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Ida Lupino: A Biography

Von William Donati

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Von William Donati : Ida Lupino: A Biography before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Ida Lupino: A Biography:

KundenrezensionenHilfreichste Kundenrezensionen0 von 0 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. Lupino was one "tough dame" both on-screen and off.Von Ein KundeIn the best cigarette-stained vernacular of 1940's film noir, Ida Lupino was one "tough dame." With steely eyes, a husky voice, and a tongue quickened by candor, the

woman earned her celluloid stripes by rarely backing down. And judging by William Donati's well-researched work, *Ida Lupino: A Biography*, the actress's headstrong screen persona matched her real-life manners. Like a downtown train, Lupino had moxie. When Lupino died two years ago at age seventy-seven, interested readers were still waiting for the star's definitive biography. Donati's book fills that void. The author offers up a linear, plainspoken account of Lupino's long career as a film and television actress, and, more important, her maverick role as one of Hollywood's first female directors. British-born, and reared in a famous, theatrical family, Lupino landed in Hollywood in 1933, determined to succeed. Her ambition, however, bordered on arrogance. Despite a generous \$600 a week salary from Paramount, the young actress opposed the studio's plan to cast her as an ingénue. Donati recounts how Lupino upset the applecart by refusing to appear in *Cleopatra*, where "she was given five lines and expected to stand behind Claudette Colbert waving a large palm frond." Lupino's defiance led to a suspension, her first scrap in a lifelong tangle with studio heads. Her early frustration with "shallow roles and mediocre films" hastened both a break with Paramount and a shrewd, propitious makeover. Gone was the blond, Kewpie Doll look modeled after Jean Harlow. In its place, Lupino reverted to her natural brown hair, while fashioning a dark, hard-boiled mien that became her stock in trade. By the early 1940s she was working at Warner Brothers, winning acclaim in *They Drive by Night*, *Out of the Fog*, *The Sea Wolf*, and her benchmark film, *High Sierra*, where she earned top billing over a still unheralded Humphrey Bogart. Donati examines the full Lupino canon - performances consisting mostly of a woman gone bad, gone mad, or, if nothing else, a woman dangerously out of kilter. Still, he fails to note the irony in a fiercely independent Lupino, who, having once rebelled against typecasting, being typecast just the same. In one melodrama after another, Lupino played femme fatales, prone to anger, hysteria, and ill fortune. The actress herself liked to say that she made her money as "a poor man's Bette Davis." It's no wonder that Lupino's roles rattled the Motion Picture Producers and Distributors of America, or MPA - a watchdog group headed by Joseph Breen. In one example, Donati cites the MPA's Production Code taking exception to Lupino's "bad girl" portrayal in *The Sea Wolf*: "Before filming, the Breen Office informed Warner Brothers that Ida's character could not be a prostitute nor could she be referred to as a slut. A revised script made her 'a fugitive of justice.'" Acting chores aside, the more trenchant sections of Donati's *Ida Lupino: A Biography* center on the woman's pioneering role as a director. Lupino's second career, this time behind the camera, was christened by chance in 1949 when she substituted for an ailing Elmer Clifton on the set of *Not Wanted*. Soon, Lupino was directing low-budget, but socially conscious and progressive movies for *Filmakers*, an upstart company which she partially controlled. *Not Wanted* tackled the then taboo subject of unwed mothers. Lupino's other directorial efforts include *The Bigamist*, *The Hitch-Hiker*, and *Never Fear*, a merciful and realistic look at America's polio epidemic. Except for *Not Wanted*, these films were unprofitable, yet they afforded the female director a freedom to visit artistic avenues ignored by standard matinee fare. Donati makes a case for Lupino as Hollywood's first feminist - a heady title long before modern feminism came into vogue. Years later, Lupino oddly disparaged the feminist movement. Donati quotes from a 1972 interview: "Ida proclaimed she was not 'one of the ladies who go in for women's lib. Any woman who wishes to smash into the world of men isn't very feminine. . . . Baby, we can't go smashing. I believe women should be struck regularly like a gong.'" Unlike the rap sheet of scandals that often saturate current biographies, Donati's book is refreshingly tame. While there is the usual litany of broken marriages - Lupino had three husbands, Howard Duff being her last and most satisfying - the author's raciest anecdotes concern Lupino's self-professed "psychic powers" and her bizarre affinity for mysticism. And if Donati's prose sometimes devolves into boosterism: "Ida was finally achieving the screen recognition she deserved," his aboveboard agenda is admirable. Where film historians ultimately rank Lupino's work remains debatable. One thing, however, is certain: Ida Lupino was a feisty woman. On-screen and off, she shot holes in Hollywood's male-dominated club. Not bad for the cinema's favorite gun moll.0 von 0 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. What a very poorly done book! Von Ein KundeI just finished reading *Ida Lupino* and was so disappointed. The author is not a biographer - he's a second-rate journalist at best. He managed to cull together a great many facts and just tossed them around, hoping for a narrative. There are so many things I'd like to know that just weren't answered. An example - Ida had one child, Brigett. She's mentioned a few times, then qualified as the center of Ida's life and the main reason for her giving up her directing career - to stay home and raise her. Yet we learn absolutely nothing about this daughter. No personal description, no personality profile, no private life or professional info. All that is said is that when she grew up, she moved out of the house and moved "far away from Los Angeles." These facts would have been easy to find, but the lazy author just glossed over whatever he didn't have. The style is high school level - things repeated over and over and restated in sentence after sentence and rephrased a paragraph later. Terribly amateurish. Didn't he even have the benefit of an editor? Lastly, the author has fallen in love with his subject and lost all perspective on both her flaws and her achievements and lasting importance. There's no solid analysis of her acting technique - just carefully chosen trade reviews that are most favorable to her. Ida Lupino mastered basically one type of performance, and she gave it over and over again. For a particular type of role, she could be extremely effective by displaying her tense, neurotic personality. But she certainly wasn't any great actress, not by anybody's standards, except the author's, and definitely only a competent director, not the female William Wyler the author tries to paint her as being. Lupino deserves a far more thorough and honest bio than this.0 von 0 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. An in-depth look at

