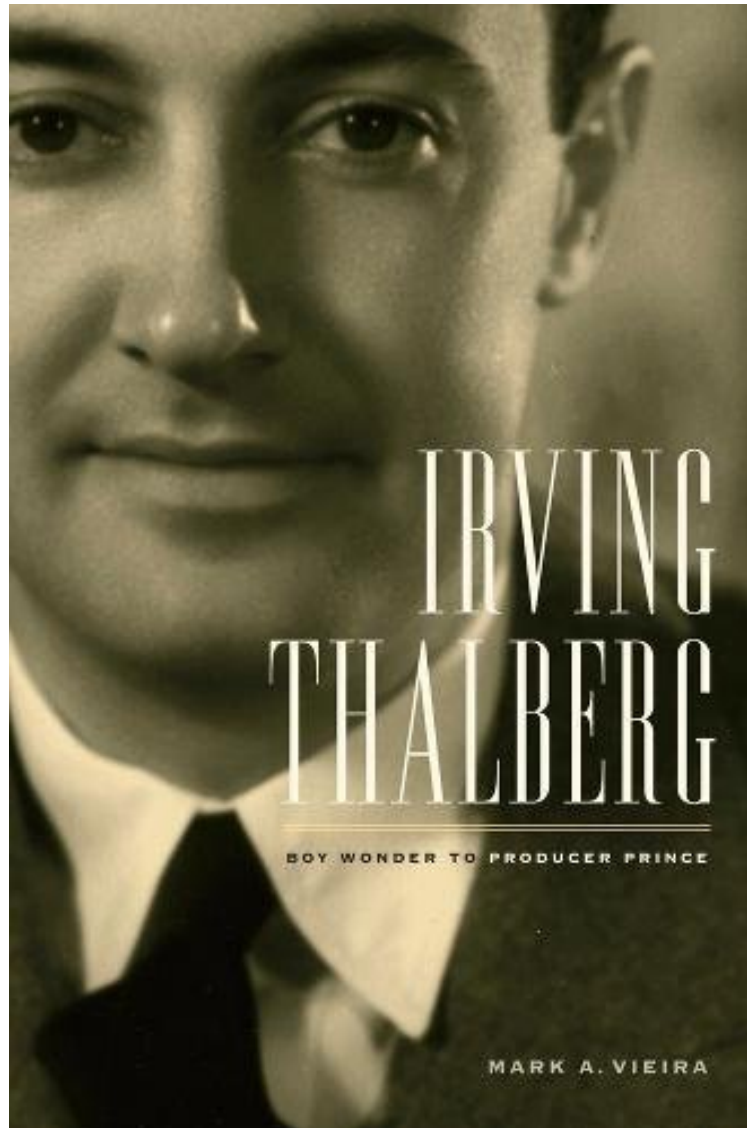


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## Irving Thalberg: Boy Wonder to Producer Prince

*Mark A. Vieira*

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**Mark A. Vieira : Irving Thalberg: Boy Wonder to Producer Prince** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Irving Thalberg: Boy Wonder to Producer Prince:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A Meeting to CelebrateBy waitsfortherainIt's both a pleasure and an immense relief to see authors such as Mark A. Vieira consolidate their position as top film historians and Hollywood biographers. Film history as a whole and Hollywood biographies in particular have been plagued for many years with opportunism, dishonesty and sheer incompetence, leading to some of the most appalling books on the lives and careers

