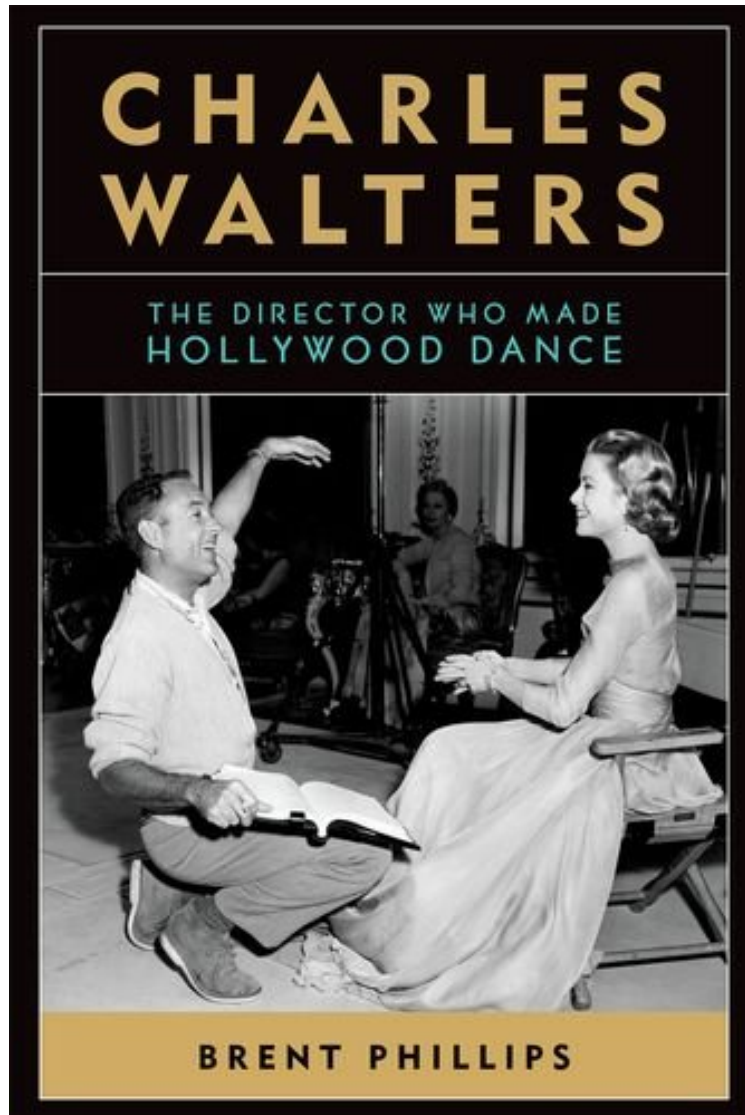


[Free] Charles Walters: The Director Who Made Hollywood Dance (Screen Classics)

## Charles Walters: The Director Who Made Hollywood Dance (Screen Classics)

*Brent Phillips*

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**Brent Phillips : Charles Walters: The Director Who Made Hollywood Dance (Screen Classics)** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Charles Walters: The Director Who Made Hollywood Dance (Screen Classics):

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Briings necessary attention to a director whose name adorns some of the most famous musicals ever madeBy Victor ThomasCharles Walters is one of the few directors who started not

only as a performer, but as an acclaimed performer, on Broadway no less. He directed at MGM during its peak Freed unit years, helming some of their biggest hits, yet has rarely been accorded the attention that other musical directors such as Minnelli and Berkeley have received. He seems to have preferred it that way, in that he was seen as a craftsman who delivered on budget, sort of like a musical "one take" W.S. Van Dyke. He wasn't flashy, but was hands on, respected, well-liked. He usually worked with performers who were already established, and managed to keep them afloat, tailoring to their talents. The one exception was Leslie Caron, who was still on the rise, and who had her stardom cemented by *Lili*, which is one of the few films that did show a more emotional, personal Walters stamp, for which he was rewarded an Oscar nomination. This biography uncovered interesting factoids, such as his unheralded work on *Gigi*, his lack of rapport with Debbie Reynolds and Vera-Ellen, and his pre-film career on Broadway. Walters was a very private man, reminding me a little of Hermes Pan, as both allowed others to hog the spotlight, while working steadily for decades, Walters living more openly as a gay man than Pan was able to do. This book successfully resurrects a neglected and underrated talent, and does much to give due credit to Walters for his many contributions to entertainment.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Celebrate Charles Walters! By Kal Peyton Charles Walters was the unsung hero of many of the glorious MGM musicals. Brent Williams, at last, provides the long over due biography of this important director. If you enjoyed "Easter Parade", "High Society", "Summer Stock" among others of that era, Charles Walters was the man who made the stars (and the stories) come alive on the screen. As a talented dancer in New York who made his way to Hollywood, he had the ability to make all the actors he worked with feel he was committed to their success. The stars returned his direction and care with memorable performances. To this day his work and his films are fresh, entertaining and visually stunning. We have all heard of the other directors of MGM musicals forever, now the story of the man that made the musicals really sing - can now be told. Walters was courageous enough to live his life as a gay director, when one had to stay "in the closet" to have a career in the 40's, 50's and 60's. This behind the scene story is for everyone who enjoyed the glorious Hollywood musical treats. His ability to get Judy Garland to perform on film and stage is also revealing and entertaining. Charles Walters indeed did make Hollywood dance. and his talents are now documented and celebrated!

