

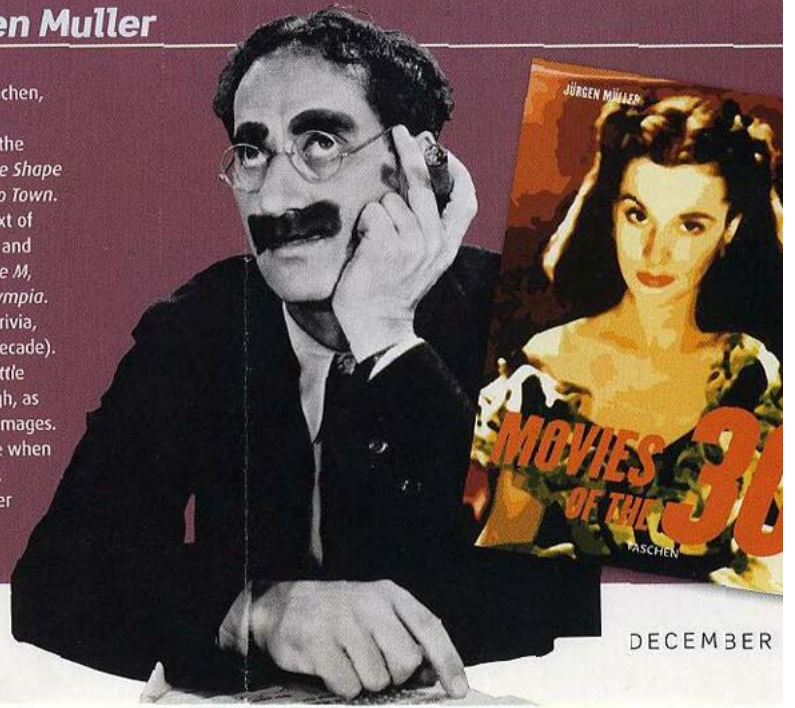
## Movies of the '30s: Edited by Jurgen Muller

One of the series of massive tomes on art and culture from German specialist Taschen, *Movies of the 30s* is a 576-page paperback packed with mainly black-and-white imagery from one of the most fascinating periods in movie history. This is when the rules were being made and broken, in films as diverse as *Dracula*, *King Kong*, *The Shape of Things To Come*, *Gone With the Wind*, *The Great Dictator* and *Mr Deeds Goes to Town*. The book presents a good mixture of Hollywood output, putting it into the context of the Depression and arguing that the cinema gave solace to the huddled masses, and more experimental European works such as Fritz Lang's expressionist masterpiece *M*, Jean Renoir's anti-war epic *La Grande Illusion* and Leni Riefenstahl's stunning *Olympia*.

Major films get a synopsis and cast and crew listings, and there are boxouts of trivia, biographies and technical data (also included is a list of Academy Awards for the decade). Most of this is very readable, much more so than the body of the text, which is a little analytical and heavy going, though full of solid information. The main point, though, as with most Taschen books, is the pictures, a superb selection of beautifully printed images. You get so used to the stark beauty of the black-and-white that it's quite a surprise when the book bursts into colour for *Fantasia*, *The Wizard of Oz* and *Gone With the Wind*.

At £19.99 this isn't an expensive book, and joins the Taschen volumes on other decades as worthy additions to your bookshelf or coffee-table.

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