

From Publishers Weekly
Shone's first book is an entertaining chronological survey of top-grossing films during the past 30 summers, beginning with Universal's *Jaws* (1975). The Steven Spielberg film became a phenomenon, breaking the \$100-million mark. When movie attendance was at an all-time low in the early 1970s, Shone explains, studios had been keeping costs down, but they changed that tactic and began spending more and developing new marketing and merchandising methods. It worked. By that decade's end, box office returns had tripled, due to 22 films, each earning more than \$50 million. Ticket sales soared as Paramount went from *The Godfather* to *Grease*, Fox launched *Star Wars* and Columbia scored with *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*. To trace the evolution of summer blockbuster films through three decades, Shone, former London Sunday Times film critic, interviewed more than 40 talents, including Spielberg, John Lasseter, George Lucas, Martin Scorsese, Ridley Scott, Sigourney Weaver and Richard Zanuck. He devotes full chapters to *Titanic* ("the world's first billion-dollar blockbuster") and other "event movies." Although reams have been published about such films as *Alien* and *Blade Runner*, Shone writes with verve, producing a probing, intelligent analysis. Photos. Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.
From Booklist
In the mid-1970s, while Hollywood was parading stars in one disaster film after another, Steven Spielberg broke things wide open with the release of *Jaws*. By today's standards, the movie used cheesy special

effects, mainly a rubber shark, and the beast doesn't even appear until 80 minutes into the film. But it became the first of the big summer blockbusters, a true phenomenon that people went to see over and over. Shone, an international film critic, takes us on a tour of 30 years of blockbuster movies, showing how the industry went from pure luck to deliberately manufacturing blockbuster hits, so-called high-concept movies backed by big-name directors, megastars, and special effects, costing upward of \$100 million. He goes behind the scenes on such films as Star Wars, Indiana Jones, Alien, Titanic, and Jurassic Park, through the pitches, the rewrites, and the extensive marketing machine. Although the reader may bemoan how one of America's greatest art forms has been reduced to entertainment aimed at 13-year-olds, Shone's biting analyses are on target. David Siegfried Copyright American Library Association. All rights reserved "Kirkus s" (starred review)The lowdown on a word beloved by film executives, loathed by film critics, and not quite understood by anybody...."Blockbuster" mixes trenchant film analysis and history with a practical understanding of the industry itself...an impressively learned narrative. One of those rare film books that walks the fine line between populist tub-thumping and sky-is-falling, Sontag-esque screed.