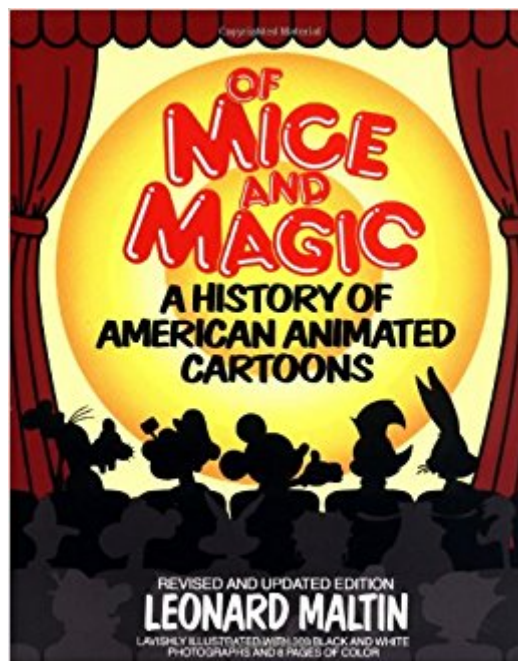




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Of Mice And Magic: A History Of American Animated Cartoons, Revised And Updated Edition



Synopsis

In this revised and updated edition of *Of Mice and Magic*, Leonard Maltin not only recreates this whole glorious era from the silent days through the Hollywood golden age to Spielberg's *An American Tail*, he traces the evolution of the art of animation and vividly portrays the key creative talents and their studios. This definitive history of American animated cartoons also brings Maltin's many fans up to date on the work being done today at the Walt Disney and Warner Bros. studios, and other developments in the world of animation. Drawing on colorful interviews with many of the American cartoon industry's principals, Maltin has come up with a gold mine of anecdotes and film history. Behind the scenes were genius animators and entrepreneurs such as Walt Disney, Chuck Jones, Tex Avery, Mel Blanc, and a legion of others. In all, Maltin has put together a glorious celebration of a universally loved segment of Americana. Includes the most extensive filmography on cartoons ever compiled.

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Customer Reviews

"Informative and delightful"; wonderful personal observations; Maltin has presented a history both readable and captivating." *The Hollywood Reporter* "Lovingly detailed; wonderfully written; an excellent book." *New York Times Book Review* "The most complete history of animation available." *Los Angeles Times* "Maltin is an impressive archivist and a lively chronicler." *Publisher's Weekly*

Leonard Maltin is an American film critic and historian. His many books include *Of Mice and*

Magic: A History of American Animated Cartoons,Â Leonard Maltin's 151 Best Movies You've Never See, and Leonard Maltin's Movie Guide. He lives in Los Angeles, California.

This was a very well detailed guide to the history of animation. I just wish it were a little more up to date, however, as it only stretches out to the late 1980s; just before Disney and Warner Bros. both made huge comebacks in quality entertainment (Disney, of course, with Beauty and the Beast, Aladdin, The Lion King and Toy Story; and Warner Bros. with Tiny Toon Adventures, Animaniacs and Batman the Animated Series). That aside, its still a well-written book.

This truly is a remarkable, detailed history of American cartoons. Maltin goes back to the beginning and will tell you tons of details about the industry, and probably about cartoons you have never heard of. I really appreciated the focus on studios. Now I understand better why I didn't like Terrytoons as a kid! There is one shot where Maltin takes a shot at Robert McKimson. Having watched some of the Loony Tunes Golden Collection, I now understand the politics behind the scenes at Warner Brothers, so it's interesting that Maltin has his side in that issue. If you like American Cartoons from the early-mid 20th Century, pick this up.

I'm an animation student and this book has so much insight about the history of animation (American). It's a good read even if you don't study animation has a lot of interesting stories. It also has the largest list I have ever seen of all the cartoons released by the specific studios.

