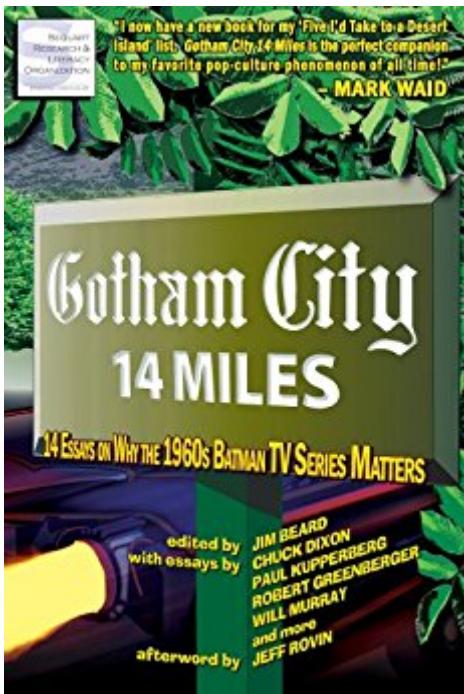


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Gotham City 14 Miles: 14 Essays On Why The 1960s Batman TV Series Matters



Synopsis

Gotham City 14 Miles offers the 1960s Batman TV series the critical reevaluation it deserves. Its essays examine Batmania, camp, the role of women, the show's participation in '60s counter-culture, its many celebrated actors, its lasting cultural effects, and other critical subjects. From 1966-1968, on both ABC and in movie theatres, America embraced Batman as a campy cultural icon. The nation thrilled to deathtrap cliffhangers and phrases like "Atomic batteries to power!" and "Same bat-time, same bat-channel!" But in the ensuing decades, many vilified the show as an embarrassment that needed to be swept under the rug if Batman and super-heroes were to be taken seriously. Having won this battle for legitimacy, perhaps we can now return to Adam West's Gotham, to the unapologetic fun of colorful, cackling villains hatching bizarre schemes, and deadpan heroes ridiculously climbing walls. And perhaps we may find it not only fun but rich with deeper cultural meanings. From Sequart Research & Literacy Organization.

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Customer Reviews

I had to check this out since as a fan of the TV Batman, the first version of the character I ever saw, I always appreciate a chance to see the show placed more in context and to see some revisionism aimed in the direction of those who think some uber-dark interpretation of the character is somehow the true standard. When it's a collection of essays, you do have to brace yourself for the fact that you'll probably like some more than others and this book proves no exception to that which is why I can only give it three stars overall. It's worth having, but for me the good was very good and the not so good was very hard to get through. First, the good. Peter Sanderson's "The 1960s Batman TV Series From Comics To Screen." This is an outstanding five star essay that not only provides important context for what comic stories were used in the show's first season, but also provides important background on the general history of the Batman comic book in the preceding decade that helps make for a strong case that the direction the TV show was going in at the start, reflected more of the improved tone in the comics than people realize. I also was glad to see cleared up the mystery of why two random comic stories from the 50s (the Joker one and the Mr. Freeze one) were adapted for Season 1, and the fact that they had just been reprinted at the same time the other stories used for the series appeared explained things perfectly. I also wanted to say a hearty THANK YOU for James Beard's essay comparing the TV Batman of Season 1 with the character as it originally appeared in the early issues of Detective Comics.

As a young child, I was completely and utterly entranced by the TV adventures of Batman & Robin. Though made in the "camp" form in the middle of the pop-art movement of the 1960s, as a kid I knew nothing about that kind of stuff. I took everything completely and have probably seen every episode 20+ (and even that is a very conservative estimate) times. Yet, for a show that reached the heights of popularity ("Batmania") that Batman climbed to, there are relatively few tangible artifacts of its existence. The show has never been released for home video (although supposedly that will happen in late 2014), and only Adam West's "Back To The Batcave" and the compendium "The Official Batman Bat-Book" stick out as series tomes. Thus, I was elated to find another book about the subject! "Gotham City 14 Miles" is an absolute joy to read based on that nostalgic perspective. It is basically just a collection of independent essays (ranging from the look of the show, the music, the villains, the creation, its place in pop culture, etc.) about the show and how it had the trajectory of a bottle rocket: quick up, quick down. All the essays are very well-written and, despite covering some "same ground", I didn't find one to be "bad" or anything like that. This is also a book that can be used for dual purposes: On one hand, it can almost be looked at as a "research volume" for the way it examines "Batman" within the context of its times. Granted, none of the authors go "too deep"

and bring out the psychology mumbo-jumbo that can turn similar-themed books into textbooks, but there is a lot of cultural heritage within these pages.

I really don't know how this academic piece of research wound up in the toy section of .com, but after trying to track it down, I thought I'd write up my review anyway. When I first heard of this text being released about five months ago, I was eagerly awaiting its arrival. After all, anything that can bring attention to the great Adam West series, is all right in my book. This book is wonderful. All fourteen essays have something to say, and are an invaluable resource in looking back at the program, and in particular for those fans who still would like to recapture the feel from the late sixties with its unique music to its Bat-Toys. Chuck Dixon's essay is especially memorable in its telling of how he tried to slip an Adam West like script past his comic books editors. The Bat-Discography chapter is great and helps track down memorable Bat-Tunes, but left me wondering why some composers never wrote a Catwoman "cue" or theme like Burgess Meredith and Frank Gorshin had for their criminal counterparts. The text also helped me identify where I originally heard a Bat-Story from the series. It wasn't from the Official Batman Batbook or the James Van Hise reference materials; no, it was from the expanded Cinefantastique issue that came out in the early nineties. Note: Any Bat-Fan should track down that magazine and keep it. It's invaluable. I'm glad to see that I'm not the only who is nostalgic for that era. The reference to the great 1966 Batman Utility Belt was awesome (they just don't make toys like that anymore, why not?) The aforementioned toy is now worth big bucks on ebay in mint condition or otherwise.

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