



Conversations with Woody Allen: His Films, the Movies, and Moviemaking

By Eric Lax

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Conversations with Woody Allen: His Films, the Movies, and Moviemaking By Eric Lax

From the author of the best-selling biography *Woody Allen*—the most informative, revealing, and entertaining conversations from his thirty-six years of interviewing the great comedian and filmmaker.

For more than three decades, Woody Allen has been talking regularly and candidly with Eric Lax, and has given him singular and unfettered access to his film sets, his editing room, and his thoughts and observations. In discussions that begin in 1971 and continue into 2007, Allen discusses every facet of moviemaking through the prism of his own films and the work of directors he admires. In doing so, he reveals an artist's development over the course of his career to date, from joke writer to standup comedian to world-acclaimed filmmaker.

Woody talks about the seeds of his ideas and the writing of his screenplays; about casting and acting, shooting and directing, editing and scoring. He tells how he reworks screenplays even while filming them. He describes the problems he has had casting American men, and he explains why he admires the acting of (among many others) Alan Alda, Marlon Brando, Michael Caine, John Cusack, Judy Davis, Robert De Niro, Leonardo DiCaprio, Mia Farrow, Gene Hackman, Scarlett Johansson, Julie Kavner, Liam Neeson, Jack Nicholson, Charlize Theron, Tracey Ullman, Sam Waterston, and Dianne Wiest. He places Diane Keaton second only to Judy Holliday in the pantheon of great screen comediennes.

He discusses his favorite films (*Citizen Kane* is the lone American movie on his list of sixteen "best films ever made"; *Duck Soup* and *Airplane!* are two of his preferred "comedian's films"; *Trouble in Paradise* and *Born Yesterday* among his favorite "talking plot comedies"). He describes himself as a boy in Brooklyn enthralled by the joke-laden movies of Bob Hope and the sophisticated film stories of Manhattan. As a director, he tells us what he appreciates about Bergman, De Sica, Fellini, Welles, Kurosawa, John Huston, and Jean Renoir. Throughout he shows himself to be thoughtful, honest, self-deprecating, witty, and often hilarious.

Conversations with Woody Allen is essential reading for everyone interested in the art of moviemaking and for everyone who has enjoyed the films of Woody Allen.

From the Hardcover edition.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Starred Review. Woody Allen biographer Lax has been conversing with the elusive, beloved film director for 36 years, and here's the proof: transcripts of their detailed shop talk distilled into chapters covering seven elements of filmmaking-writing, casting, shooting, etc.-and Allen's career as a whole. Despite a reputation for being odd and unapproachable, the man revealed in these dialogues is likable, forthcoming and even humble: "It's just not in me to make a great film; I don't have the depth of vision to do it." Fans, of course, will want to argue otherwise, but they'll be too absorbed by this fascinating, decades-long discussion to register the grievance. From the tremendous stable of actors Allen has directed-especially former muses Diane Keaton and Mia Farrow-to the deceptively intriguing details of editing *Another Woman*, Lax's interviews are penetrating but far from formal, giving readers the unique opportunity to hear Allen's thoughts on projects-in-progress (everything from *Bananas* to *Match Point*) and to join him on location. Fans will find a trove of Woody-on-Woody insight (heavy on second-guessing, light on personal details), and there's much advice for the aspiring artist: "The key is to work, enjoy the process, don't read about yourself... and keep your nose to the grindstone." Even casual fans will appreciate this work; with a handy index for tracking down favorite films and something interesting on nearly every page, it's a perfectly browsable volume. B/w photos.

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Review

"Fascinating . . . Readers will find a trove of Woody-on-Woody insight [and] something interesting on nearly every page." —*Baltimore Sun*

"Lax's informed questions . . . allow Allen to speak with intelligence and maturity."
—*The Washington Post*

"Mesmerizing." —*Financial Times*

"Remarkable . . . Fresh with an immediacy often missing in a retrospective." —*Raleigh News & Observer*

"You feel that you are in the same room, listening to someone asking intelligent, informed questions and hearing the subject giving intelligent, relaxed answers . . . An entertaining book."
—*The Washington Times*

From the Trade Paperback edition.

About the Author

Eric Lax is the author of *On Being Funny: Woody Allen and Comedy*, *Life and Death on 10 West*, and *The Mold in Dr. Florey's Coat*, and coauthor (with A. M. Sperber) of *Bogart*. His writing has appeared in *The Atlantic*, *The New York Times*, *Vanity Fair*, *Esquire*, and the *Los Angeles Times*. An officer of International PEN, he lives with his wife and their two sons in Los Angeles.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Yvonne Wagner:

Spent a free time for you to be fun activity to complete! A lot of people spent their spare time with their family, or their very own friends. Usually they doing activity like watching television, about to beach, or picnic within the park. They actually doing ditto every week. Do you feel it? Do you wish to something different to fill your personal free time/ holiday? Might be reading a book is usually option to fill your free time/ holiday. The first thing that you will ask may be what kinds of guide that you should read. If you want to consider look for book, may be the reserve untitled Conversations with Woody Allen: His Films, the Movies, and Moviemaking can be good book to read. May be it might be best activity to you.

Melanie Archer:

A lot of people always spent their free time to vacation or perhaps go to the outside with them friends and family or their friend. Are you aware? Many a lot of people spent they free time just watching TV, or perhaps playing video games all day long. In order to try to find a new activity here is look different you can read the book. It is really fun to suit your needs. If you enjoy the book that you just read you can spent the entire day to reading a guide. The book Conversations with Woody Allen: His Films, the Movies, and Moviemaking it is rather good to read. There are a lot of people who recommended this book. They were enjoying reading this book. If you did not have enough space to develop this book you can buy the e-book. You can m0ore quickly to read this book from your smart phone. The price is not too expensive but this book provides high quality.

Mark McKinney:

Playing with family in a very park, coming to see the sea world or hanging out with friends is thing that usually you might have done when you have spare time, subsequently why you don't try issue that really opposite from that. One particular activity that make you not experience tired but still relaxing, trilling like on roller coaster you already been ride on and with addition of information. Even you love Conversations with Woody Allen: His Films, the Movies, and Moviemaking, it is possible to enjoy both. It is great combination right, you still desire to miss it? What kind of hangout type is it? Oh can occur its mind hangout men. What? Still don't have it, oh come on its known as reading friends.

William Culley:

Is it a person who having spare time after that spend it whole day by watching television programs or just telling lies on the bed? Do you need something totally new? This Conversations with Woody Allen: His Films, the Movies, and Moviemaking can be the reply, oh how comes? It's a book you know. You are thus out of date, spending your free time by reading in this fresh era is common not a nerd activity. So what these books have than the others?

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