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John Simon, New York Magazine



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The Best of Broadway...Close to Home

## Out in print

### 'Idol Worship' examines the male form in American film

by J.S. Hall

Michael Ferguson's "Idol Worship" is essentially a paean to the many gorgeous men who have appeared on the silver screen in various states of undress. While their acting abilities (or lack thereof) are mentioned and career highlights (and nadirs) are considered, Ferguson primarily concentrates on why these men inspired thoughts both dreamy and carnal.

Starting with the 1910s and continuing through to the dawn of the new millennium, Ferguson studiously chronicles a century's worth of men who have quickened our hearts, put a sparkle in our eyes and lulled us willingly into fantasy. He also starts by recounting how the art of appreciating male beauty has evolved since the advent of photography, cinematography and the Internet. His lists are admittedly personal favorites — and by no means a complete or definitive guide to male beauty on celluloid. Just the same, they are candid, honest and forthright.

Many of the expected heartthrobs make the grade here — Rudolph Valentino, Errol Flynn, Montgomery Clift, James Dean, Tab Hunter, Rock Hudson, Paul Newman, Richard Gere, Christopher Atkins, Tom Cruise, Rob Lowe, Matt Dillon, Brad Pitt, Keanu Reeves, Jude Law and Colin Farrell. However, Ferguson devotes pages to forgotten and/or obscure hunks as well — such as Neil Hamilton (aka Commissioner Gordon in "Batman"), Jeffrey Hunter, Fabian, Jan-Michael Vincent, Helmut Berger, Matt Lattanzi, Maxwell Caulfield, Rodney Harvey and Sasha Mitchell.

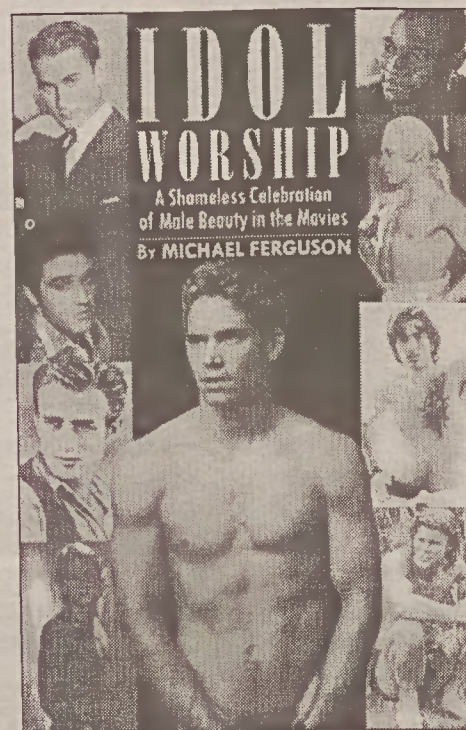
Ferguson also keeps an eye on up-and-coming dreamboats like Jared Leto, Ryan Phillippe, Ian Somerhalder and Paul Walker. Some might argue that Ferguson's choices are skewed towards caucasians, but he also acknowledges the talents of Sabu, Sidney Poitier, Bruce Lee, Denzel Washington and Taye Diggs.

Amidst his praises, Ferguson peppers the pages of "Idol Worship" with tangents

of varying quality — much of it bordering on rambling, but never boring.

"Idol Worship" contains over 120 photos of half-naked celebrities, but unfortunately the paper used in this book renders most of these photos dull and somewhat muddy, especially in the shadow tones. For \$24.95, one would expect a better grade of paper and photo reproduction, not to mention some full-color plates for readers' consumption and pleasure, but the only color photos to be found are on the cover. Also, the paragraph spacing and close-to-the-edge margins makes reading more difficult than it should be, which is unfortunate.

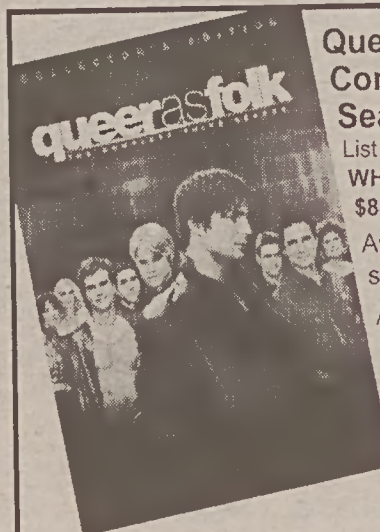
Despite these production flaws (and what some readers will inevitably see as



omissions and/or oversights), "Idol Worship" is an entertaining and thought-provoking collection of cinematic musings. It is also welcome proof that STARbooks Press has survived the death of its founder, John Patrick.

**info:**

"Idol Worship: A Shameless Celebration of Male Beauty in the Movies"  
Michael Ferguson  
STARbooks Press  
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