There is no movie musical more fun than Singin in the Rain, and few that remain as fresh over the years. . . . It is a transcendent experience, and no one who loves movies can afford to miss it.--Roger Ebert  Americas most popular film critic is hardly alone in singing the praises of Singin in the Rain. This quintessential American film--made in Hollwyoods Golden Age, showcasing the genius of Gene Kelly, and featuring what Ebert calls the most joyous musical sequence ever filmed--has inspired love and admiration from fellow critics, film scholars, and movie buffs worldwide for more than half a century. Indeed, its reputation continues to grow: the American Film Institute now ranks it number 1 on its list of the Greatest Movie Musicals of All Time and number 5 on its list of the Greatest American Films of All Time. Echoing the enthusiasm of the films most devoted fans, Earl Hess and Pratibha Dabholkar embrace and illuminate both the film and its reputation. Combining lucid prose with meticulous scholarship, they provide for the first time the complete inside story of how this classic movie was made, marketed, and received. They re-create the actual movie-making experience, on the set and behind the scenes, and chronicle every step in production from original concept through casting, scripting, rehearsals, filming, scoring, and editing. They then trace its distribution, critical reception, and enduring reputation. The book is brimming with human interest, bursting with anecdotes and quotes by and about the films stars and makers. Here are Gene Kelly and Donald OConnor at the top of their form, along with Debbie Reynolds and Cyd Charisse in their breakthrough roles. Here, too, are fascinating tidbits--about censorship troubles, continuity flaws, stunt doubles for Kelly, voice doubles for cast members, the dubbing of taps, and genealogy of all the songs. Hess and Dabholkar also provide in-depth analyses of each of the major song-and-dance performances, including details of everything from the dynamics of Gotta Dance! to the physical challenges of the remarkable title number. Based on exhaustive research in oral histories, studio
production records, letters, memoirs, and interviews, their book is factually impeccable, compulsively readable, and indispensable for anyone who loves movies at their absolute best. This book is part of the CultureAmerica series.

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My Personal Review:
The thing I liked most about the book, besides the subject matter of course, was the writing style; it was easy flowing and friendly. I have read a lot of books, biographies and the like, which were necessarily packed with details. Many times these things are just too gruesome in writing style. But one slogs through it because the subject is of interest. You will not get that effect here. These authors did an excellent job of writing an accessible, coherent, and frankly entertaining story.

Which brings up the other thing I really liked -- the frankly entertaining story. Overall, it is detailed, well researched, well organized, and well painted with color. I learned a cart load of interesting things about the making of this fantastic film. But strangely, in a good way, the authors managed to reflect the tone of the film -- a lighthearted and fun romp of a story. I had trouble putting it down.

This is definitely a must read. Ultimately, I should comment about repetitiveness. Substantively, there is none. However, the book is divided into chapters and subsections dealing with specific themes or aspects of the film and its people. Since many events in the making of the film (just like in life) ultimately lead to more than one consequence, it made sense to tie things together by referring back to the original, motivating event. Typically, that is not referred to as repetitive. Rather, that tends to be referred to as the hallmark of a good, coherent communicator.

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