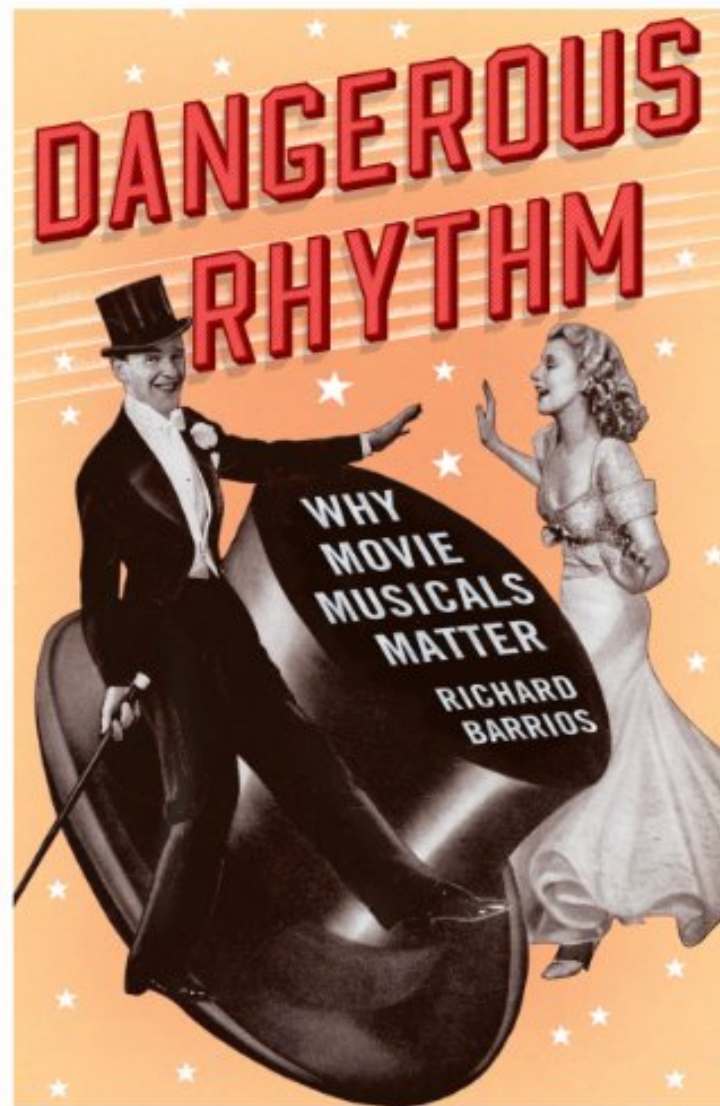


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Dangerous Rhythm: Why Movie Musicals Matter

Richard Barrios

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Richard Barrios : Dangerous Rhythm: Why Movie Musicals Matter before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Dangerous Rhythm: Why Movie Musicals Matter:

6 of 6 people found the following review helpful. Dangerous Rhythm Matters! By Larry D I am a lifelong fan of the Hollywood musical. I have believed movie musicals matter since I was 10 years old. And while I have not written an opinionated critical history of the movie musical, if I were to write one, I could only hope to come up with something as enjoyable and thought-provoking as Dangerous Rhythm. Mr. Barrios' obvious affection and respect for the genre is apparent on every page. He's got 87 years to cover and he makes no attempt to mention every film, every performer. If

you, too, think movie musicals matter, you will no doubt find a favorite movie conspicuous by its absence. But make no mistake, he gets the high points - the movies important for artistry, financial success, influence or any combination thereof, are given their due; from "The Jazz Singer" and "Love Me Tonight" to "The Wizard of Oz" and "Singin' in the Rain", with a tip of the hat to spectacular flops like Jolson's "Say It With Song" and the Village People vehicle "Can't Stop the Music". While we don't see eye-to-eye on everything (He loves Maurice Chevalier, whom I cannot stomach), even where we disagree, Mr. Barrios' arguments are always well articulated and reasonable. (I still don't care for Chevalier, but I understand why Mr. Barrios does.) I smiled and whispered "Yes!" when "the joyous and under-appreciated Donald O'Connor" was finally given some of the respect he so richly deserves. (Come on, he wipes the floor with Gene Kelly in the "Moses Supposes" number.) And I had an "Aha!" moment when I learned that the not-untalented but utterly blank Lucille Bremer, inexplicably starred in far too many big-big MGM musicals in the 1940s and 50s, was a "friend" of uber-producer Arthur Freed. Seldom have I read a more enjoyable combination of scholarship and dish.

