

## PREFACE

This book is the culmination of an ambitious project that sought to find out what kind of insights and potential applications could emerge within the field of audience studies by adopting an innovative longitudinal methodological approach to studying receptions of Peter Jackson's *Hobbit* trilogy (2012–14). Much of what we have attempted hasn't been done before on this scale, and the complexity of the project only really became apparent soon after we received the first rich accumulation of data in December 2012. Along the way, several new and unexpected issues emerged that warranted further investigation; we have done our best to give service to these. Writing this book has given us the opportunity to gather together our core findings and present these back to those who contributed to them, reflect on what these findings mean in the bigger picture and their possible implications for theoretical understandings of audience reception per se and Hollywood film franchises in particular, and to offer interested readers insight into the methodological design and conduct of a unique project that, we hope, may inspire similar studies in future.

The research that informs this book was the outcome of a collective effort over an extended period, and simply would not have been possible without the generous assistance and contributions of our respective institutions and the people associated with them. We have been extremely fortunate to receive modest funding at critical stages of the project from the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences as well as the Research Trust at the University of Waikato, without which we could not have attempted

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Fans, Blockbusterisation, and the Transformation of  
Cinematic Desire

Global Receptions of The Hobbit Film Trilogy

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