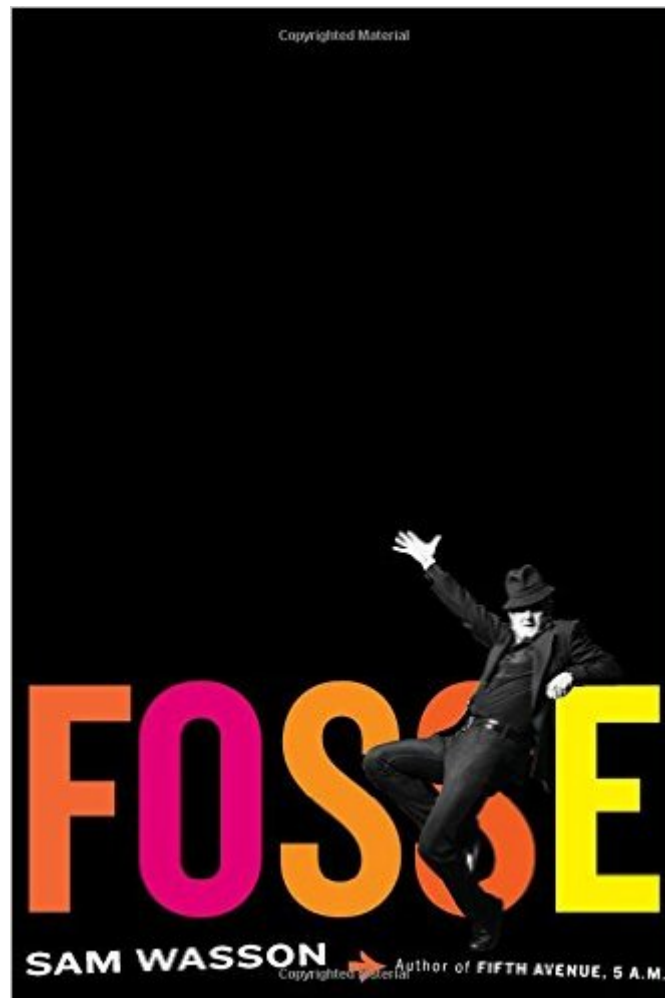


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# Fosse



## Synopsis

More than a quarter-century after his death, Bob Fosse's fingerprints on popular culture remain indelible. The only person ever to win Oscar, Emmy, and Tony awards in the same year, Fosse revolutionized nearly every facet of American entertainment, forever marking Broadway and Hollywood with his iconic style — hat tilted, fingers splayed — that would influence generations of performing artists. Yet in spite of Fosse's innumerable achievements, no accomplishment ever seemed to satisfy him, and offstage his life was shadowed in turmoil and anxiety. Now, bestselling author Sam Wasson unveils the man behind the swaggering sex appeal, tracing Fosse's untold reinventions of himself over a career that would spawn *The Pajama Game*, *Cabaret*, *Pippin*, *All That Jazz*, and *Chicago*, one of the longest-running Broadway musicals ever. Drawing on a wealth of unpublished material and hundreds of sources — friends, enemies, lovers, and collaborators, many of whom have never spoken publicly about Fosse before — Wasson illuminates not only Fosse's prodigious professional life, but also his close and conflicted relationships with everyone from Liza Minnelli to Ann Reinking to Jessica Lange and Dustin Hoffman. Wasson also uncovers the deep wounds that propelled Fosse's insatiable appetites — for spotlights, women, and life itself. In this sweeping, richly detailed account, Wasson's stylish, effervescent prose proves the ideal vehicle for revealing Bob Fosse as he truly was — after hours, close up, and in vibrant color.

## Book Information

Hardcover: 736 pages

Publisher: Eamon Dolan/Houghton Mifflin Harcourt; First Edition edition (November 5, 2013)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0547553293

ISBN-13: 978-0547553290

Product Dimensions: 6 x 2.1 x 9 inches

Shipping Weight: 2 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.5 out of 5 stars — See all reviews (147 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #260,456 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #77 in Books > Arts &

Photography > Performing Arts > Individual Directors #97 in Books > Biographies & Memoirs > Arts & Literature > Theatre #115 in Books > Arts & Photography > Performing Arts > Theater > History & Criticism

## Customer Reviews

This isn't Fosse 101, it's the whole story. Sam Wasson is an excellent writer and not only covers

every aspect of Bob Fosse's colorful and often tragically sad life, but digs in deep and keeps his reader enthralled with all of the details one could only glean from such a detailed book. Where to start? How about Fosse's difficult childhood where his father left the family when little Bobby was in his formative years. Sad (and not surprising) to say that this loss paved the way for the angst, drive, and abuse (to himself and the people in his life - not just the women), all of which fueled the genius of this talented dancer, choreographer, and director. This book is so dense that I found myself jumping around to the chapters that interested me the most i.e. his lifetime love affair with Gwen Verdon (Wasson gives us more than a glimpse about Gwen and her story, which is fascinating if you're a fan, and how she stuck with Fosse til (literally) the very end. The scads of other women in his life including Ann Reinking, et al, all play a part in Fosse's search for something he could honestly never find: happiness. His self-loathing and ongoing depression conquered all, but never love. As a reader, I was reminded of just how MANY amazing films and shows this man headed up. This book is so interesting if you are a fan of Broadway and film. "Damn Yankees" .. "Pippin" ... "Liza with a Z" ... "The Pajama Game" ... "Kiss Me Kate" ... Fosse was without a doubt, the "Zelig" of both worlds. I was so pleased that Sam Wasson's writing kept me invested in the story of this man. Too many biographies lately are so poorly written and just a hodge-podge of previous attempts of getting the whole story with more numeric citations than a college algebra book.

This is a long book about a short man who cast a long shadow in a short lifetime. Bob Fosse single-handedly changed the way people dance on Broadway and in the movies. Through his major blockbuster accomplishments -- PAJAMA GAME, DAMN YANKEES, HOW TO SUCCEED IN BUSINESS WITHOUT REALLY TRYING, CABARET, SWEET CHARITY, CHICAGO, PIPPIN -- and others, he left his mark in the world of dance and the musical as we know it. True, he fell back on certain tricks that over the years have become clichés, but clichés come about only through their original brilliance. Sam Wasson's incredibly well-researched biography of this man, while perhaps overlong, never fails to enlighten. I knew many of Fosse's shows, having been fortunate enough to become aware of Broadway at the same time he was at his peak. Thus I was able to see many of his shows in their original productions. They're shows I still listen to, to this day. I have many of his movies on DVD and watch them from time to time. But until I read this book, I had no knowledge of the man behind all those dances and shows. He had a very sad beginning -- a distant father, a mother who seemingly let him do whatever he wanted. I mean, what kind of mother would allow a teenage son to work in burlesque theaters where strippers would molest him? These early events not only colored his psyche but helped contribute to his artistic output. We all are the sum total of

our lives. Not all of us, though, can turn those formative experiences, good and bad, into something that will bring pleasure to millions of people, well beyond the end of our own physical existence. Fortunately for all of us and for generations to come, Bob Fosse was one of those who could and did.

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