



Robert Osborne Award and Russ Tamblyn Tribute #TCMFF

Description

Posted by Larry Gleeson

After a successful Opening Night and a full day of classic film screenings, today brings more films, a tribute to Russ Tamblyn at Club TMC and a screening of *Seven Brides For Seven Brothers* (1954). “It would be easy to get lost in a film featuring 14 major roles, particularly with Howard Keel and Jane Powell, two of MGM’s best musical performers, as the leads. But one highlight is Russ Tamblyn—who turned 20 during production—as the youngest brother, Gideon. MGM cast its contract players alongside professional dancers like Tommy Rall and Jacques d’Amboise, who might have been expected to carry the bulk of Michael Kidd’s athletic choreography. But Tamblyn’s experience as both a dancer and a gymnast led to his being given a standout moment in the film’s big “Barn Dance” number, while his acting skills delivered some of the film’s most memorable scenes.” (TCMFF)



Russ Tamblyn on the 2023 TCM Classic Film Festival Red Carpet (Photo cr. Larry Gleeson)

In addition, Donald Bogle is set to receive the Robert Osborne Award later in the evening at the Hollywood Legion Theatre. “Turner Classic Movies pays tribute to our late host, Robert Osborne, with the Robert Osborne Award, presented annually at the TCM Classic Film Festival to an individual whose work has helped preserve the cultural heritage of classic film for future generations. In 2023, TCM honors film historian, author, and professor [Donald Bogle](#) for his pioneering studies of African American cinema and his tireless efforts to elevate the achievements of Black performers and filmmakers.” (TCMFF)



Donald Bogle on the red carpet at the 2023 TCM Classic Film Festival (Photo cr. Larry Gleeson)

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Donald Bogle is one of the foremost authorities on African Americans in the movies. In a series of provocative, culturally significant books, Bogle almost single-handedly pioneered the study, appreciation, and value of the work and achievements – as well as the heroic struggles – of Black artists working in films, primarily in Hollywood, where they boldly helped alter the face and landscape of American cinema. The range and scope of his coverage of Black film history has been breathtaking: from the silent era and the films of the Lincoln Motion Company, headed by Black actor Noble Johnson; to Oscar Micheaux; to the controversial but invigorating performances of such Black stars as Paul Robeson, Hattie McDaniel, Eddie ‘Rochester’ Anderson, Fredi Washington, and Louise Beavers;

to such breakthrough performers as Ethel Waters and Lena Horne; to the work of Dorothy Dandridge and Sidney Poitier; to the arrival of such later African American directors as Melvin Van Peebles and Gordon Parks; to the rise of such filmmakers as Spike Lee, John Singleton, Charles Burnett, Julie Dash, Kasi Lemmons, Carl Franklin, Antoine Fuqua, and Ryan Coogler; to such iconic stars as Denzel Washington, Samuel L. Jackson, Halle Berry, Angela Bassett, Whoopi Goldberg, and Viola Davis. Bogle has chronicled them all in his distinctive, lively, witty, and piercing style that has made his books highly readable, enjoyable, and enlightening. Film historian Leonard Maltin has commented: “No one knows more (or has written more extensively) about the history of African American contributions to cinema than Donald Bogle.” *Vogue* hailed him as “that pioneering safekeeper of the history of blacks in films.” “Let’s all nod in appreciation to Donald Bogle for putting everything in historical perspective,” filmmaker Spike Lee has written. “Mr. Bogle continues to be our most noted Black-cinema historian.”

Many know Bogle best for his book *Toms, Coons, Mulattoes, Mammies, and Bucks: An Interpretive History of Blacks in American Films*. The winner of the Theatre Library Association Award for Film and now in its 5th expanded, updated edition, *TCMMB* is considered a classic study of Black movie images in America and is used in courses at colleges and universities around the country. In his recent book *Hollywood Black: The Stars, The Films, The Filmmakers* — published by Turner Classic Movies in 2019 — Donald Bogle continued his pioneering examination of African American film history. Its Foreword was written by John Singleton, the late Oscar-nominated director of the classic *Boyz n the Hood* (1991).

Among Bogle’s other books is his groundbreaking *Dorothy Dandridge: A Biography*, which was praised by critics and led to a rediscovery of Dandridge, the mesmerizing and tragic star of *Carmen Jones* (1954) and the first African American (female or male) to be nominated for an Oscar in a lead acting category. Enthralled by the book, Whitney Houston wrote: “Dorothy Dandridge’s talents and gifts, like those of Josephine Baker, Billie Holiday, and Paul Robeson, were never fully appreciated. She was, quite simply, ahead of her time. Donald Bogle’s book brings her triumphs and tragedies to life with richness, elegance, and dignity.” Houston optioned the rights to the book and was initially set to play Dandridge in a production for Disney. Ultimately, Houston did not play the role. But the book is now considered a classic Hollywood biography, and a new edition was published in 2021.

Bogle is also the author of the critically acclaimed *Heat Wave: The Life and Career of Ethel Waters*. The *New York Times Book Review* wrote that “Bogle . . . has researched Waters thoroughly and presents, fastidiously, the great many facts of her long life and career.” Hailing the Waters book as “an exemplary biography,” *Liberty Journal* wrote: “Bogle masterfully uses Waters’s story to examine the economic, aesthetic, and racial politics of the 1920s-60s popular culture. This work is everything a biography should be.” “Powerful biography,” commented *Publishers Weekly*. “Bogle’s thorough and unflinchingly honest look at Waters’s brilliant and flawed life will undoubtedly be the definitive biography of this great woman.”

