

RKO

RKO Theatres was part of the same company that owned RKO Radio Pictures. Metropolitan Playhouses had close ties to 20th Century-Fox through Joseph Schenck, who was a major shareholder in both companies. During the Depression, Schenck sold RKO Theatres a 25% interest in Metropolitan Playhouses, which explains why the RKO, Skouras, and Randforce chains usually played the same movies.

RKO (Radio-Keith-Orpheum) Pictures is an American film production and distribution company. As Radio Pictures Inc. and then RKO Radio Pictures Inc., it was one of the so-called Big Five studios of Hollywood's Golden Age. The business was formed after the Keith-Albee-Orpheum (KAO) theater chains and Joseph P. Kennedy's Film Booking Offices of America (FBO) studio were brought together under the control of the Radio Corporation of America (RCA) in October 1928. RCA chief David Sarnoff engineered the merger in order to create a market for the company's sound-on-film technology, RCA Photophone.

RKO has long been celebrated for its cycle of musicals starring Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers in the mid- to late 1930s. Katharine Hepburn and, later, Robert Mitchum had their first major successes at the studio. Cary Grant was a mainstay for years. In its later years, RKO was taken over by maverick industrialist Howard Hughes and finally by the General Tire and Rubber Company. The original RKO Pictures ceased production in 1957 and was effectively dissolved two years later. In 1981, broadcaster RKO General, the corporate heir, revived it as a production subsidiary, RKO Pictures Inc. In 1989, this business—with its few remaining assets, the trademarks and remake rights to many classic RKO films—was sold to new owners, who now operate the small independent company RKO Pictures LLC.

[<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/RKO>]

