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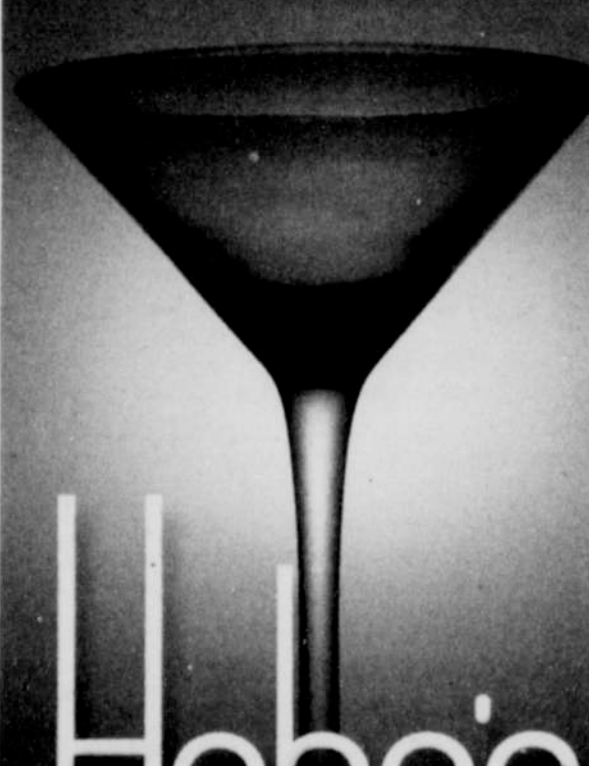


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film

Jean Malin, an openly gay nightclub entertainer in real life, found his one scene in 1933's *Double Harness* reshot with another actor because of studio fears about his notoriety.

Learning from the Past

Historian curates monthlong series of queer-centric cinema
by Christopher McQuain

In honor of Pride Month, Turner Classic Movies—that venerable cable oasis of bona fide cinephilic credibility—is broadcasting *Screened Out: Gay Images in Film*, a series for which a treasure trove of queer-interest films has been assembled for broadcast. It covers decades of film history, from near the birth of the medium all the way up through the watershed cultural (and political) moment of Stonewall. From its earliest entry, 1912's silent short *Algie, the Miner*, to its most recent, William Friedkin's 1970 touchstone/lightning rod *The Boys in the Band*, the series encompasses multiple genres and styles of films with queer themes or characters, mining TCM's vast film library to bring to the fore some occasionally surprising but unfailingly interesting selections.

The germ of the idea for *Screened Out* can be traced back to 2002's *Out on Film*, Atlanta's queer film festival, where a chance meeting between author Robert Barrios (from whose 2002 book the series derives its title, timeline and sensibility)

and Lee Tsiantis—a Turner Entertainment attorney with an enthusiasm for film and Barrios' work, and with connections to the ranks at TCM—led to the eventual realization of the project. With other TCM monthlong showcases, such as last year's *Race & Hollywood: Black Images in Film*, offering what Barrios calls “an excellent precedent of sorts,” he and the network's programmers have been working in earnest for almost a year now to curate and develop *Screened Out*.

Barrios is rightfully proud of what has been accomplished: “The fact that TCM is devoting eight full nights to this festival, with 44 films plus this amazing group of guest commentators [including Alan Cumming, Charles Busch and Michael Musto] is still stunning to me. I'm just awed by this kind of support, and in great admiration of TCM's willingness to extend itself in this fashion.”

Among those 44 films are unequivocal classics such as 1933's *Queen Christina* (Garbo, the queen of the title, has an affair with a countess); the giddy Rock Hudson/Doris Day sex comedy *That Touch of Mink*, from 1962; Otto Preminger's 1962 political thriller *Advise and Consent*, with its plot turning on a closeted senator and featuring the first-ever Hollywood depiction of a gay bar; and Robert Aldrich's dark lesbian comedy from 1968, *The Killing of Sister George*.

Even more tantalizing than revisiting these familiar and much-discussed favorites, however, is the chance to catch those films for which the series



Film historian Robert Barrios (left) co-hosts *Screened Out* with Robert Osborne.

has gone a bit further off the beaten path. In 1930's *Way Out West*, modern audiences have a chance to catch the now virtually forgotten William Haines, the first gay movie star, in action. The lesser-known work of two queer directors, George Cukor's *Our Betters* (1933) and Vincente Minnelli's *Designing Woman* (1957), blend prominent gay sidekicks into their frothy comedic mixes.