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Steven Spielberg: Interviews (Conversations With Filmmakers Series)



Synopsis

Steven Spielberg has become a brand name and a force that extends far beyond the movie screen. Phrases like "phone home" and the music score from Jaws are now part of our cultural script, appearing in commercials, comedy routines, and common conversation. Yet few scholars have devoted time to studying Spielberg's vast output of popular films despite the director's financial and aesthetic achievements. Spanning twenty-five years of Spielberg's career, *Steven Spielberg: Interviews* explores the issues, the themes, and the financial considerations surrounding his work. The blockbuster creator of E.T., Jaws, and Schindler's List talks about dreams and the almighty dollar. "I'm not really interested in making money," he says. "That's always come as the result of success, but it's not been my goal, and I've had a tough time proving that to people." Ranging from Spielberg's twenties to his mid-fifties, the interviews chart his evolution from a brash young filmmaker trying to make his way in Hollywood, to his spectacular blockbuster triumphs, to his maturation as a director seeking to inspire the imagination with meaningful subjects. The Steven Spielberg who emerges in these talks is a complex mix of businessman and artist, of arrogance and insecurity, of shallowness and substance. Often interviewers will uncover the director's human side, noting how changes in Spielberg's personal life -- marriage, divorce, fatherhood, remarriage -- affect his movies. But always the interviewers find keys to the story-telling and filmmaking talent that have made Spielberg's characters and themes shape our times and inhabit our dreams. "Every time I go to a movie, it's magic, no matter what the movie's about," he says. "Whether you watch eight hours of Shoah or whether it's Ghostbusters, when the lights go down in the theater and the movie fades in, it's magic."

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Customer Reviews

A collection of interviews charting Spielberg's evolution from brash young filmmaker to blockbuster king to mature and meaningful film director

Lester D. Friedman teaches medical humanities and bioethics at Upstate Medical University and cinema studies in the College of Visual and Performing Arts at Syracuse University. Brent Notbohm of Spring Green, Wisconsin, is a freelance instructor of film production and media studies. He has written and directed several films and videos independently and as a graduate student at Syracuse University's College of Visual and Performing Arts.

Although badly in need of an update (it concludes just after the release of "Saving Private Ryan"); it's still one of the best in the Conversations With Filmmaker series. The pieces give the career arch of the Hollywood titan; the talented youth who impressed studio heads to get the directing job for "The Sugarland Express", followed by the first contemporary blockbuster, "Jaws". Spielberg keeps excellent track record, until coming to "The Color Purple" in which he openly frets about taking on more adult content (still a fantastic film). He stifles his way through the remainder of the 80s, until the year 1993, in which the articles become fixated on the boy becoming a man. The theme carries on for the rest of the 1990s, and tips its hat to the opening of DreamWorks and Spielberg's branching out as a producer.

I really enjoyed the first half of this book. It is fascinating to read the interviews in chronological order as his career took off. I did start losing interest after the halfway point, once he'd long-since been established as an icon... through no fault of the interview content... he just became a bit more guarded with his answers and a little less interesting. But reading about his experiences in the making of "Sugarland Express" and "Jaws"... the things he would've done differently if he could go back... the self-doubts overcome by sheer will and perseverance. You see the fiber of his character and the energy of his youth that got him to where he is now. Good stuff. Highly recommend and not just for filmmakers or film buffs.

Steven Spielberg: Interviews is a great book on many levels. It's probably one of the only books about Spielberg that shows his more personal side and manner of speaking. The interviews give us a different different perspective of the man and show that he is not what everyone (or me at least) envisioned him to be. Interesting, information, and with its own of sense of humor, this is definitely a must-read for Spielberg fans, filmmakers, and people period.

This is a good interview book w/ the man! It's not the same type of lessons presented, but still worth a read!

There's a lot of really good stuff in here. First, the interviews span some 25 years, so you get a sense how he's matured and yet how he's stayed the same. Second, Spielberg is very candid, so interviews with him tend to reveal more than many others. Third, there's just a lot of good stuff in here, some of which you may have heard and some not. For instance, I had never heard the story of how, as an awkward 12 year old, he and a mentally retarded boy were dead last in a school race and their peers cheered the retarded boy to beat young Spielberg. Spielberg describes how he knew he had to let the boy win without him realizing it and did just that. And then he describes how after the race, after the others carried the retarded boy on their shoulders, Spielberg was both devastatingly happy and sad. Or there's the anecdote about his encounter with Stanley Kubrick -- how the master was not as stand-offish as one might think, and yet how he sized up Spielberg with "his probing, questioning eyes, always looking at you to see if you're true or falso. To see what you're made of, to see what you have upstairs. His chess player's eyes. Real surgeon's eyes." There's lots of other examples I can bring but if you have any interest in Spielberg or movies just go out and get the book. It's a great read about a fascinating man whose own character arc and maturity as a movie-maker is the stuff great stories are made of.

This book has become one of my favorite books to read and I loved learning so much about Spielberg is just these collection of articles. All his stories are fascinating and so insightful. The authors' perceptions about him and how they've analyzed him make me imagine what it would be like to be Spielberg. Knowing his failures, his back story, his thoughts by reading them in this book makes me admire the man so much more. This is a great book to read and I definitely recommend reading it if one wants to learn more about Steven and how he's such a genius.

Steven Spielberg is undoubtedly the greatest movie director of our times. ALL his movies have been

box-office hits. He is brilliant and dedicated to his craft! And people adore him! He's way cool ...That's why it's so exciting to read a book by him, describing the last 25 years of his life. Awesome material!Can't wait to see more of his movies! Many reviewers are saying that my TOONIES book would make a great movie ... a la Spielberg. I should be so lucky, but was lucky enough to meet and pose with Clint Eastwood many moons ago, so perhaps I'll get lucky again. Hint! Hint!With all his fame and fortune and he still remains a very "nice, dear, down-to-earth" man. More of the actors should emulate his example.Go, Steven!

I've been waiting a long time for a book like this. Populist filmmakers like Steven Spielberg are too often ignored by publishers who would rather print in-depth literature on the likes of Coppola or Scorsese, so it's nice to see a meaty tome such as this on the bookshelves. Spielberg lets rip on all the stuff you often wondered about whilst watching his films, and proves himself to be rather adept at delivering hilarious anecdotes. Unlike the George Lucas Interviews book, Spielberg isn't shy when it comes to discussing his private life. All in all, an enlightening read. Jolly good.

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