



Felix: The Twisted Tale of the World's Most Famous Cat

John Canemaker

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Handsomely illustrated with over 150 photos and with full-color inserts, *Felix* is a stylish account of the intrigue behind the creation and marketing of the most popular, well-executed, and lucrative cartoon of the silent era. Based on a combination of "Sammy Johnsin" (a Sambo caricature) and Charlie Chaplin, Felix the Cat was the first cartoon character to exhibit an individual "personality" in moving pictures, preceding Mickey Mouse by a decade. From 1919 to 1933 Felix was internationally celebrated, as popular as Chaplin and Buster Keaton. Felix's producer, Pat Sullivan, a journeyman artist, chronic alcoholic, and convicted rapist, claimed credit for creating and developing Felix. But, as John Canemaker discovered, in truth it was Otto Messmer, Sullivan's brilliant, self-effacing production manager, who conceived, animated, and directed the more than two hundred Felix films during the period of his greatest popularity. And by focusing on Messmer's amazing achievement, Canemaker illuminates the entire world of film animation in the years before Walt Disney.

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