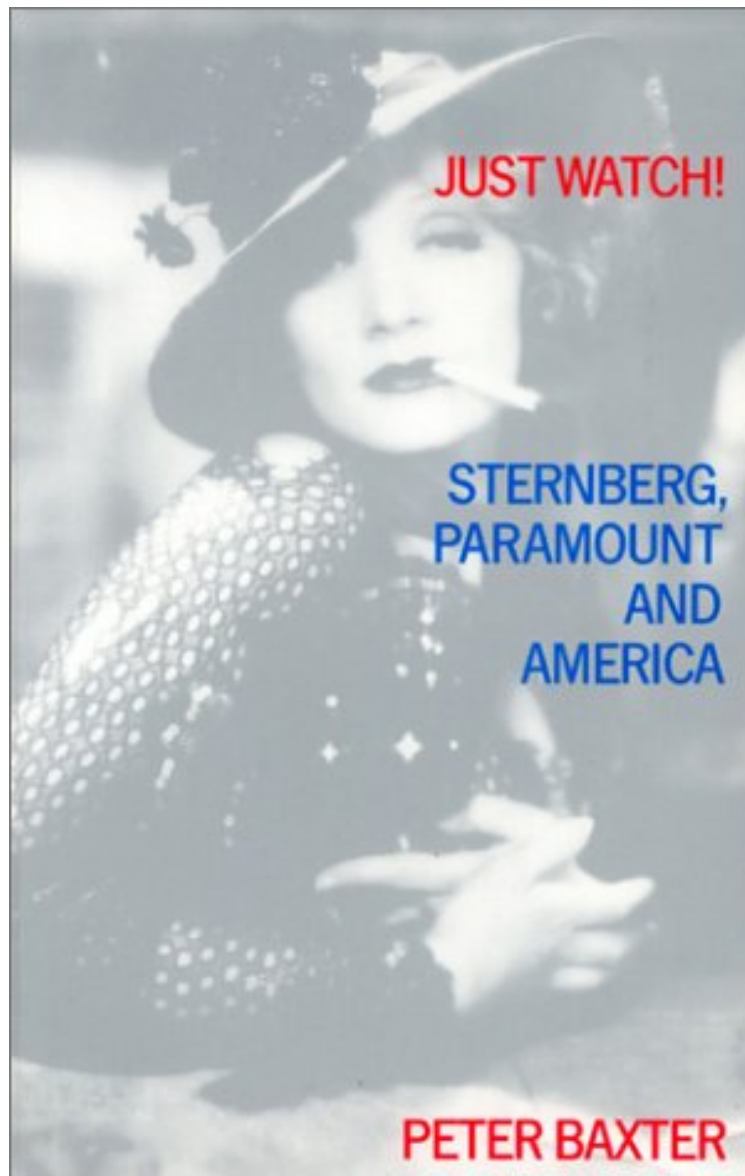


(Download free ebook) Just Watch!: Sternberg, Paramount and America

## Just Watch!: Sternberg, Paramount and America

*Peter Baxter*

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**Peter Baxter : Just Watch!: Sternberg, Paramount and America** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Just Watch!: Sternberg, Paramount and America:

For its 1932 release of Joself von Sternber's Blonde Venus, Paramount trumpeted Marlene Dietrich's role as "fallen

woman." Portraying nightclub entertainer Helen Faraday, Dietrich plunges into adultery, loses both husband and child, and is hounded from the stage onto the streets. Like thousands of Americans at the nadir of the Great Depression, she wanders the country without shelter or hope. In a last effort of will, Helen Faraday vows to regain her fame and fortune: "Don't you think I can?" she asks. "Just watch!" 1932 was a key year for Josef von Sternberg, for Paramount Pictures, and for the United States. After three Hollywood films with the star he created in *The Blue Angel*, Sternberg had reached a creative crossroads. Paramount was at the brink of collapse but hoped *Blonde Venus* would match the stunning profits realized by *Shanghai Express*. In a high stakes challenge to his studio and his audience, Sternberg chose a story addressed directly to the social catastrophe that had befallen the U.S. In this highly original and meticulously researched book, Peter Baxter probes the landmark film from every angle. He teases out its relations to Sternberg's life and work, maps the byzantine politics of a major Hollywood studio, and discusses the film's relation to a fragmented society.

About the Author Peter Baxter is Associate Professor of Film Studies at Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario.