Vidor, King (1894-1982) Encyclopedia Article

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In a 40 year career, Texan-born pioneer film director King Vidor necessarily adapted to commercial considerations, but his personal vision, and his concern with the problems of society and the individuals within it, resulted in two silent masterpieces (both his wives, Florence Vidor and Eleanor Boardman, were leading silent stars) and a handful of significant sound films. He established his reputation with a powerful anti-war statement, *The Big Parade* (1925), and secured it with *The Crowd* (1928). This profoundly realistic examination of struggle and alienation in the big city revealed a virtuoso use of the camera. Vidor's eclectic tastes and wide interests informed the watershed all-black musical *Hallelujah* (1929), the huge hit *The Champ* (1931), and the Depression drama *Our Daily Bread* (1934). Later work ranged from *Stella Dallas* (1937) and *The Fountainhead* (1949), to Westerns *Duel in the Sun* (1947) and *Man Without a Star* (1955) and the epic *War and Peace* (1956). A five-time Academy nominee, he retired in 1959 and received an honorary Oscar in 1979 for "incomparable achievements as a cinematic creator and innovator."

Further Reading:

Brownlow, Kevin. *Behind the Mask of Innocence: Films of Social Conscience in the Silent Era.* London, Jonathan Cape, 1990.

Finler, Joel W. *The Movie Directors Story.* New York, Crescent Books, 1986.

Vidor, King. *On Filmmaking.* New York, Daniel McKay Co., 1972.

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