

# Oscar® Nominated Director Ava DuVernay To Join TCM's The Essentials

Wednesday, April 24, 2019

Curated Season To Feature Hand-Picked Films By DuVernay

Premieres May 4 & Airs Saturdays at 8 p.m.



**Turner Classic Movies (TCM)** today announced that Oscar® nominee **Ava DuVernay** will join **The Essentials**, TCM's popular franchise showcasing "must see" classic films. Emmy®, BAFTA® and Peabody® winning DuVernay joins TCM primetime host Ben Mankiewicz for the new season where they will introduce a hand-picked film each Saturday and offer commentary on its cultural significance, its influence on other films, behind-the-scenes stories and their own personal reflections. The new season of *The Essentials*, which airs every Saturday night, premieres **May 4 at 8 p.m. (ET)**.

"What a thrill to be invited to select films for TCM's *The Essentials*. And what a treat to sit with Ben Mankiewicz to discuss them in delicious detail. The whole experience was a film lover's dream from top to bottom. And the fact that many of my favorite films will be shared with fellow classic movie lovers is a complete honor and a true pleasure" said **Ava DuVernay**.

DuVernay's selection of films for this season of *The Essentials* include:

- *Marty* (1955) - Delbert Mann's highly praised big-screen version of Paddy Chayefsky's touching teleplay about an ordinary guy
- *Ashes and Embers* (1982) - directed by Haile Gerima, a rarely-seen drama about a troubled black veteran of the Vietnam War who faces new challenges as he tries to reconnect to urban life

- *Cabin in the Sky* (1943), director Vincente Minnelli's film version of the 1940 all-black Broadway musical about a gambler who comes close to death after being shot and finds agents of the Lord and the Devil struggling for his soul
- *Pather Panchali* (1955) - an Indian Bengali-language film that marked the debut of writer-director Satyajit Ray
- *West Side Story* (1961) - Robert Wise and Jerome Robbins seminal film about a young couple from dueling street gangs who fall in love
- *Harlan County, U.S.A.* (1976) - director Barbara Koppel's ground-breaking documentary about Kentucky miners
- *La Pointe Courte* (1954) - Agnes Varda's innovative film featuring two storylines about the simultaneous efforts of a husband and wife to mend their broken marriage
- *Dog Day Afternoon* (1975) - Sydney Lumet's pioneering classic about a man who robs a bank to pay for his lover's sex change operation
- *Daughters of the Dust* (1991) - director Julie Dash's look at three generations of Gullah women who reunite in 1902 before the family emigrates to the North
- *The Battle of Algiers* (1967) director Gillo Pontecorvo's look the Algerian revolt against the French Foreign Legion
- *Gandhi* (1982) - Richard Attenborough's sweeping epic about the life the legendary Indian leader who utilized peaceful means to free his homeland from British rule
- *Losing Ground* (1982) - one of the first feature films ever directed by an African-American woman, Kathleen Collins' influential film offers an intimate look at marriage
- *Claudine* (1974) - Diahann Carroll and James Earl Jones star in this unique love story about a single mother who finds unlikely love with a garbage man as they both struggle to get ahead in a system that's gamed against them
- *Souder* (1972) - Cicely Tyson and Paul Winfield play Louisiana sharecroppers who are trying to survive during the Depression in Martin Ritt's beloved classic
- *Rashomon* (1950) - Akira Kurosawa's artistic masterpiece set in medieval Japan with four people offering conflicting accounts of a rape and murder
- *The Meetings of Anna* (1978) - auteur filmmaker Chantal Akerman's personal look at a female movie director who deals with a series of people making unwanted demands
- *A Warm December* (1972) - Sidney Poitier's gentle drama follows a doctor visiting London who falls for a mysterious woman

"In addition to her lofty standing among the most prominent directors of her generation, Ava DuVernay has established herself as an artist driven by a profound sense of justice and social consciousness. Her transformation from an in-demand movie publicist to a writer/producer/director is a testament not only to her remarkable drive, but her passion for telling stories that represent a broad coalition of voices and perspectives from inside the world of independent African-American films," said **Ben Mankiewicz, TCM Primetime Host**. "Ava's selections for this season of The Essentials are carefully curated. And these movies are certain to challenge our perspectives, expand our collective cultural conversations around film history, and, I suspect, inspire new audiences to discover these cinematic treasures."

To view a promo and for more information including a complete schedule, bios, images and film information, please visit [tcm.com/essentials](http://tcm.com/essentials).

### About Turner Classic Movies (TCM)

Turner Classic Movies (TCM) is a two-time Peabody Award-winning network that presents great films, uncut and commercial-free, from the largest film libraries in the world highlighting the entire spectrum of film history. TCM features the insights from Primetime host Ben Mankiewicz along with hosts Alicia Malone, Dave Karger and Eddie Muller, plus interviews with a wide range of special guests and serves as the ultimate movie lover destination. Currently in its 25th year as a leading authority in classic film, TCM offers critically acclaimed series like The Essentials, along with annual programming events like 31



Days of Oscar® in February and Summer Under the Stars in August. TCM also directly connects with movie fans through events as the annual TCM Classic Film Festival in Hollywood, the TCM Big Screen Classics series in partnership with Fathom Events, as well as through the TCM Classic Film Tour in New York City and Los Angeles. In addition, TCM produces a wide range of media about classic film, including books and DVDs, and hosts a wealth of material online at [tcm.com](http://tcm.com) and through the Watch TCM mobile app.

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