One might not think animated cartoons would merit a scholarly study, but this is an excellent book for casual cartoon fans and dedicated film buffs alike. Leonard Maltin and Jerry Beck trace motion-picture animation from its comic-strip-character beginnings to the latest technological developments. Some cartoon studios were celebrated (like Disney and Warner Brothers), others unsung (like Van Beuren and Columbia), but all make fascinating reading, enhanced by firsthand accounts by animators, directors, and producers. Excellent as a continuous read or for reference.

nice

It delivered so fast than I was expected! The book seems like it is a new book in a condition, I am so excited to have this book for history of animation class. Thank you for a good deal.

When I think of the history of animation, I tend to divide things into three periods: The Golden Age, noted for early Warner Brothers cartoons and the classic Disney movies such as Snow White and Fantasia; The Age of Mediocrity, where creativity seemed to reach its nadir, as seen most notably in the bland Hanna Barbera cartoons; and the Modern Era, with the resurgence in cartoon creativity, which, starting with The Little Mermaid in the movies and the Simpsons on TV, animation reached a new level of popularity and respectability. Leonard Maltin's book, *Of Mice and Magic*, shows that my own view of cartoon history is roughly correct but also overly simple: there was plenty of mediocrity in the Golden Age and plenty of decent stuff in the Age of Mediocrity. Maltin starts off with a chapter about the silent era, when animation was just beginning. Over time, experience would refine the process, but the big leap would occur with sound, in particular with Walt Disney's *Steamboat Willie* featuring Mickey Mouse. After the silent era chapter, there are chapters that serve as "biographies" of the major animation studios, starting with the biggest of them all, Disney. The Disney characters are among the most popular in cartoon history (or film history in general). Mickey Mouse may have been the biggest name, but he didn't have much of a personality, so he started being pushed aside in favor of more developed characters, especially Donald Duck, the first major Disney character with any sort of edge. In fact, this is a constant theme in the book: that the weakest cartoons from any studio were the ones that featured characters with no distinct personalities. Success would often come with the most offbeat and edgy characters, such as Donald Duck, Bugs Bunny, Popeye and Daffy Duck. But some of the studios had a mercenary nature that would put quantity ahead of quality; probably the worst in the bunch was Terrytoons where good cartoons were the exception, not the rule. Although even Terrytoons would have some memorable characters - in particular, Mighty Mouse and Heckle & Jeckle - even many of the cartoons featuring them were not very good (which is why in the world of cartoons, the Terrytoons characters will never outshine even some of the Disney or Warner Brothers second-stringers). Space limitations prevent me from going as in depth on this subject as I would like, but suffice it to say that after reading this book, I still do feel justified in defining an Age of Mediocrity. It was not that every cartoon in that period was bad, but the good ones were few and far between and classics were very rare indeed. The Age of Mediocrity was filled with bland cartoons that were more cute than funny, often repeated the same gags over and over again, and had few remarkable characters. What about what I call the Modern Age? It would have started right after this edition of the book was published (1987), so it is understandably, but sadly omitted. Also missing is any real look at TV cartoons, so Bullwinkle, Underdog, Yogi Bear and the Super Friends, among others, are only mentioned in passing. Maltin admits up front that this book won't cover these TV cartoons, nor non-American products, hence the omission of

international fare such as the Italian Fantasia-like movie, *Allegro non troppo*. The strengths of this book, however, far outweigh the shortcomings. While my opinions sometimes differ from Maltin's on the quality of various cartoons, these are a matter of individual taste (overall, he tends to go easier on the films than I do; for example, he has a more favorable opinion on the UPA cartoons than I do); besides, this book is more of a history of cartoons than a critique of them. In addition to good writing, we get lots of pictures (only a few in color) and an extensive filmography for all the chronicled cartoon studios. You probably need to be a certain age (probably at least 30) to fully appreciate this book, as younger readers may not have really grown up with these cartoons and may not have even seen them as adults (and since many of these cartoons were geared only to kids, they would not even have much appeal to those over 10). But if you remember these cartoons and look back at them with fond nostalgia, this is a great book.

All I can say is get this book...it is highly helpful in understanding different aspects of the animation industry and the methods employed to be successful. I would like to see an updated version of it covering some of the new improvements and additions since this was written. Get this book and you will not be disappointed.

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