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Reverent and Joyous By Peter Fields A completely captivating account of one of MGM's foremost directors. Never salacious, yet deliciously behind the scenes, it's impossible to put down. If you're not familiar with Charles Walters, you'll be amazed and pleased with how many of your favorite films he directed. The stories and memories of those he surrounded himself with never fail to enlighten the reader of a man who was probably far too loving and respectful of his art to really be appreciated during his lifetime. A must read.

From the trolley scene in *Meet Me in St. Louis* (1944) to Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers's last dance on the silver screen (*The Barkleys of Broadway*, 1949) to Judy Garland's timeless, tuxedo-clad performance of "Get Happy" (*Summer Stock*, 1950), Charles Walters staged the iconic musical sequences of Hollywood's golden age. During his career, this Academy Award-nominated director and choreographer showcased the talents of stars such as Gene Kelly, Doris Day, Debbie Reynolds, and Frank Sinatra. However, despite his many critical and commercial triumphs, Walters's name often goes unrecognized today. In the first full-length biography of Walters, Brent Phillips chronicles the artist's career, from his days as a featured Broadway performer and protégé of theater legend Robert Alton to his successes at Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. He takes readers behind the scenes of many of the studio's most beloved musicals, including *Easter Parade* (1948), *Lili* (1953), *High Society* (1956), and *The Unsinkable Molly Brown* (1964). In addition, Phillips recounts Walters's associations with Lucille Ball, Joan Crawford, and Gloria Swanson, examines the director's uncredited work on several films, including the blockbuster *Gigi* (1958), and discusses his contributions to musical theater and American popular culture. This revealing book also considers Walters's personal life and explores how he navigated the industry as an openly gay man. Drawing on unpublished oral histories, correspondence, and new interviews, this biography offers an entertaining and important new look at an exciting era in Hollywood history.

"[A] lively biography. . . Charles Walters: The Director Who Made Hollywood Dance is really a backstager, opening a curtain on a veritable musical factory, where the workers were all experts and the product a lesson in self-confidence." Ethan Mordden, *Wall Street Journal* "An extremely significant contribution to film scholarship, full of very precise detail about Walters' multifarious contributions to the show business world in which he operated, demonstrating throughout a serious commitment to its subject, a very great director whose life and work have been grievously overlooked until now." David Ehrenstein, *Keyframe and Cahiers du Cinema* "A much-needed, very welcome reminder of the genius of Charles Walters, whose work has been too long neglected by historians and students of American film. Phillips offers a lively, convincing argument that Walters should take his place alongside such other greats of musical film as Vincente Minnelli, Stanley Donen, and Gene Kelly." William J. Mann, author of *Kate: The Woman Who Was Hepburn and Tinseltown: Murder, Morphine and Madness at the Dawn of Hollywood* "It's a treat that readers (like me) will have the opportunity to discover the underrated director-choreographer who created some of the most defining screen numbers for Garland, Astaire, Kelly, Crosby, Sinatra, and others. "Get Happy," "We're a

