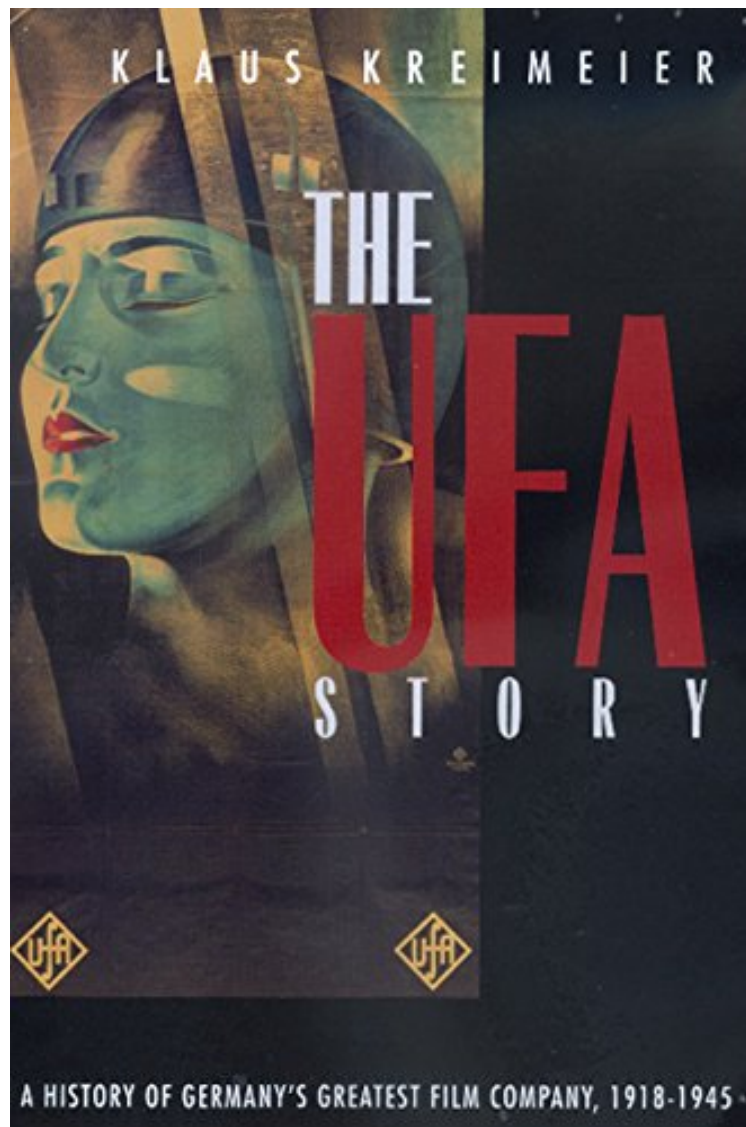


[Read ebook] The Ufa Story: A History of Germany's Greatest Film Company, 1918-1945 (Weimar and Now: German Cultural Criticism)

The Ufa Story: A History of Germany's Greatest Film Company, 1918-1945 (Weimar and Now: German Cultural Criticism)

Klaus Kreimeier

*ebooks | Download PDF | *ePub | DOC | audiobook*



[Download](#)

[Read Online](#)

#2816684 in Books 1999-10-26 Ingredients: Example Ingredients Original language: English PDF # 1 1.32 x 5.98 x 8.931, #File Name: 0520220692459 pages | File size: 34.Mb

Klaus Kreimeier : The Ufa Story: A History of Germany's Greatest Film Company, 1918-1945 (Weimar and Now: German Cultural Criticism) before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Ufa Story: A History of Germany's Greatest Film Company, 1918-1945 (Weimar and Now: German Cultural Criticism):

