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John Ford Made Westerns: Filming the Legend in the Sound Era

Gaylyn Studlar, Matthew Bernstein

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Fresh perspectives on some of the most influential films of John Ford.

The Western is arguably the most popular and enduring form in cinematic history, and the acknowledged master of that genre was John Ford. His Westerns, including The Searchers, Stagecoach, and The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance, have had an enormous influence on contemporary U.S. films, from Star Wars to Taxi Driver.

In John Ford Made Westerns, nine major essays by prominent scholars of Hollywood film situate the sound-era Westerns of John Ford within contemporary critical contexts and regard them from fresh perspectives. These range from examining Ford’s relation to other art forms (most notably literature, painting, and music) to exploring the development of the director’s reputation as a director of Westerns. While giving attention to film style and structure, the volume also treats the ways in which these much-loved films engage with notions of masculinity and gender roles, capitalism and community, as well as racial, sexual, and national identity.

Contributors include Charles Ramirez Berg, Matthew Bernstein, Edward Buscombe, Joan Dagle, Barry Keith Grant, Kathryn Kalinak, Peter Lehman, Charles J. Maland, Gaylyn Studlar, and Robin Wood.

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