6 of 6 people found the following review helpful. Fascinating Rhythm
By Moshe Bloxenheim
Author Richard Barrios has always had a knack for providing the history and the stories of different areas of the American Film Industry in ways that are informative, fascinating and engaging. "Dangerous Rhythm" continues in this vein - not so much as a historical summing up, but instead Mr. Barrios gives a very thoughtful look at the Hollywood Movie Musical and its place in both the film industry and in American culture. Different musicals are examined and often compared with films from other studios and times to show the way Hollywood developed (or mishandled) ideas, how different connections, events and trends could bring success or disaster and why the Movie Musical has always been a very unique creation. While I certainly must praise Mr. Barrios' thoroughness in covering his subject, I really appreciate his ability to share his enthusiasm with the reader. Even the footnotes have a level of zest which demonstrates that "Dangerous Rhythm" is no mere book of scholarly observation but a good, solid and entertaining work that can be read and reread with pleasure. There are going to be many films that I will now watch in a whole new light.

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. A terrific book about a fascinating film genre.
By J. D. Heise
A fine look at the movie musical and how they have both evolved and devolved, with specific looks at such classics as SINGIN' IN THE RAIN, THE BAND WAGON, MY FAIR LADY, THE SOUND OF MUSIC and others. Barrios previous work, A SONG IN THE DARK, took a fascinating look at the early musicals of the sound era and is one of the best books on that period-this takes a wider view and is fascinating from beginning to end (he even goes so far as to rank the SOUTH PARK movie as one of the better latter-day musicals, which might raise a few eyebrows but since I love that film as well, it is nice to see that film given some props in a book. Well done!

Singin' in the Rain, The Sound of Music, Camelot--love them or love to hate them, movie musicals have been a major part of all our lives. They're so glitzy and catchy that it seems impossible that they could have ever gone any other way. But the ease in which they unfold on the screen is deceptive. Dorothy's dream of finding a land "Somewhere Over the Rainbow" was nearly cut, and even a film as great as The Band Wagon was, at the time, a major flop. In *Dangerous Rhythm: Why Movie Musical Matter*, award winning historian Richard Barrios explores movie musicals from those first hits, *The Jazz Singer* and *Broadway Melody*, to present-day Oscar winners *Chicago* and *Les Misérables*. History, film analysis, and a touch of backstage gossip combine to make *Dangerous Rhythm* a compelling look at musicals and the powerful, complex bond they forge with their audiences. Going behind the scenes, Barrios uncovers the rocky relationship between Broadway and Hollywood, the unpublicized off-camera struggles of directors, stars, and producers, and all the various ways by which some films became our most indelible cultural touchstones -- and others ended up as train wrecks. Not content to leave any format untouched, Barrios examines animated musicals and popular music with insight and enthusiasm. Cartoons have been intimately connected with musicals since *Steamboat Willie*. Disney's short *Silly Symphonies* grew into the instant classic *Snow White*, which paved the way for that modern masterpiece, *South Park: Bigger, Longer, Uncut*. Without movie musicals, Barrios argues, MTV would have never existed. On the flip side, without MTV we might have been spared *Evita*. Informed, energetic, and humorous, *Dangerous Rhythm* is both an impressive piece of scholarship and a joy to read.

"Barrios knows this material inside out, which allows him to step back to make often inspired observations." -- New York Times Book "[Barrios] writes about his subject authoritatively ...and always directly. He does so with an absence of heavy theorizing and an abundance of strong opinions. Part of what makes *Dangerous Rhythm* enjoyable to read is its idiomatic prose." --Wall Street Journal "[A] hugely readable, authoritative meditation on the Hollywood musical." -- Philadelphia Inquirer "Simultaneously a rigorous dissection of and a valentine to the movie musical." -Milwaukee Journal Sentinel "Few people can discuss early-talkie musicals and television's *Glee* with equal authority. Richard Barrios sees it all as part of a continuum, which is what makes his wide-ranging book so relevant. His sense of humor and lively prose style transform a scholarly treatise into a highly enjoyable reading experience." --Leonard Maltin, film critic and historian. "Barrios knows his stuff, and musical film aficionados are well advised to get a hold of *Dangerous Rhythm*. He combines vast knowledge of the subject with tangy writing, resulting in a hard-to-put-down read." -- Matthew Kennedy, author of *Roadshow! The Fall of Film Musical in the 1960s*

About the Author
Richard Barrios

worked in the music and film industries before turning to film history with the award-winning *A Song in the Dark* and with *Screened Out*, which was the basis of a film series by Turner Classic Movies. He lectures extensively and appears frequently on television and in film and DVD documentaries. Born in the swamps of south Louisiana and a longtime resident of New York City, he now lives in western New Jersey, near Philadelphia