

Kazan on Directing

By Elia Kazan

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Elia Kazan was the twentieth century's most celebrated director of both stage and screen, and this monumental, revelatory book shows us the master at work. Kazan's list of Broadway and Hollywood successes—*A Streetcar Named Desire*, *Death of a Salesman*, *On the Waterfront*, to name a few—is a testament to his profound impact on the art of directing. This remarkable book, drawn from his notebooks, letters, interviews, and autobiography, reveals Kazan's method: how he uncovered the "spine," or core, of each script; how he analyzed each piece in terms of his own experience; and how he determined the specifics of his production. And in the final section, "The Pleasures of Directing"—written during Kazan's final years—he becomes a wise old pro offering advice and insight for budding artists, writers, actors, and directors.

From the Trade Paperback edition.

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Kazan on Directing By Elia Kazan Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #509213 in eBooks
- Published on: 2009-04-18
- Released on: 2009-04-21
- Format: Kindle eBook

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Editorial Review

From Booklist
Starred Review The late film and theater director Elia Kazan may still be vilified in some circles for naming names to HUAC in the 1950s, but there is no denying he was an important artistic force in mid-twentieth-century America. Many a seminal play and film from this period—All My Sons, A Streetcar Named Desire, Death of a Salesman, On the Waterfront, and others—has Kazan's fingerprints on it. This fascinating book collects Kazan's notes and journal entries associated with those seminal works as well as his notes on his productions of many lesser or, at least, less successful works by Tennessee Williams, Arthur Miller, and others, including Thornton Wilder, Archibald MacLeish, and Maxwell Anderson. From these writings we learn, for example, the extent to which Williams depended on the kindness and insight of Kazan to birth his masterpieces and also the limits of that dependence. We learn from Kazan's journal entries how self-lacerating his criticism of his own artistic missteps could be. Also included is Kazan's fine essay on the craft of directing, "The Pleasure of Directing," and editor Cornfield's extensive notes and commentary, providing a context for Kazan's words. An invaluable resource for American theater and film aficionados. -- Jack Helbig

Review
"To read this book is to sit with Kazan as he talks about his work. You feel his energy, devotion, and openness. You are given rare and fascinating access to the insights and techniques of a great director." —Sidney Lumet

"Kazan stands alone in his work both on stage and screen. This book provides an excellent opportunity to deepen our understanding of Kazan's achievements." —Alec Baldwin

"A fascinating account of how a master director works. . . . It is also, quite simply, a good read." —*The New Criterion*

"A wonderfully conflicted yet curiously confident self-portrait of a great director." — *Los Angeles Times*

"Unusually entertaining . . . It's not just his insights, it's the incisive way he expresses them." —*New York Observer*

"This is Kazan the professional speaking, a giant of the Method spilling his secrets. . . . An indispensable resource for anyone hoping to understand the direction of actors and the differences between stage and screen. . . . Revelatory and instructive." —*Directors Guild of America Quarterly*

"*Kazan on Directing* displays Kazan's interpretive genius at work, analyzing each major play and movie, working with writers on scripts and actors on interpretations. . . . Invaluable." —*The Providence Journal*

"[Kazan] may be the most influential director of his time after Hitchcock. . . . If only every living American director would read this.." —*The Buffalo News*

"Remarkable. . . . A portrait of the artist in his own words. . . . A marvelous dissection and explanation of how Kazan brought to life some of America's greatest pieces of drama, and at what personal price." —Eric Lax, truthdig.com

“Elia Ka...

About the Author
Elia Kazan was born in 1909 in Istanbul. He graduated from Williams College and attended the Yale School of Drama before joining the Group Theatre. He was the founder of the Actors Studio, and he won three Tony Awards for direction (for *All My Sons, Death of a Salesman*, and *J.B.*) and two Academy Awards (for *Gentleman’s Agreement* and *On the Waterfront*), as well as an honorary Oscar in 1999 for lifetime achievement. He died in September 2003.

Users Review

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