



47-3051 JQ2941 2008-39544 CIP
Gilman, Lisa. **The dance of politics: gender, performance, and democratization in Malawi.** Temple University, 2009. 252p bibl index afp ISBN 9781592139859, \$64.50

Gilman (English and folklore, Univ. of Oregon) offers a rich, detailed examination of women's dancing as a political tool in the burgeoning democratic state of Malawi. A coherent overview of historical trends in Malawi—including the regimes of former president Hastings Kamuzu Banda and his successor, Elson Bakili Muluzi—informs feminist analysis of poverty and social status for women in Malawi and provides a compelling depiction of why women dance in these controversial contexts. The author explicates linkages between women's dancing and the national political culture with care, offering as evidence descriptive analysis of particular rallies, based on fieldwork. Including an overview of dance forms, e.g., the *malipenga*, *chilimika*, *vimbuzalmasiawe*, *honara*, and *chiwoda*, the author explicates the “dance of politics”—dance enacted at political rallies—and its relationships to structures of power in performance. She explores gender dimensions in the political arena and considers the place of preexisting dance forms in the emergent political landscape. The complex intertextual system of performance Gilman portrays simultaneously relies on women's participation and denigrates their political presence. Written with clarity, this volume stretches folklore, performance, and feminist studies methodologies to consider “the central role that the political sphere has come to play in providing contexts for performance.” **Summing Up:** Recommended. ★★ Lower-division undergraduates and above.—*T. F. DeFrantz, Massachusetts Institute of Technology*

47-3052 ML2075 CIP
Terror tracks: music, sound and horror cinema, ed. by Philip Hayward. Equinox, 2009. 286p bibl index ISBN 9781845532024 pbk, \$29.95

Over the last three decades, literature about music used in horror films has either barely scratched the surface or failed to be balanced enough in respect to music, horror film, and horror literature scholarship. Addressing the needs of a musical and nonmusical readership, Hayward (Macquarie Univ., Sydney, Australia) attempts to rectify this situation. He collaborated with film scholars, musicologists, and music theorists, which gives this book a strong sense of continuity. In the introduction, he provides necessary historical background for those unfamiliar with horror cinema. The diversity of films covered (*Psycho*, *The Wicker Man*, *The Shining*, *Hellraiser*, among many others) will satisfy those interested in literature as well as film. All essays focus on the film as a final product with its film music—i.e., the music is not separate from but rather interacts with the soundtrack. James Wierzbicki's and Scott Murphy's opening essays on *Psycho* provide a much-needed musical orientation and analysis of the film; Mark Evans's essay on *The Exorcist* will likely inspire other studies about rhythm. **Summing Up:** Highly recommended. ★★★ Lower-division undergraduates through faculty and professionals.—*M. Goldsmith, Nicholls State University*

Film

47-3053 PN1993 2009-15438 CIP
Casty, Alan. **Communism in Hollywood: the moral paradoxes of testimony, silence, and betrayal.** Scarecrow, 2009. 369p bibl index afp ISBN 9780810869486, \$50.00

The Hollywood blacklist continues to be a fascinating topic for scholars, and this book is likely to generate heated debate among those familiar with the period. Casty takes a decidedly different approach to the period by examining the control the international communist movement exercised on Hollywood communists and the silence that ensued from Hollywood leftists as Stalinist atrocities (including anti-Semitism) become known in the 1950s. The author divides the book's 20 chapters into three parts. The first covers the period before the House Un-American Activities Committee hearings, when communist ideology first took hold in Hollywood; the second, the hearings and the enforcement of party discipline; the last, the blacklist and filmmaking during the height of the blacklist. The usual suspects and subjects are here: the Hollywood Ten, unfriendly and friendly witnesses, ideological battles, the Maltz controversy. Though flawed, this book makes a compelling argument that, contrary to many blacklist sympathizers' assertions, there were indeed “message films” during the 1950s. The book reminds one that the truth of the period lies somewhere between Casty's view and the more Left-leaning view espoused by Patrick McGilligan and Paul Buhle in their outstanding *Tender Comrades* (CH, Jan'98, 35-5562). Excellent research and endnotes. **Summing Up:** Recommended. ★★ Comprehensive film collections serving graduate students and researchers.—*M. D. Whitlatch, Buena Vista University*

47-3054 PN1998 2009-33181 CIP
Doom, Ryan P. **The brothers Coen: unique characters of violence.** Praeger, 2009. 208p bibl filmography index afp ISBN 9780313355981, \$44.95

Doom (freelance writer) offers a by-the-numbers, film-by-film trudge through the works of the Coens, who have delighted in creating spectacles of murder and mayhem since their first feature, *Blood Simple*, in 1984. Doom's tone is overly reverential, and though the book is factually accurate the author stuffs it with plot synopses; what passes for analysis is slight indeed. The Coens have appropriated the thematic concerns and visual styles of a number of other filmmakers in their career, and thus their films owe a substantial debt to their cinematic predecessors. Doom does not make this as clear as he might have. In short, this is a plodding, linear reading of the Coens' work in chronological order, with each film receiving nearly unqualified praise. Those interested in an insightful look into the Coens' work should turn to *The Philosophy of the Coen Brothers*, ed. by Mark Conard (CH, Apr'09, 46-4326), Erica Rowell's *The Brothers Grim: The Films of Ethan and Joel Coen* (CH, Dec'07, 45-1935), or Ronald Bergan's authorized biography, *The Coen Brothers* (2000). **Summing Up:** Not recommended.—*W. W. Dixon, University of Nebraska—Lincoln*

47-3055 PN1995 MARC
Rombes, Nicholas. **Cinema in the digital age.** Wallflower, 2009. 171p bibl ISBN 9781905674855 pbk, \$26.00

In this engaging, informative study, Rombes (English, Univ. of Detroit Mercy) provides a comprehensive overview of digital cinema and its impact on traditional filmmaking. Cleverly organized in