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Top heavy with historical, financial, and political info
By John Colaresi
If you're looking for a detailed book about Germany's Ufa film studio, this is the one you want. However, it might not be what you expected, at least for me as I have mixed reservations about it. My main complaint about *The Ufa Story* is that it's top heavy with historical, financial, and political info. It's very thorough in those aspects, maybe too thorough because they make for slow reading. You can find shorter and less detailed accounts of the studio and that info elsewhere, but not to this extreme if that's your choice. Klaus Kreimeier's book begins with how the studio was founded in 1918 by the German Army Supreme Command that wanted morale-boosting films made to counteract Germany's defeat, but they evolved to become "Germany's very German response to Hollywood as theaters were dominated by American films and others from France and Scandinavian countries and preferred by audiences. Plots became based more on German folklore, culture, and literature to promote pride in the nation's past. When certain films received international acclaim in the 1920s, many artists, like Emil Jannings, Pola Negri, Ernst Lubitsch, and F. W. Murnau left for Hollywood; Marlene Dietrich departed in the early 1930s. After the Nazis took over, filmmaking became an instrument of the state. Audiences wanted entertainment instead of political speeches and parading stormtroopers although you can find some kind of propaganda in almost any feature film. Of the over 1,100 films produced between 1933 and 1945, a very small percentage can be labeled pure propaganda and most of them were not big box office hits. There's a difference between a harmless nationalist film promoting love of country and its basic virtues (*Heimat* and mountain films), and a propaganda film promoting a political agenda and hate (*JUD SUSS*, *HEIMKEHR*). Some films blurred the line between these two types such as a few by Luis Trenker. Ufa cultivated its own star system and many films were artistically and technically well made because not all the best talent left Nazi Germany. I wanted to read more about films and who worked in front of and behind the camera on them, but in fairness to Kreimeier, this wasn't his intent. Most films are mentioned in passing so you'll have to look elsewhere to learn about them if they are unfamiliar to you and too many are omitted. Occasionally you'll find a few paragraphs or pages devoted to a famous film or person and learn something new about them. In the pages covering Murnau's *FAUST* (1926), you'll learn how the technical effects were executed, and how Ufa barely avoided creating a national scandal when the film's intertitles written by Germany's greatest living author at the time, Gerhart Hauptmann, were judged inferior and replaced. Although the film is now considered a classic of German cinema, most people don't know it was an expensive failure like Fritz Lang's *METROPOLIS* debuting a year later. These costly flops and others almost bankrupted Ufa and led Alfred Hugenberg, an important German businessman and early Hitler supporter, to purchase the company in 1927 and later transfer ownership to the Nazi Party in 1933. Another example of good research providing new info for me and maybe others is found in several pages devoted to the fantasy *AMPHITRYON* that became 1935's biggest hit: Jupiter's wife, Juno (Adele Sandrock) has Mercury (Paul Kemp) refer to her as Highest Lady... an allusion to the actress Emmy Sonnemann, whom the Reich Air Marshal [Herman Goering] had recently married. [Director Reinhold] Schunzel and his team permitted themselves the national joke. Ufa's managers bet they could get away with it; the censors raised timid objections or looked the other way; and [Reich Minister of Propaganda Joseph] Goebbels was delighted to have his rival Goering exposed to public ridicule. Like all despotic agencies with power, the Nazi censorship offices functioned perfectly and irrationally at the same time, working feverishly yet also at crossed purposes. That in-joke about Goering's wife was a very risky move for Schunzel who was half-Jewish and only allowed to work under a special permit because of his previous successes like 1933's *VIKTOR UND VIKTORIA*. As for actors, we learn that Hans Albers, who was Germany's biggest male star during the 1930s and 1940s, was contractually obligated to make an occasional propaganda film during the Nazi years like 1941's *CARL PETERS*, an anti-British and anti-Semitic story about Germany's lost colonies in Africa. Kreimeier says of Albers who despised the Nazis and made them pay big money for his work: Aloof, audacious, and not without a touch of cynicism, Albers lost no sleep over the question of who commissioned his films and he brought to his national Socialist roles the unmistakable Albers touch with its mixture of devil-may-care and adventure, of rough-and-tumble elegance and magical invincibility. Albers and the roles he played kept this explosive combination intact, and it was his artful ambivalence that kept him, one of the few authentic folk stars of the NS cinema, from becoming a Fascist figurehead. Other actors like Gustaf Grundgens and Trenker, who were also directors and whom Goebbels had plenty to say about in his diaries, are barely mentioned and deserve more attention. In summation - As much as I like Kreimeier's book, I have to agree with Publisher Weekly's review quoted above: A plus for his account is that he sets it within the context of the larger German culture. While it is packed with detail and interesting historical references, it is too prolix and discursive for general readers.

