Who's in the Money?
The Great Depression Musicals and Hollywood’s New Deal
Harvey G. Cohen

Advance Praise:

'Harvey G. Cohen’s Who’s In the Money? is a brilliantly written and thoroughly researched study of such classic Great Depression era musicals as Footlight Parade and Gold Diggers of 1933. The cast of characters in these pages – Franklin Roosevelt, Walt Disney, James Cagney, Upton Sinclair, Hugh Johnson, among others – is extraordinary. Cohen’s enthusiasm for his topic is self-evident. Highly recommended!'

- Professor Douglas Brinkley, Rice University

- The first book to look in detail at the Warner Bros. visible public support for Franklin D. Roosevelt’s administration in the early days of the New Deal. It features the most extensive primary research ever completed regarding the creation of the National Recovery Administration’s (NRA) motion picture code, including many new insights about the process.

- An intriguing story of financial survival, political intrigue and backstabbing during the worst of the Great Depression. Harvey G. Cohen details an age-old history of how powerful industry bosses have – and still do (Uber and Sports Direct to name a few companies currently facing criticism) – take the overwhelming share of profits, while curtailing workers’ rights and salaries.

- Publication coincides with a resurgence in the popularity of musicals following the success of La La Land. Who’s in the Money focuses on the Warner Bros. widely loved musicals 42nd Street, Gold Diggers of 1933, and Footlight Parade.

- Harvey G. Cohen’s last book Duke Ellington’s America (University of Chicago Press, 2010) was named one of the best books of the year by the Washington Post and received significant coverage in the New Yorker, TLS, Guardian, NY Times, BBC and NPR


- Harvey G. Cohen will be appearing at the British Film Institute and is available for interview

Harry and Jack Warner were among the most important advocates and fundraisers of President Franklin Roosevelt during his 1932 presidential campaign. They supported his New Deal legislation in their film marketing during 1933,
and themes and plot points from their successful series of Great Depression Musicals from that year (*42nd Street*, *Gold Diggers of 1933*, *Footlight Parade*) resonated deeply with Roosevelt’s policies and philosophies. But while the Warners posed as exemplars of the New Deal in real life and in their movies, they were attempting to reverse Roosevelt’s policies within their studio and their industry.

Using dozens of newly unearthed primary sources, this book examines the bitter and little-known struggle in Hollywood and Washington D.C. during 1933 to create a National Recovery Administration (NRA) code of practice for the motion picture industry. This months-long process pitted independent film studios and theatres against the major studios, as well as newly organized actors and screenwriters against studio management. Through the manipulation of New Deal legislation, Harry and Jack Warner especially, along with the other studio moguls, sought to curtail workers’ rights and salaries instead of bolstering both sides of the labour-management divide as they were supposed to do under NRA regulations. They attempted to ensure that the economic pain of the Depression was served as much as possible upon artists and craftsmen, not owners or management.

With its tales of Hollywood employees, including movie stars, fighting to win a fair share of the proceeds of their labour (as many of the characters are also doing in the Great Depression Musicals), the creation of the NRA code makes for an intriguing story of financial survival, political intrigue and backstabbing during the worst of the Great Depression.

- Features unprecedented research and coverage of the 1933 WB Great Depression Musicals and the 1933 industry-wide negotiations for the NRA code for Hollywood and Washington, D.C.
- Documents the beginnings of Hollywood talent (from stars, extras and craftspeople) and independent producers fighting against the oligopolistic business practices of the major Hollywood studios.
- Shows how the 1933-1934 events in Hollywood eventually led to the Supreme Court’s post-WW2 dismantling of much of the studios’ overwhelming industry power.

**Dr Harvey G. Cohen** is an American cultural historian at King’s College London, who writes and teaches about the art, history and business of the UK and US music and film industries. As a Resident Scholar at the John W. Kluge Center/Library of Congress, he completed Research for *Duke Ellington’s America* (University of Chicago Press, 2010), which was named one of the best books of the year by the *Washington Post*.

He is currently working on a third book, for which he won a year-long Leverhulme research grant, which examines American music, business and Christianity in the mid-20th-century.

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Harvey G. Cohen is available for comment and interview.
Review copies will be available at the beginning of February.
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