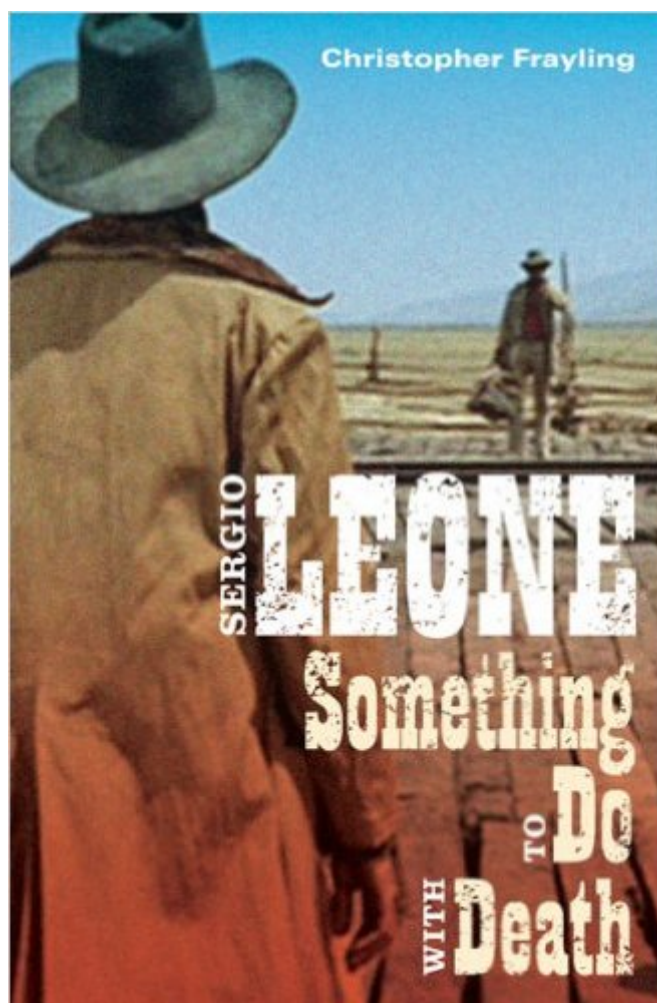


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Sergio Leone: Something To Do With Death



Synopsis

Sergio Leone is a singular figure among Italian filmmakers of the postwar years; his films grow in reputation year after year. Groundbreaking westerns such as his Dollars trilogy and the authoritative *Once upon a Time in the West* have made Leone one of the most popular and influential directors in world cinema. Christopher Frayling's remarkable biography of Leone "the first ever" affectionately explores his body of work and casts light on little-known details of his life. A wealth of research, story, and insight, *Sergio Leone: Something to Do with Death* stands as the definitive study of this master filmmaker, crafted by one of our most acclaimed critics and historians.

Book Information

Paperback: 592 pages

Publisher: Univ Of Minnesota Press; Reprint edition (January 26, 2012)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 081664683X

ISBN-13: 978-0816646838

Product Dimensions: 6 x 1.7 x 9.1 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.8 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.7 out of 5 stars See all reviews (14 customer reviews)

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Photography > Performing Arts > Individual Directors #111 in Books > Biographies & Memoirs > Arts & Literature > Movie Directors #226 in Books > Arts & Photography > Other Media > Film & Video

