

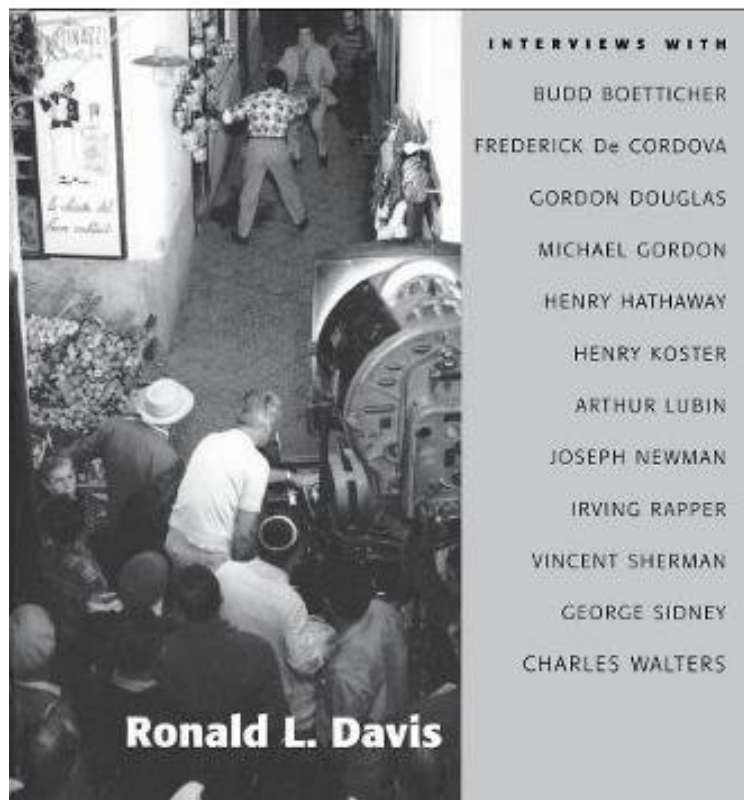
Just Making Movies: Company Directors on the Studio System

Ronald L. Davis

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Just Making Movies

Company Directors on the Studio System



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Ronald L. Davis : Just Making Movies: Company Directors on the Studio System before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Just Making Movies: Company Directors on the Studio System:

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From the late 1930s to the mid-1950s, five big movie studios—Paramount, Warner Bros., Twentieth Century-Fox, Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer (MGM), and RKO—dominated Hollywood's film industry. This "big studio system" operated primarily as a series of assembly-line production factories. Ideally, each churned out fifty-two movies a year, enough to supply showcase theaters across the country with a new lineup each week—with profit being the overriding goal. Of this era, veteran screenwriter Julius Epstein (*Casablanca*) said: "It was not called the motion picture industry for nothing. [It] was like working at belts in a factory." Studios assigned the majority of the lower-tier screenplays to directors under long-term contract and expected them to stick to the script and keep productions within the budget. These filmmakers, known as "house directors," often made films quickly, inexpensively, and with limited resources. *Just Making Movies: Company Directors on the Studio System* collects twelve interviews with house directors from this era, all conducted by the author during the 1980s. These previously unpublished interviews provide a clear picture of how the big studio system operated, as told by those who knew it best. Despite limitations, house directors sometimes made enduring film classics, such as Charles Walters's *Easter Parade*, Henry Koster's *The Bishop's Wife*, George Sidney's *The Three Musketeers*, and Vincent Sherman's *The Hasty Heart*. In these interviews the filmmakers talk candidly about working with such superstars as Joan Crawford, Errol Flynn, Richard Burton, Bette Davis, Judy Garland, Cary Grant, Esther Williams, and Lana Turner.

From the Publisher-- Reflections from the filmmakers who kept screens flickering in the Big Studio era -- Features unpublished, in-depth interviews with notable directors of Hollywood's Golden Age -- Essentially provides an oral history of the studio system during its heyday -- Discusses working with the biggest stars of their day, including such notables as Joan Crawford, Bette Davis, Judy Garland, Cary Grant, Ronald Reagan, and John Wayne -- Shines light on these workhorses whose names we might forget, but who produced lasting movies
From the Inside Flap
Reflections from the filmmakers who kept screens flickering in the big studio era
About the Author
Ronald L. Davis is professor emeritus of history at Southern Methodist University. He is the author of *Van Johnson: MGM's Golden Boy* (University Press of Mississippi) and *The Glamour Factory: Inside Hollywood's Big Studio System*.