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Citizen Kane: A Filmmaker's Journey



Synopsis

With the 75th anniversary of Citizen Kane in May 2016, Harlan Lebo has written the full story of Orson Welles' masterpiece film. The book explores Welles' meteoric rise to stardom in New York and the real reason behind his arrival in Hollywood and unprecedented contract with RKO Studios for total creative control. It also delves into the dispute over who wrote the script; the mystery of the "lost" final script; and the plot by Hearst to destroy Welles' project through blackmail, media manipulation, and other tactics. The author finally examines the surprising emergence of Citizen Kane as an enduring masterpiece. Using previously unpublished material from studio files and the Hearst organization, exclusive interviews with the last surviving members of the cast and crew, and what may be the only surviving copy of the "lost" final script of the film, Citizen Kane: A Filmmaker's Journey recounts the making of one of the most famous films in Hollywood history.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

As a casual and totally unknowledgeable movie watcher, I've never appreciated Citizen Kane as much as I feel I should. I've always been aware that the reason for this is that largely I watch films on a pretty superficial level, for the plot and acting, whereas often with these films that are designated as 'great' it's as much for cinematography, innovative technique etc. So this looked like the perfect book to help me understand just what it is I'm missing about a film that is often cited as the greatest movie ever made. In the introduction, Harlan Lebo explains that the book is based on source documents and conversations with some of the participants in the making of the film. He points out that there are a lot of myths around the film, many of them created by Welles himself for

the fun of it. He proposes to debunk at least some of these myths (none of which I knew anyway) at the same time as getting to the truth behind the mythology. He recommends having the film set up ready to watch each scene as it's discussed. I heartily agree with this advice â " it added a lot to my understanding of the more technical side of the book to be able to see what Lebo was describing. I also watched the film all through to refresh my memory of it before I began reading, and that was useful too. Lebo starts with a brief biography of Welles' achievements on stage and radio before he was given a contract by RKO. His notoriety following the famous War of the Worlds broadcast had made him hot property, with every studio wanting to sign him. RKO won the bidding war by offering him unprecedented artistic freedom to produce, write, direct and star in his own movies â " all this when he was just 25. He was granted things previously unheard of, such as the right to determine the final cut.

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