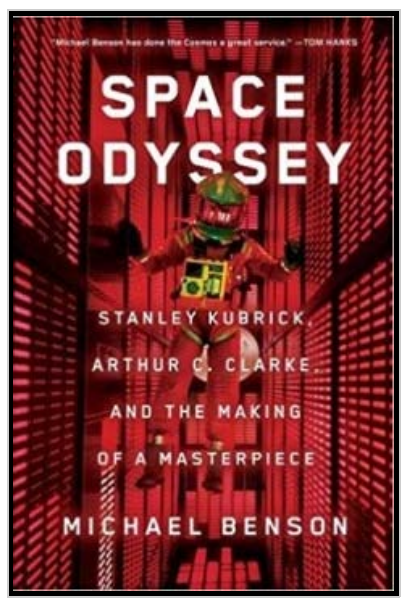


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Space Odyssey

Stanley Kubrick, Arthur C. Clarke, and the Making of a Masterpiece

by Michael Benson

Price: \$30.00(Hardcover)

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★★★★★

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From the Publisher: Celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of the film's release, this is the definitive story of the making of 2001: A Space Odyssey, acclaimed today as one of the greatest films ever made, including the inside account of how director Stanley Kubrick and writer Arthur C. Clarke created this cinematic masterpiece. Regarded as a masterpiece today, 2001: A Space Odyssey received mixed reviews on its 1968 release. Despite the success of Dr. Strangelove, director Stanley Kubrick wasn't yet recognized as a great filmmaker, and 2001 was radically innovative, with little dialogue and no strong central character. Although some leading critics slammed the film as incomprehensible and self-indulgent, the public lined up to see it. 2001's resounding commercial success launched the genre of big-budget science fiction spectacles. Such directors as George Lucas, Steven Spielberg, Ridley Scott, and James Cameron have acknowledged its profound influence. Author Michael Benson explains how 2001 was made, telling the story primarily through the two people most responsible for the film, Kubrick and science fiction legend Arthur C. Clarke. Benson interviewed Clarke many times, and has also spoken at length with Kubrick's widow, Christiane; with visual effects supervisor Doug Trumbull; with Dan Richter, who played 2001's leading man-ape; and many others. A colorful nonfiction narrative packed with memorable characters and remarkable incidents, Space Odyssey provides a 360-degree view of this extraordinary work, tracking the film from Kubrick and Clarke's first meeting in New York in 1964 through its UK production from 1965-1968, during which some of the most complex sets ever made were merged with visual effects so innovative that they scarcely seem dated today. A concluding chapter examines the film's legacy as it grew into its current justifiably exalted status.

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About The Author

Michael Benson


Michael Benson works at the intersection of art and science. An artist, writer, and filmmaker, he's a Fellow of the NY Institute of the Humanities and a past Visiting Scholar at the MIT Media Lab's Center for Bits and Atoms. In addition to *Space Odyssey* he has written such books as *Cosmographics: Picturing Space Through Time*, a finalist for the Science and Technology award at the 2015 *Los Angeles Times* "Festival of Books." Benson's planetary landscape photography exhibitions have been shown internationally. He has contributed to many publications including *The New Yorker*, *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *The Atlantic*, *Smithsonian*, and *Rolling Stone*. Visit Michael-Benson.net.

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What We Say

Everyone knows about Stanley Kubrick's science fiction masterpiece "2001: A Space Odyssey." Even if you've never seen it, you've seen clips from the film or at least parodies of the film -- just its name alone will start the stirring strains of "Also Sprach Zarathustra" ringing in your ears. It's a landmark film that still stuns with its special effects (all hail hand-crafted models over the purely digital!) and utterly confuses the literal-minded. As a kid, I had to read the novelization by Arthur C. Clarke to grasp what the hell was going on. We've caught up to the film's elliptical nature, so it may not be quite as confounding today for a new viewer. If you haven't watched it yet, you must. And once you do, you may well become obsessed. And if you do get obsessed, you might want to read Michael Benson's thorough coverage about the making of this film. It's strictly for fans of Kubrick and/or the film itself -- all but ardent admirers will be bored during early passages about what was shot when and how and by whom. Benson speaks to many participants and creates good drama out of his material, but it doesn't come quite to life on its own terms as a story. Yet if you care about filmmaking, you'll discover fascinating information about the endless creativity on display, how a brilliant director can frustrate and inspire everyone around him and the improvisation that is inherent in even the most meticulously planned production. Though Kubrick was as prepared and painstaking as possible, a film with no finished script is hardly one destined for a casual shoot. I was surprised to hear how this director noted for his controlling image was hugely open to ideas, the way he thrust responsibility on newbies with little to no track record and -- after all that -- how petty he could be about giving credit where credit was due. It's all here (to a fault), from the first meeting of Kubrick and a too-trusting Arthur C. Clarke to the disastrous opening night premiere and the film's rather quick rebirth as both a critical and popular hit. Everyone cherished their link to this classic -- well, not everyone, since there were a surprising number of casualties both professionally and health-wise -- and who could blame them? How often do you get to be part of an adventure like this? I recommend the movie wholeheartedly -- and if you feel nonplussed or bored or just bewildered, welcome to the club. If you become entranced -- like me and so many others -- you should tackle this book. I've never read a Kubrick bio or other earlier tales about the making of the film, but on its own this certainly leaves no stone (or monolith) unturned. -- Michael Giltz

What Others Say

"At last! The dense, intense, detailed, and authoritative saga of the making of the greatest motion picture I've ever seen, 2001: A Space Odyssey. I now have reason to see Kubrick's 'proverbial "really good" science fiction movie' another 200 times. Michael Benson has done the Cosmos a great service." (Tom Hanks) "Over the years, so much has been written about 2001 and its creation that I thought we knew all that there was to know. And then, I received a copy of Michael Benson's lively, exciting and exhaustively researched book, which further expands our understanding of what is truly one of the greatest films ever made." (Martin Scorsese) "Michael Benson's Space Odyssey: Stanley Kubrick, Arthur C. Clarke and the Making of a Masterpiece is a masterpiece about a masterpiece—a passionately written, impeccably researched book about a great director's pushing himself, his cast and crew beyond safety or sanity in a relentless quest for a non-verbal vision of the transcendent future of both space and film itself." (Scott Eyman, author of John Wayne: The Life and Legend and Hank and Jim: The Fifty-Year Friendship of Henry Fonda and James Stewart) "Despite the attention Benson lavishes on the humans—Kubrick and Clarke—HAL-9000 would have been proud of this smart, fluent, and meticulously researched account of the making of a sci-fi classic." (Peter Biskind, author of Easy Riders, Raging Bulls: How the Sex, Drugs, and Rock 'n' Roll Generation Saved Hollywood) "A fascinating, detail-rich account of the long slog to make the science-fiction masterpiece 2001: A Space Odyssey. . . . [An] endlessly interesting narrative. Essential for students of film history, to say nothing of Kubrick's most successful movie." (Kirkus Reviews (starred review)) "If Kubrick's masterpiece was a remarkable voyage into the future, Michael Benson's book is a delightful voyage back in time. For those of us inspired by the film, this book provides a delicious peek into landmark collaboration of two creative geniuses and the lasting gift they provided for all of us." (Lawrence M. Krauss, Foundation Professor in the School of Earth and Space Exploration, Director of the Origins Project at Arizona State University, and author of The Physics of Star Trek, A Universe from Nothing, and The Greatest Story Ever Told.. So Far)

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