



Tennessee Williams and Company: His Essential Screen Actors

John DiLeo

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John DiLeo's *Tennessee Williams and Company: His Essential Screen Actors* examines the films based on the works Tennessee Williams. The focus is on the eleven actors who appear in more than one of the Williams movies, an unofficial stock company of repeat players. Several of these names, such as Marlon Brando and Geraldine Page, should come as no surprise, since they had performed roles by Williams on the stage. Others, such as Anna Magnani and Vivien Leigh, both foreign-born, could hardly have been foreseeable as brilliant interpreters of such a distinctly American writer. Also included are the two most famous screen-acting couples of Williams Hollywood heyday: Paul Newman and Joanne Woodward, and Elizabeth Taylor and Richard Burton. This critical look at these eleven actors, bonded by their sustained artistic and professional association with Williams. The results include some of the more remarkable performances in movie history, from Anna Magnani in *The Rose Tattoo* (1955) to Geraldine Page in *Sweet Bird of Youth* (1962). Everyone remembers how magnificent Marlon Brando and Vivien Leigh are in *A Streetcar Named Desire* (1951), but what about their second Williams appearances, Brando's in *The Fugitive Kind* (1960) and Leigh's in *The Roman Spring of Mrs. Stone* (1961)? Richard Burton is brilliant in *The Night of the Iguana* (1964), yet wretched in *Boom* (1968), while Elizabeth Taylor scores in *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* (1958) but is just as awful in *Boom* as Burton is.

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