

Contents

Acknowledgments	xi
1 Introduction: The Uncertainty of Sound	1
PART 1: A NEW ERA IN ELECTRICAL ENTERTAINMENT	
2 Electric Affinities	23
3 Virtual Broadway, Virtual Orchestra: De Forest and Vitaphone	63
4 Fox-Case, Movietone, and the Talking Newsreel	89
5 Enticing the Audience: Warner Bros. and Vitaphone	101
6 Battle of the Giants: ERPI and RCA Consolidate Sound	127
7 The Big Hedge: Hollywood's Defensive Strategies	165
8 Boom to Bust	181
9 Labor Troubles	217
10 Inaudible Technology	225
11 Exhibition: Talkies Change the Bijou	250
PART 2: THREE SEASONS: THE FILMS OF 1928–1931	
12 The New Entertainment Vitamin: 1928–1929	271
13 Taming the Talkies: 1929–1930	313
14 The Well-Tempered Sound Track: 1930–1931	355
15 The Sound of Custard: Shorts, Travelogues, and Animated Cartoons	381
16 Outside the Mainstream	402
17 Foreign Affairs	418
PART 3: HEARING THE AUDIENCE	
18 The Voice Squad	445
19 Constructive Criticism: The Fans' Perspective	480
20 Buying Broadway: THE JAZZ SINGER's Reception	516
21 "The Great Ninety Per Cent"	532

Appendix 1: Selected Box Office Grosses, 1928–1931	547
Appendix 2: Academy Awards Related to Sound, 1927–1931	553
List of Abbreviations	557
Notes	559
Bibliography	603
Picture Sources	611
General Index	613
Index of Films	633