Customer Reviews

There aren't too many directors who could inspire me to read a 576-page tome about their career. In fact, apart from a handful of auteurs to whom I'm still trying to speak and the dozen or so who have opened their hearts to *Cashiers du Cinéma*, there aren't too many directors I'd even like to read about. Yet, of all directors-past and present-it's only Sergio Leone's name that I've been scanning for when I troll the "directors biographies" section at Borders Bookstore. Sure, sure, maybe it'd be fun to read a nicely done work on Fritz Lang or Kenji Misumi but it's Leone who presents me with the biggest challenges. This Italian mastermind helmed a handful of films, nearly all of which would rank among my favorites. More than creating some damn fine work, Leone's style influenced untold filmmakers. His films were operas powered by the music of Ennio Morricone. His dialogue's sparseness made it all the more powerful. Leone didn't shy away from embracing the language of

cinema and creating his own dialect. Remarkably, though Leone's filmography can be tallied on both hands, the breadth of rumours and conflicting stories are enough to easily fill Frayling's tome. Luckily, Frayling isn't above questioning the veracity of his subject. While never denying Leone respect, Frayling doesn't shirk his journalistic duty to present as many facets of the fiery, passive-aggressive auteur as possible. *Something to Do with Death* takes its sweet time to get moving (I had to skip the second chapter and skim a few others before getting to the real "meat" of the book) but, once it gets going, there's little that can deter the reader from delving into the life of a truly enigmatic talent. (ISBN: 0571164382)

I worship Sergio Leone. I've been a huge fan of his films since my childhood in the late Seventies. I've always wanted/needed a weighty, fact-filled bio-reference to illuminate his here-to-fore mysterious life/career. This is that book. More detailed than the expensive, picture-packed Italian book on Leone, *S.T.D.W.D.* will stand for a long time as the essential Leone tome. Literate, balanced, and exhaustive, this book is a triumph in every respect.

I cannot understand the first review of this book. I understood this book to be a biography of Sergio Leone, not a story about Spaghetti Westerns so I was pleasantly surprised when the author began by describing the whole cultural background of Mr Leone. The book is certainly not without emotion, but the author has attempted to provide a detailed and unbiased insight into the life of Mr Leone. Had the book been more "humorous" as per the initial reviewer's thoughts, this would have diverted from the objective of a biography, as I am sure Sergio's life was not just fun all the time, no offense to the first reviewer ("You smell like a pig already, let's try not to make things any worse" Tuco's guard "The Good, The Bad, & The Ugly"). Mr Frayling has obviously researched his subject in a fantastically detailed way, constructing a clear picture of his life, not just by his films, but by the people around him. This is evident in that Sergio himself contacted Prof Frayling after reading his earlier book on Spaghetti Westerns as it contained information about Sergio's father that even he hadn't previously known. Check out Cenk Kiral's site for Sergio Leone info (he was thanked by the author in the book).

This is my favorite book in the entire world. Sergio Leone is my favorite filmmaker ever, and in this amazing and incredibly well-researched book by Christopher Frayling, there is now a biography worthy of the Master's brilliant life. I have read, listened to, and watched just about every word Frayling has said about Leone that is available to the public (eg. books, blu-ray disc commentaries,

podcasts, YouTube videos, speeches, magazine pieces), and I just love this guy. I thank God every day that we have a person like Frayling to make the world of Leone accessible to the English-speaking public. Carla Leone, Sergio's widow, has recalled fondly how Frayling was the first one to knock on their door, ie. the first film scholar to take Leone's work seriously. Today, Leone is widely considered a great filmmaker, but when his movies were first released, they were mostly ignored by the scholars and critics (though not by audiences). But Frayling has been an unabashed Leone fan from Day 1. One of the points Frayling has always made is that while many critics criticized Leone's films (like all spaghetti westerns) as trying to copy American Westerns, these films instead have to be looked at from a Mediterranean perspective: these films are a part of ITALIAN culture, they are not ersatz versions of American films. Frayling does a great job of tracing Leone's artistic influences and putting his work in the context of where the Italian film industry was at the time. If I was marooned on an island for the rest of my life and all I could take along with me was one book, this would be it :-)

Not only a fascinating insight into the spaghetti western and its master practitioner, but also an examination of where this form stands in the context of Italian cinema as a whole. Having finished reading, I re-viewed all of Leone's films. They are totally different viewing experiences in light of the knowledge gleaned from this book. A truly al dente reading experience.

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