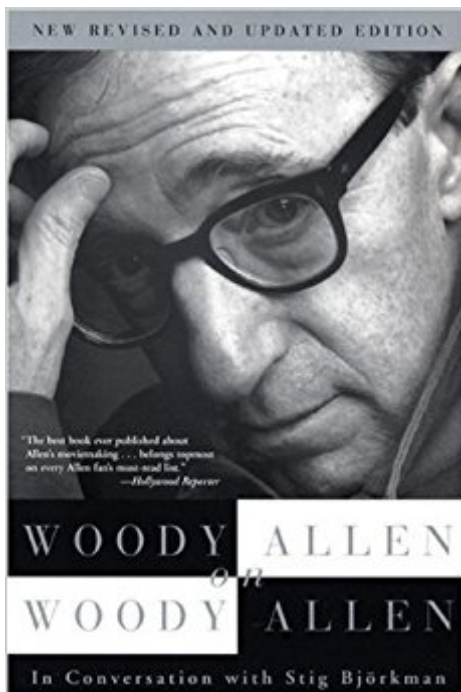


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# Woody Allen On Woody Allen



## Synopsis

Over the course of his long directing career, Woody Allen has portrayed contemporary American life with an unmistakable mixture of irony, neurotic obsession, and humor. *Woody Allen on Woody Allen* is a unique self-portrait of this uncompromising filmmaker that offers a revealing account of his life and work. In a series of rare, in-depth interviews, Allen brings us onto the sets and behind the scenes of all his films. Since its original publication, *Woody Allen on Woody Allen* has been the primary source of Allen's own thoughts on his work, childhood, favorite films, and inspirations. Now updated with one hundred pages of new material that brings us up to his Hollywood Ending, *Woody Allen on Woody Allen* is a required addition to any cinephile's library.

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## Customer Reviews

Fans of Woody Allen have long waited to hear him tell us in his own words about his life, his tastes, and his films, but until recently he has been reluctant to give lengthy interviews. This book is the conversation we've been waiting for, a dialogue with Stig Bjorkman in which Allen speaks openly about himself and his art. Bjorkman invites the writer/director to talk at length about his lesser-known movies as well as his famous ones. We also learn about Allen's filmmaking technique, his feelings about his stock company of actors, his influences, and why *Stardust Memories* and *The Purple Rose of Cairo* are his two personal favorites. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

In this collection of interviews with Bjorkman, a Swedish filmmaker, Allen emerges as a disciplined worker, far different from his famed persona as self-pitying and neurotic. The book will delight-and relieve-his fans. Allen discusses his craft and oeuvre, with a chapter devoted to each film in chronological order from *Take the Money and Run* to *Manhattan Murder Mystery*. He recommends "Socratic" learning rather than film school and reveals that he once did many takes but now, with increased confidence, infrequently reshoots scenes. He defends his portrayals of blacks against criticism from African American groups that he casts them only as menial characters, explains that his temperament determines the length of his films ("Scorsese's body rhythm is longer") and knocks American movie reviewers who "gush tremendously over populist junk films." There's virtually nothing here about his recently turbulent personal life, though Allen comments that, "one must be very lucky" to achieve a deep, lasting relationship. Photos. Copyright 1994 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

I am a long-time admirer of Woody Allen's films (at least most of them) and have read several books that evaluate his films, his film messages, and his filmmaking craft and have found them to be intellectually pretentious, so much so that their authors reminded me of the pretentious characters he so humorously satirizes in his films. While this book shows Allen to be a very intelligent and knowledgeable filmmaker (no surprise), it also reveals him to be a dedicated filmmaker who can be refreshingly modest and wise and shrewd in his judgment of people and social mores. He admits that in his very early films he just pointed the camera at where the action was, and that he learned a great deal from the exceptional cinematographers that he subsequently employed, e.g., Gordon Willis. It's well known that Allen is not particularly communicative with his actors, both in the initial interview and while directing, so it's revealing to hear him say that "90% of my films" is in the casting; that is, he gets the most suitable actor for the part and then simply lets the actor employ his / her craft on the set. The interviews reveal that Allen is well-read in literature, and it's no surprise that writing the script is his favorite part of filmmaking, and also worth noting that he can sometimes complete an entire script in a day. I liked the structure of the interviews in that they started with his first film and then discussed each subsequent film in chronological sequence. The interviewer, Stig Bjorkman, is a Swedish filmmaker and critic who is obviously well-versed in Allen's films since many of his questions and observations reflected a detailed knowledge of various scenes and characters in Allen's films. It certainly helped the rapport between interviewer and interviewee that they both shared a love of Bergman films. Allen acknowledges that, by and large, the studios have given him a great deal of creative freedom with his films, but that European audiences may have sustained his

autonomy in recent years. As mentioned, Allen comes across in these interviews as a dedicated, hard-working and creative filmmaker, and although he resembles the stock character he so often portrayed in his films in certain ways, in many other ways he is different from that character, e.g., he was a reasonably athletic adolescent. Nonetheless, some of those "neurotic" features are much in evidence in these interviews. He's obsessed with death and has a morbid fear of "perishing" (perhaps it's why he's such a workaholic). On numerous occasions, he cites Ernest Becker's "The Denial of Death" as a book that's shaped him both intellectually and emotionally. Of course, Woody always said that he "didn't want to achieve immortality through his work, but by not dying." He also reveals that he's not the hypochondriac he's portrayed but instead he's an "alarmist

This is a wonderful book chronicling the first twenty-five years of Woody Allen movies in the format of Allen's answering questions from interviewer Stig Bjorkman. The continuity in Allen's films is his fixation with perishing, which Allen believes is the only weighty matter of life. Everything else is irrelevant and unworthy of carrying a piece of art. He respects Diane Keaton's opinion more than any other, thinks that Judy Davis was the greatest actress of her generation and loves the work of Dianne Wiest. His favourite movie of his at the time was THE PURPLE ROSE OF CAIRO. He also discusses his three famous cinematographers, Gordon Willis, Carlo Di Palma and Sven Nykvist.

Excellent book if you are a fan of Woody Allen and his movies. I couldn't put it down and it is filled with in depth interviews where he shares his thoughts, memories, childhood stories, inspirations and much more. I felt like I was being given a back stage behind the scenes account of all of his films and life. It is funny, informative and very entertaining.

The book starts with a good interview about Allen's early days and his transition from a young movies' fan, to a skilled writer and director. The interviewer makes deep questions trying to reveal Allen's way of thinking, his taste on films, literature, music, etc. In addition the book makes a complete and deep revision of each Allen's movie in which Woody provides a detailed explanation and description of the movie itself. The subject, the locations where they were film, the election of the movie cast, as well as his relationship with the whole staff that has accompanied him along the years in the movies making process. If you like Woody Allen you will love this book because it is entertaining, it provides a lot of insight about Allen and while you are reading it, you feel you are part of the interview as well, like you had the chance to sit there discussing life and movies with him.

A great companion reader to Allen's career, right from the source. Read the stories behind your favorites, while also getting a good context for those films that you may still need to catch up with. Hard to put down once you start digging in.

I bought this book for my Father, a huge Woody fan. He said it's not only one of the best Woody Allen books he has read, but one of the best books in general.

A very relaxed and interesting discussion regarding the development of Allen's style and individual films that is very entertaining. This is an excellent companion to his earlier films. Bjorkman asks excellent questions that keep the discussion flowing in a chronological sense yet allow for Woody Allen to address many interesting topics related to his work. The focus here is really the body of work and not Allen's personal life. Like sitting with a bottle of wine and talking to two intelligent filmmakers about their craft.

Interesting book, good read. Thanks

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