An updated, expanded edition of Bogle’s book *Brown Sugar: Over A Hundred Years of America’s Black Female Superstars* – which is a stunning examination of the lives and careers of African American entertainers from the early years of the twentieth century to the present with rare, seldom published photographs, from the eras of Bessie Smith and Josephine Baker to today’s Beyoncé – has also been published. *Brown Sugar* was adapted by Bogle into a four-hour, four-part documentary for PBS and German Educational Television. Bogle wrote and co-executive-produced the series that was a winner of the American Women in Radio and Television Commendation Awards “in recognition of

excellence in programming that presents a positive and realistic portrayal of women.” He is also the author of such books as *Bright Boulevards*, *Bold Dreams: The Story of Black Hollywood*; *Primetime Blues: African Americans on Network Television*; and *Blacks in American Films and Television: An Illustrated Encyclopedia*.

His book *Elizabeth and Michael: The Queen of Hollywood and the King of Pop, a Love Story* was praised by columnist Liz Smith, who devoted one of her last columns to discussing the book. “A surprisingly comprehensive, sensitive, and entertaining look at Taylor and Jackson, and not just their friendship,” wrote Smith. “Bogle has, essentially, written three books in one: Taylor’s biography, Jackson’s, and the tale of their mutual coming together, the how and why. . . The writer knows his subjects and his back-and-forth bios of Taylor and Jackson are extremely well done.” In a starred review, *Kirkus* commented: “Exhaustively researched. . . with a fresh and fair-minded perspective. . . Devoted fans of either star. . . will appreciate the balance and compassion underscoring Bogle’s treatment. A grounded and consistently absorbing biography.” In the fall of 2016, *People* magazine named it one of the best new books.

Bogle has also appeared as a film/cultural commentator on numerous television programs, including Henry Louis Gates’s Peabody award-winning PBS series *The African Americans: Many Rivers to Cross* (2013). In this ambitious, sprawling documentary series, which traces African American history from the period of slavery to the present, Bogle was initially interviewed at length by Gates about the careers of African American filmmaker Oscar Micheaux; singer/actress Ethel Waters; and *Ebony* magazine’s importance in the cultural life of Black America in the late 1940s/1950s. The *New Yorker.com* praised “the very sensitive interviews that Gates conducts with important thinkers ranging from the feminist scholar Paul Giddings to the film historian Donald Bogle.”

He has served as a commentator on numerous other documentaries. His articles have appeared in such publications as *Film Comment*, *Ebony*, *Elan*, *Essence*, *Spin*, and *Freedomways*. He curated a major retrospective on Sidney Poitier at the American Museum of the Moving Image and another on Dorothy Dandridge at New York’s Film Forum, as well as retrospectives on Blaxploitation Cinema and on Images of African American Women in the Movies, also at Film Forum. At the American Museum of the Moving Image, Bogle also conducted onstage public interviews with Spike Lee and Sidney Poitier.

Bogle has a long association with Turner Classic Movies. Previously, he was the cohost and commentator with Robert Osborne for TCM’s award-winning 38-film series, *Race and Hollywood*, which traced the depictions of African Americans in Hollywood from the silent period, with D. W. Griffith’s *The Birth of a Nation* (1915), up to Carl Franklin’s *Devil in a Blue Dress* (1995) and Spike Lee’s *Get on the Bus* (1996). He conceived the series, selecting all the films to be broadcast. Later he served as one of TCM’s on-air guest hosts, introducing over twenty films, including such classics as Billy Wilder’s *Some Like It Hot* (1959) and Fred Zinnemann’s adaptation of Carson McCullers’s *The Member of the Wedding* (1952) with Ethel Waters. In 2018, he co-hosted a two-night series for TCM with Ben Mankiewicz on *Slavery and the Movies*. He has made other important appearances on TCM from 2019 to the present.

Bogle has been one of the principal film historians who have participated in Turner Classic Movies’s annual TCM Classic Film Festival in Los Angeles. He has introduced films for packed screenings and conducted on-stage interviews with directors John Singleton and Spike Lee; Academy Award-winning actor Louis Gossett Jr.; actor Richard Roundtree, the star of the Blaxploitation era film *Shaft* (1971);

Katharine Houghton, a star of *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner* (1967); Nancy Kwan, star of *The World of Suzie Wong* (1960) and *Flower Drum Song* (1961); Richard Sherman, the Oscar-winning composer of *Mary Poppins* (1964); pop star Lulu, featured in *To Sir, with Love* (1967); and numerous others. He also moderated the Festival's highly attended panel discussion on the controversial "Cultural Legacy of *Gone with the Wind*."

His other appearances at the TCM Festival have included engrossing visual presentations on his books *Bright Boulevards*, *Bold Dreams* and *Toms, Coons, Mulattoes, Mammies, and Bucks*, which received rousing ovations. Bogle also provided the commentary for an evening screening of a series of controversial Black cartoons that had been taken out of circulation by Warner Bros. in 1968 because of their inflammatory stereotyped content. The Festival marked the first public screening of the cartoons in over forty years. Bogle was also one of the commentators for TCM's seven-part documentary series on the history of Hollywood, titled *Moguls & Movie Stars* (2010). " (TCMFF)

Category

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