Hollywood's first female director. Von Keith Burnage This book provides a concise and in-depth investigation on what drove Ida Lupino, not only as an actress but to become Hollywood's first female director. Starting off with a background look at the Lupino family the author, William Donati, gives us at the foundation upon which Ida was driven to carry on in the family business, and would eventually lead her to Hollywood. Here we are given a real life look at what actors had to endure during the studios contract days, in which they controlled not only the lives of their stars, but their careers as well. We learn of the battles Ida had to put up with, both artistically and physically, and how the glamorous life of a star could be anything but. This treatment would eventually lead her to split from the studios and strike out on her own, as an independent. Here we learn of her first foray into directing, and the constant struggle to finance and put out quality films. This is paralleled with the conflict between her career and personal life, as we are given a clear glimpse at her failed marriages, and her battle with herself. The author gives us a real fans eye look at this great actress come director. Truly a must book for any fan of Hollywood's golden age.

Kurzbeschreibung "Ida Lupino (1918-1995) was more than a gorgeous image of film noir in the forties and fifties who starred in classics such as *They Drive By Night*, *High Sierra*, and *Road House*. Lupino also evolved into one of Hollywood's earliest female directors whose work was described by Martin Scorsese as ""resilient, with a remarkable empathy for the fragile and heartbroken."" William Donati chronicles the dramatic life of one of Hollywood's most prolific, substantive, and innovative artists, both behind and in front of the camera. "Pressestimmen" "A tough-gal actress." -- Newsweek "An appreciative account of her life." -- Utne Reader "A feminist filmmaker long before the modern feminist movement." -- American Bookseller ""Like one of Lupino's own films (and Lupino's own performances), Donati's book packs much into a small space. It is a gripping read." -- Audience Magazine ""Lupino is doubtless the most prolific woman director ever to have worked in Hollywood." -- Barbara Sharres, The Film Center of the Art Institute of Chicago ""Lets an icon of women's filmmaking emerge as a full-fledged human being, social crusader, and artist." -- Kirkus s ""A true pioneer.... Her work is resilient, with a remarkable empathy for the fragile and heartbroken." -- Martin Scorsese, New York Times Magazine ""A tough-gal actress." -- Newsweek ""Donati adores his subject but doesn't shrink from showing blemishes." -- Publishers Weekly ""An appreciative account of her life." -- Utne Reader ""The first major biography of this great dame who helped make 'hard-boiled' an adjective not so readily affixed to an egg." -- Vanity Fair "Kurzbeschreibung "Ida Lupino (1918-1995) was more than a gorgeous image of film noir in the forties and fifties who starred in classics such as *They Drive By Night*, *High Sierra*, and *Road House*. Lupino also evolved into one of Hollywood's earliest female directors whose work was described by Martin Scorsese as ""resilient, with a remarkable empathy for the fragile and heartbroken."" William Donati chronicles the dramatic life of one of Hollywood's most prolific, substantive, and innovative artists, both behind and in front of the camera."