5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. The German Contribution
By kevymack
This is an excellent book which details the always fascinating story of UFA, the greatest film company in Germany and all of Europe which for quite some time gave Hollywood a run for its money as the film capital of the world. It also shows how many of the great directors, writers, film technicians etc. fled Germany for the freedom of Hollywood and the tremendous contribution they made to American cinema.

0 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Four Stars
By Julie D,Goetz
fascinating history of German filmmaking

Universum-Film AG best known by its signature logo, Ufa was once the largest film company in Europe. Founded by

the German High Command as a propaganda medium during World War I and always central to Germany's nationalistic big-business interests, Ufa was also home to the most innovative talents of the Weimar Republic. Fritz Lang, Marlene Dietrich, Emil Jannings, and Ernst Lubitsch were Ufa stars; *Metropolis*, *The Blue Angel*, and *Dr. Mabuse* were only a few of its finest works. From its dazzling theaters to its state-of-the-art studios and processing labs, from its comprehensive multimedia publicity campaigns to its avant-garde art films, Ufa challenged Hollywood for cultural dominance and market share in Jazz Age Europe. But the story grows darker after the simultaneous advent of sound films and National Socialism. The story of Ufa under Hitler, when technically superb films continued to be made, is the story of the corruption and destruction of this vital company by the state that brought it into existence.

.com This account of the first great European film studio, which came under the domination of the Nazis as World War II approached, should find a readership beyond students of movie history. From the Berlin soundstages of Universum-Film AG emerged classics such as "Metropolis" and "The Blue Angel" and Hollywood luminaries such as Marlene Dietrich and Billy Wilder. German journalist Klaus Kreimeier crafts a chilling drama of a hotbed of artistic expression gradually perverted by the Nazis into a fascist propaganda factory. From Publishers Weekly Universum-Film AG (Ufa) was founded in 1918 at the direction of the German Army Supreme Command for propagandistic purposes, but it went on to become "Germany's very German response to Hollywood." Freelance journalist Kreimeier, former cultural editor for *Der Spiegel*, traces the growth of the company from its founding through its demise at the end of the Nazi era, during which time it had become, once again, an instrument of the state. Ufa developed such stars as Emil Jannings and Marlene Dietrich, who turned out to be "several sizes too large" for the company and moved on to Hollywood. Kreimeier attributes Ufa's success during the interwar years to its "instinct for business and art... and a feel for what the public wants." In his opinion, the film that best represents the company's aesthetic is Fritz Lang's *Metropolis*. A plus for his account is that he sets it within the context of the larger German culture. While it is packed with detail and interesting historical references, it is too prolix and discursive for general readers. Copyright 1996 Reed Business Information, Inc. From *Library Journal* Under the auspices of the Universum-Film AG (Ufa) film company, German cinema of the Twenties and early Thirties reached a high level of technical excellence and creativity. Hitler and propaganda minister Goebbels later used Ufa to advance their nationalistic and anti-Semitic aims, most notably in the notorious *Jud Suss*. Although Ufa continued to turn out films, it crumbled along with the Third Reich. The author, a former cultural editor at *Der Spiegel*, has written a dense, sometimes dry account of the company from its Weimar years to the controversial period of state ownership under the Nazis. Figures appear like directors Fritz Lang and Ernst Lubitsch (who fled Germany for Hollywood) and actor Emil Jannings (who stayed), but they don't come to life on these pages. A much fuller treatment of individual Ufa films is also needed. Since the author's main focus is on political forces at work both within and outside Ufa, the book's appeal is limited to serious students of German history. Not a necessary addition for most film collections. Stephen Rees, Levittown Regional Lib., Pa. Copyright 1996 Reed Business Information, Inc.