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The Hollywood Studios

Ethan Mordden

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Ethan Mordden : The Hollywood Studios before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Hollywood Studios:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five StarsBy Gerard HanlonA very good book1 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Five StarsBy PAULGRIMEXCELLENT15 of 15 people found the following review helpful. A lot of endless ramblingBy B. GouldI am a huge fan of the old Hollywood studio era but was pretty disappointed in this book. It's probably a good place to start for someone who hasn't done alot of previous reading or research. To me it was a bunch of babbling and Mr. Mordden kept repeating the same point over, and over, and over(albeit changing the characters)... It didn't offer me anything new so I skimmed thru the first couple chapters and struggled to finish it, but finally just put it back on the shelf.If you have an interest in the Hollywood studios, I would HIGHLY reccomend "The Glamour Factory" by Ronald Davis and "City of Nets" by Otto Friedrich, I found both of these very interesting - another great read is "Irving Thalberg: Boy Wonder" by Mark Vieira.

Hollywood in the years between 1929 and 1948 was a town of moviemaking empires. The great studios were estates of talent: sprawling, dense, diverse. It was the Golden Age of the Movies, and each studio made its distinctive contribution. But how did the studios, "growing up" in the same time and place, develop so differently? What combinations of talents and temperaments gave them their signature styles? These are the questions Ethan Mordden answers, with breezy erudition and irrepressible enthusiasm, in this fascinating and wonderfully readable book.

Mordden illuminates how the style of each studio was primarily dictated by the personality, philosophy, and attitudes of its presiding mogul--and how all these factors affected the work and careers of individual actors, directors, writers, and technicians, and the success of the studio in general.

From Publishers Weekly
The studio system in Hollywood was doomed once the Supreme Court decided in 1948 that the same companies that created movies could not legally control their exhibition, forcing studios to divest their theater chains. That decision inaugurated a series of changes limiting studio contributions primarily to the financing and marketing of pictures. What was lost? Much more than the simple star-making machinery one associates with the studio era, as this entertaining, informative volume makes clear. Performing arts writer and novelist Mordden (*The Hollywood Musical*, etc.) ably demonstrates that each studio had its own distinctive style, deriving from the esthetic affinities of the moguls who ran them, the idiosyncrasies of their contract artists and the ways they distributed power among the studios' various creative departments. Mordden makes an amiable and authoritative guide as he tours readers through the studios of the 1930s and '40s, pointing out the hallmarks of the major houses: the MGM musical, the Paramount sex comedy, the Warner crime drama and more. Written with a flair and clarity that will delight even the casual movie lover, this study is a refreshing and convincing alternative to the auteurist approach to film history. Photos not seen by PW. Copyright 1988 Reed Business Information, Inc.
From Library Journal
Movie studios, originally small, nameless, faceless factory-like operations, grew and were shaped along stylistic lines. Focusing mainly on Paramount, MGM, Warner Brothers, Fox, RKO, and Universal, Mordden's highly readable text discusses actors, directors, and producers and explains how and why each specific house style was nurtured and developed. Written with wit by an expert, this book gives more insight and perspective to the rise of the studios than such books as John Douglas Eames's *The Paramount Story* (LJ 12/85). One snag: lacks an index. Recommended for all film collections. Arthur Bargar, Milford P.L., Ct. Copyright 1988 Reed Business Information, Inc. "[E]ntertaining, informative. . . . Mordden makes an amiable and authoritative guide as he tours readers through the studios of the 1930s and '40s, pointing out the hallmarks of the major houses: the MGM musical, the Paramount sex comedy, the Warner crime drama, and more. Written with a flair and clarity that will delight even the casual movie lover, this study is a refreshing and convincing alternative to the auteurist approach to film history." --Publishers Weekly
"Much film writing is either sappy or esoteric, but this book is accessible, well written, humorous and informed. Barrett Whitener is brisk and crisp--as always, a delight to listen to." --AudioFile
"Mordden's highly readable text discusses actors, directors, and producers and explains how and why each specific house style was nurtured and developed. Written with wit by an expert, this book gives more insight and perspective to the rise of the studios than such books as John Douglas Eames's *The Paramount Story*. Recommended for all film collections." --Library Journal