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The Battle for the Bs: 1950s Hollywood and the Rebirth of Low-Budget Cinema

Blair Davis

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#2305164 in Books Blair Davis 2012-04-05 2012-03-12Original language:EnglishPDF # 1 9.02 x .70 x 5.96l, .98 #File Name: 0813552532280 pagesThe Battle for the Bs 1950s Hollywood and the Rebirth of Low budget Cinema | File size: 60.Mb

Blair Davis : The Battle for the Bs: 1950s Hollywood and the Rebirth of Low-Budget Cinema before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Battle for the Bs: 1950s Hollywood and the Rebirth of Low-Budget Cinema:

1 of 2 people found the following review helpful. demonstrating how cheap films with guaranteed profits like I Was a

Teenage Werewolf were the very same ...By Alexander Davis
With *The Battle for the Bs*, Blair Davis provides a fascinating examination of the "underside" of the film industry. Through an incredible amount of archival research, Davis reveals the significance that some of the most notorious films of the 1950s had for a struggling studio system and a film industry battling it out with the increasing popularity of television. While Davis' subject would have been a worthwhile read simply for the current lack of research done on B-films, Davis's scholarship is particularly insightful, forcing readers to completely reconsider previous notions of low-budget cinema as "bad" and, more significantly, "unimportant." With this text, Davis reveals the centrality of low-budget filmmaking to the film industry, demonstrating how cheap films with guaranteed profits like *I Was a Teenage Werewolf* were the very same films that allowed studios to finance prestige, A-Films. To make this argument, Davis draws upon a wide range of research, and provides a great deal of historical information for filmmaking of the era. With chapters on the history of independent B-Film production studios, B-Films' relationship with television, and differences in production styles between "big-budget" Bs and low-budget Bs, this book is a must-read for anyone interested in post-Classical Hollywood Cinema, and is a strongly recommended read for anyone interested in Hollywood Cinema as a whole.³ of 5 people found the following review helpful. Lively but misinformed
By Mark Mcgee
I enjoyed this book but I wonder where the author got some of his information. Having written a few books myself I know how easy it is to spread misinformation but concerning the career of Robert L. Lippert it's hard to understand how the author could come up with *Jungle Goddess* as Lippert's first release. Go on any website and you'll find *Wildfire* listed as the first Screen Guild release. And there were a lot of pictures after that before *Jungle Goddess* showed up.

The emergence of the double-bill in the 1930s created a divide between A-pictures and B-pictures as theaters typically screened packages featuring one of each. With the former considered more prestigious because of their larger budgets and more popular actors, the lower-budgeted Bs served largely as a support mechanism to A-films of the major studios most of which also owned the theater chains in which movies were shown. When a 1948 U.S. Supreme Court antitrust ruling severed ownership of theaters from the studios, the B-movie soon became a different entity in the wake of profound changes to the corporate organization and production methods of the major Hollywood studios. In *The Battle for the Bs*, Blair Davis analyzes how B-films were produced, distributed, and exhibited in the 1950s and demonstrates the possibilities that existed for low-budget filmmaking at a time when many in Hollywood had abandoned the Bs. Made by newly formed independent companies, 1950s B-movies took advantage of changing demographic patterns to fashion innovative marketing approaches. They established such genre cycles as science fiction and teen-oriented films (think *Destination Moon* and *I Was a Teenage Werewolf*) well before the major studios and also contributed to the emergence of the movement now known as underground cinema. Although frequently proving to be multimillion-dollar box-office draws by the end of the decade, the Bs existed in opposition to the cinematic mainstream in the 1950s and created a legacy that was passed on to independent filmmakers in the decades to come.

"*The Battle for the Bs* is a highly-readable book that shies away from the jargon that often accompanies film theory, which will make it valuable to students studying film history as well as students who want to learn more about mid-twentieth century cultural history."