

The Ultimate Book of Gangster Movies

Review by Tom Sims, Executive Director, Cape May Film Society

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Who doesn't love a good gangster movie? Well, what's your favorite? A local publisher asked that very question of Philadelphia Inquirer reporter George Anastasia and radio personality Glen Macnow. The result? The soon-to-be-released resource guide entitled The Ultimate Book of Gangster Movies. Sure, you'll see The Godfather series in here (although the third installment is way, way further down the list than the first and second installment), but you'll also see classics like Angels with Dirty Faces.

This book is a movie fan delight, especially (but not exclusively) for fans of the gangster genre. There are a variety of special articles in the book as well, such as one on the first gangster movie ever made, a profile of the Sopranos, Tim Roth, and Viggo Mortensen. You may ask, "Viggo Mortensen? What was he in?" He only starred in one of my favorite gangster movies, A History of Violence. You could say my favorites are not the typical favorites when it comes to any genre, let alone gangster movies.

As you thumb through this book, which will come out in October, you'll chuckle, smirk, even raise an eyebrow. Sure there might be a few moments where you say, "Now how did that get in here." For the most part, however, the films selected for this anthology are spot on when it comes to capturing the essential (dare I say essence) of the mob flick.

So according to these authors what are the top ten gangster movies of all time. Well, it's no surprise that numbers one and two go to Godfather I and II. Followed by Good Fellas, On the Waterfront, Pulp Fiction, Little Cesar, The Departed, Donnie Brasco, The Usual Suspects, and Casino (Scarface, if you're interested, comes in just after that at number eleven). Is your favorite in the top ten? Send an email to capemayfilm@hotmail.com to let us know why your favorite should be there! We'll let you know if your selection even made the cut for the top 100.

Author George Anastasia will be on hand at the Cape May Film Festival this year (October 21-23, 2011 at the Chalfonte Hotel) to present some of the best scenes from some of these great films, and we're encouraging Glen Macnow to join him. And don't be surprised if you see one of our favorite guests from years past (you know the ones who fit the bill—Vincent Pastore, Joey Pantoliano) on this panel as well. The publisher of this book is working with our local Atlantic book store to bring in advanced copies so we can have a signing party during the Festival. Visit www.capemayfilm.org for details.