of people who gave their whole earthly existence, to the art of film-making. It's painful to know that most readers can't see the difference between an honest and a dishonest biography. It has been said that they can't see the difference between a delicate dish prepared by a great cook and junk food. Whatever. The fact is that some biographers seem to have decided from the start to dedicate their time and energy to producing trash about people who, by all accounts deserved better than that. Hence the relief of authors like Mark A. Vieira coming up with works like "Irving Thalberg: Boy Wonder to Producer Prince". He did it again! Here is a film biography that makes it obvious from the start that it was extremely well researched. No hearsay. No apocrypha. The way facts are presented is proportional to their historical relevance, not to their gossip potential. The analysis of the period in which the story takes place is both objective and sympathetic. Last but certainly not least, this is a book that reads like a juicy novel that gives the reader great pleasure. Irving Thalberg needed very badly to become the focus of a gifted biographer. His importance in the development of the American film industry is tremendous. He was one of the men who gave shape to the star system. Hollywood would have been totally different without him. His unique way of seeing what was ahead and the tremendous importance he attached to acting talent made it possible for truly great artists like Garbo and the Marx Brothers to leave their best work forever on film. Yet, unlike other producers, Thalberg was a reclusive man about whom many myths grew. Even Scott Fitzgerald added to the legend by making him the model for the lead in "The Last Tycoon," his last, unfinished novel. Now for the first time it's possible to read the real story of the man who didn't seem to have a shadow. His is one of the best biographies ever written about a key figure of the so called "Golden Hollywood," A book no one interested in film history can afford not reading. Irving Thalberg was a giant of a producer. Mark A. Vieira is a giant of a biographer. Anyone who cares for quality should celebrate this meeting. 24 of 24 people found the following review helpful. Irving Thalberg: A fine read! By J. Billings I pre-ordered this book several months ago and was not disappointed. Author Mark A. Vieira has presented a detailed and insightful profile of Irving Thalberg, creator of such classics as Grand Hotel, Mutiny on the Bounty, and The Good Earth. A major plus for this book is the use of the heretofore unpublished memoirs of Thalberg's wife, Norma Shearer. Although there have been two excellent biographies of Shearer, this book provides an added dimension: a woman of kindness and strength. By all accounts a devoted wife, and mother of two young children who set aside her own career when necessary to care for her physically infirm husband. Still, she managed to garner 6 Oscar nominations (1 win) and set the standard for MGM glamour in the 1930's. In addition to Shearer, Thalberg made stars of: Jean Harlow, Clark Gable, Joan Crawford and Greta Garbo. Mark Vieira adeptly chronicles their rise and much more. This book is a fine account of a great visionary, Irving Grant Thalberg who in life never sought public acknowledgement, but created a lasting legacy that has delighted movie fans for generations since. Great thanks to Mark Vieira for a fine book. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Very interesting... By CE Taylor Excellent read. I got this to read about Norma Shearer and her marriage and found that I was more interested in her husband than her by the time I got to the third chapter. This is a really good book. Extremely interesting. If you like old movies and want to know more about the making of old movies and I mean old silent movies then read this book. This man was amazingly smart. From now on when I watch a film I will think about what this man did to help make movies what they are today. He would be amazed at the special effects in movies of our era. Personally I do not find new movies entertaining but after reading this book one gets to see the process and its very interesting. His life and marriage, health issues, plus running MGM... well its amazing what he accomplished.

Hollywood in the 1920s sparkled with talent, confidence, and opportunity. Enter Irving Thalberg of Brooklyn, who survived childhood illness to run Universal Pictures at twenty; co-found Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer at twenty-four; and make stars of Lon Chaney, Norma Shearer, Greta Garbo, Joan Crawford, Clark Gable, and Jean Harlow. Known as Hollywood's Boy Wonder, Thalberg created classics such as Ben-Hur, Tarzan the Ape Man, Grand Hotel, Freaks, Mutiny on the Bounty, and The Good Earth, but died tragically at thirty-seven. His place in the pantheon should have been assured, yet his films were not reissued for thirty years, spurring critics to question his legend and diminish his achievements. In this definitive biography, illustrated with rare photographs, Mark A. Vieira sets the record straight, using unpublished production files, financial records, and correspondence to confirm the genius of Thalberg's methods. In addition, this is the first Thalberg biography to utilize both his recorded conversations and the unpublished memoirs of his wife, Norma Shearer. Irving Thalberg is a compelling narrative of power and idealism, revealing for the first time the human being behind the legend.

Vieira has accomplished something quite extraordinary. . . . This is the definitive volume about a towering figure in the history of Hollywood.