Couple of Swells", "Well Did you Evah?" The numbers in his films have been some of my favorites since I was a teenager this book is for anyone who loves Broadway and Hollywood musicals."Casey Nicholaw, Tony Award-winning Broadway director-choreographer of *The Drowsy Chaperone*, *The Book of Mormon*, and Disney's *Aladdin*"Brent Phillips has provided anyone with a passion for the golden age of Hollywood musicals with a much needed and wonderfully informative biography of director Charles Walters. Phillips makes an excellent case that Walters, who hitherto has been dismissed as a mere company man, was actually a genuine artist whose taste and skill not alone shaped his own films but made enormous contributions to films directed by other better known directors. Phillips also writes sensitively and not sensationally about Walters' private life and how a brave talented gay man could swim through the rough waters of Homophobic Hollywood with his integrity intact."Charles Busch, actor/playwright (*The Tale of the Allergist's Wife*, *Die Mommie Die*)"Easter Parade, *The Barkleys of Broadway*, and *Summer Stock* were among my favorite movie musicals as a child indeed the work of Charles Walters inspired me to become a director and choreographer myself. Now Brent Phillips shines the spotlight on the unsung genius behind some of Hollywood's most iconic musicals, and takes us on the ultimate backstage tour. This book is a must-have for any movie or theater lover's library."Susan Stroman, Tony Award-winning director and choreographer of *The Producers*, *The Scottsboro Boys*, and *Bullets Over Broadway*"Brent Phillips consistently wins the confidence of the reader with his precise, no-nonsense look at the career of director and choreographer Charles Walters. He gives us a full, satisfying account of how Walters worked on films such as *EASTER PARADE*, *SUMMER STOCK* and *TORCH SONG*. Thanks to Phillips' fine work, Walters' place in the history of the MGM is no longer a mere footnote."Brian Kellow, author of *Pauline Kael: A Life in the Dark*, *Ethel Merman: A Life*, and *The Bennetts: An Acting Family*"Brent Phillips makes a staggeringly persuasive case that Charles Walters is one of the most underappreciated directors and choreographers in the annals of film history. The book also brings to light the trailblazing Walters did living openly as a gay man during an era when such things were strictly taboo. Exhaustively researched and impeccably written, this addictive treatise made me rabid to rediscover and reassess Walters' entire oeuvre. It is absolutely essential reading!"Sam Irvin, author of *Kay Thompson: From Funny Face to Eloise*"Chuck Walters was Hollywood's best kept secret. Thankfully, his days as an overlooked and underappreciated artist are finally over. In this informative and engaging biography, Brent Phillips examines the life and legacy of the multi-talented director, dancer and choreographer who brought his special brand of showmanship to every production. From Fred Astaire and Judy Garland strolling along Fifth Avenue in *Easter Parade* to an invincible Debbie Reynolds on the road to somewhere in *The Unsinkable Molly Brown*, Walters was responsible for some of the most beloved images in American film. Through careful consideration of Walters's work on Broadway and in Hollywood, Phillips reclaims a life and career worthy of much greater attention."Mark Griffin, author of *A Hundred or More Hidden Things: The Life and Films of Vincente Minnelli*"I'm a huge fan of the great MGM musicals. I've read just about every book written about the people who were involved in creating those wonderful movies. And yet, Chuck Walters was hardly ever mentioned. His name would fly by during the credits of some of the best musicals - and that was it. I never saw anything written about him. Never an interview or a documentary. I always wondered why he was so ignored. Well, now I know why. His story is fascinating. Chuck Walters was a gifted and decent man in a world of ego driven bullies and sharks. *The Director Who Made Hollywood Dance* makes it clear that this modest, self-deprecating, incredibly talented man was happy and grateful to be doing his job and didn't need publicity or headlines. For people like me, who admire the geniuses that gave us some of the best entertainment of the century, this book is an important piece of the puzzle about one of its greatest talents a beautifully written biography."Barry Manilow, Grammy, Emmy, and Tony Award-winning singer-songwriter"Phillips' diligently researched tome, which draws on letters and oral histories, teases out this contradictory figure: the star who ceded the spotlight to others, the self deprecating man in a cut-throat world, the visionary renowned for generous collaboration."Dance Today"As Brent Phillips reveals in his lively biography, Walters was an unremarkable man with remarkable abilities. . . . Charles Walters: *The Director Who Made Hollywood Dance* is really a backstager, opening a curtain on a veritable musical factory, where the workers were all experts and the product a lesson in self-confidence. . . . This is the story of a time in American culture when our life coaches were singers and dancers, because they made happy endings look easy, even deserved. Forget your troubles and just get happy."Wall Street Journal"A top biography which receives my very highest recommendation."Laura's Miscellaneous Musings"Despite a career of several decades directing and choreographing an impressive number of famed Hollywood movies, Charles Walters hasn't received the recognition of his peers....That's now been resolved by Brent Phillips' film-devouring, sexually knowing Charles Walters."Bay Area Reporter"Brent Phillips' biography on the director/choreographer is just as bouncy and lyrical as the director it's about."Journeys in Classic Film"MGM musical lovers be they longtime or more recent sweethearts will lap up this gracefully presented study of director Charles Walters. The author's thoroughly readable, enlightening study scores a hit for the University Press of Kentucky."Books by David Marshall James"Phillips, a former Joffrey Ballet soloist, writes with warmth and engagement about a characteristic and, yes, overlooked figure from the mid-century movie industry."Shepherd Express"Brent Phillips's newest book *Charles Walters: The Man Who Made Hollywood Dance* is a compulsively readable look at one of Hollywood's unsung directors. Little has been written on Walters, for reasons unknown, so Phillips's book comes as a

refreshing look at the Golden Age of a director and the time he lived in. The enthusiasm of the book is palpable, evoking the joy that Walters brought to his films. It is an exhilarating read and one to cherish for a long time." *Film Matters*

About the Author Brent Phillips is a former Joffrey Ballet soloist. He currently serves as the Audiovisual Archivist at the Rockefeller Archive Center in Tarrytown, New York.