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Bogie: A Celebration of the Life and Films of Humphrey Bogart

Richard Schickel

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In the fifty years since his death in 1957 Humphrey Bogart has firmly established his position as one of the iconic figures in the history of cinema, a star of the same magnitude as Monroe, Gable or Chaplin, and the personaification of one of Hollywood's most enduring genres, film noir. In this lavishly illsutrated survey of Bogart's life and work, Richard Schickel assesses his career and enduring legacy while George Perry provides a detailed review of the films he made over three decades, with a particular focus on his key roles. Published with the authorization of the Estate of Humphrey Bogart, this official celebration is a fitting tribute to a much-loved star.

Having started out playing a series of supporting roles and "B" movie leads in routine gangster films, Bogart first emerged as a figure to be reckoned with in *High Sierra* before starring as the private eye Sam Spade in *The Maltese Falcon* in 1941. Then, two years later, came *Casablanca,* the film in which, for the first time, he was allowed to show the humanity that lay behind the mask of the laconic, wisecracking tough guy. A humanity that was fully realized in the part of Charlie Allnut in *The African Queen* for which he won an Oscar in 1952.

In all, Bogart appeared in over seventy-five films, and consistently lived up to his own definition of stardom -- "you have to drag your weight at the box office and be recognized wherever you go" -- and was later adopted as a cult figure by a new generation of fans, who saw him as an existentialist hero. Five decades after his death, he remains an invigorating presence in our imaginations.

While Bogart's magnetism is to this day unmatched on screen, his private life was equally entrancing. He had already been married three times when he met Lauren Bacall on the set of *Passage to Marseille* and told her, "I saw your test. We're going to have a lot of fun together." She provided a much-needed stabilizing influence to his life and together they formed one of the most celebrated on- and off-screen couples. They had a son and daughter and appeared together in four movies including *Key Largo* and *The Big Sleep*.

On the night Bogart won his Oscar for *The African Queen,* Bacall reflected that "Bogie had everything now--a happy marriage, a son, another child on the way, an ocean racing yacht [the legendary *Santana*], success, and the peak of recognition in his work."

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