

coverstory

BY JAY BOBBIN

Bette Davis is the first performer showcased in Turner Classic Movies' annual "Summer Under the Stars" month, which begins Sunday.



TCM's Alicia Malone is ready for another 'Summer Under the Stars'

Not only is Turner Classic Movies' annual "Summer Under the Stars" festival the usual celebration of one performer per day this year, it's also a birthday salute in certain cases.

The channel reserves all of August for 24-hour tributes to selected performers, and this time, those fall on the birthdates of several of the given stars. They include Louis Armstrong (on Wednesday, Aug. 4), Robert Mitchum (Friday, Aug. 6), Esther Williams (Aug. 8), Robert Redford (Aug. 18) and Fredric March (Aug. 31). Armstrong and Redford are first-timers for "Summer Under the Stars" showcasing, as are others such as Richard Burton (Monday, Aug. 2), Abbott and Costello (Saturday, Aug. 7), Eve Arden (Aug. 23) and Tony Randall (Aug. 26).

Also a debuting "Summer Under the Stars" subject is the recently deceased George Segal, with his Aug. 10 "day" doubling as a memorial. The lineup that ranges from the comedic "Fun With Dick and Jane" to the deeply dramatic "Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?" (for which Segal was Oscar-nominated) falls on the watch of Alicia Malone, TCM's Sunday-afternoon and Tuesday-evening host.

"It's a real pleasure to get to pay tribute to him," Malone says. "He left behind a huge body of work since he worked so much, particularly in the 1970s, and with

incredible directors like Paul Mazursky and Robert Altman. It's a treat to see him in 'King Rat,' because that's a film I had on my watch list for a long time. That was his first big break, a role turned down by Paul Newman and Steve McQueen, but it ended up being perfect for what George Segal was able to do. Not only was he handsome, he was very charming, and he had that wit."

Malone helps launch the 2021 "Summer Under the Stars" with a Bette Davis day Sunday, Aug. 1. Others whose classics and careers she covers during the month include Kim Novak (Tuesday, Aug. 3), Judy Garland (Aug. 15), Gloria Grahame (Aug. 17), Tyrone Power (Aug. 22), Maurice Chevalier (Aug. 24) and Ingrid Bergman (Aug. 29). Since Malone also handles the Fredric March night, she gets to both open and close the event.

Noting that she likes to give an overall profile of the chosen actor when first introducing one of his or her films, Malone adds that in doing research, she was surprised by "how young some of these people were when they died. It always shocks me when their careers are doing so well and then, that happens. Tyrone Power had 'Witness for the Prosecution' just a year or two before he died, so that always gives me pause ... what roles may have been on the horizon if they'd had longer lives."

Guide to the TV grids

TV Ratings:

- 'G': General audience
- 'Y': Young children
- '7': Children over 7
- '14': Children over 14
- 'PG': Parental guidance
- 'M': Mature audience only

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- 🔊: In stereo
- 📺: Closed captioning
- iTV: Interactive TV program
- N: Program is new

- PA: Parental advisory
- DVS: Descriptive video service
- EI: Educational/instructional
- D: Dialogue
- L: Language
- S: Sexual situations
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