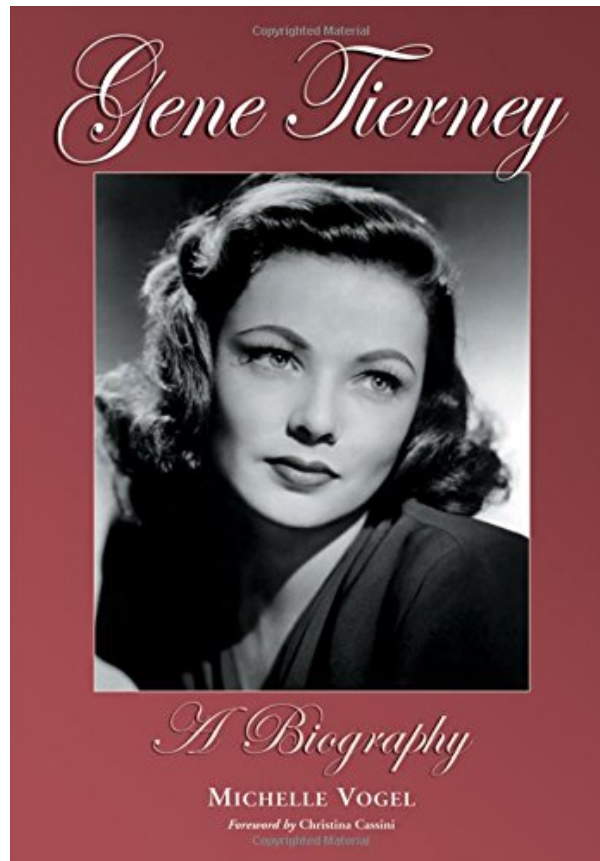


GENE TIERNEY: A BIOGRAPHY BY MICHELLE VOGEL



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Gene Tierney



A Biography

MICHELLE VOGEL

Foreword by Christina Cassini

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About the Author

Film historian Michelle Vogel lives in Victoria, Australia.

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Called the most beautiful woman in movie history, Gene Tierney starred in such 1940s classics as *Laura*, *Leave Her to Heaven* and *The Ghost and Mrs. Muir*. Her on-screen presence and ability to transform into a variety of characters made her a film legend. Her personal life was a whirlwind of romance (she married a count, was engaged to a prince, and was courted by a future president) and tragedy (her first daughter was born with severe retardation and Tierney herself struggled with mental illness). After years of treatment, including electroshock therapy that erased portions of her life from her memory, she triumphantly returned in one of the biggest comebacks in Hollywood history. This first complete biography since the actress's death includes a foreword by her daughter, Christina Cassini, an extensive filmography, and many rare photographs.

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- Published on: 2010-12-02
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- Binding: Paperback
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About the Author

Film historian Michelle Vogel lives in Victoria, Australia.

Most helpful customer reviews

94 of 103 people found the following review helpful.

An Undistinguished Portrait

By J. Michael Click

Michelle Vogel's long-awaited book about the life of Gene Tierney is a monumental disappointment, both as a biography and as a reference guide to the actress' distinguished forty-year career on stage, screen, radio, and television. In terms of recounting the story of Tierney's turbulent life, there's very little new material here for readers familiar with the existing Tierney literature, and unfortunately, the author offers few fresh insights into the actress' personality. Most of the book simply recounts events and conversations already covered in Tierney's 1979 autobiography; a perusal of the Bibliography also discloses that the author included many old movie fan magazine articles among her sources.

Factually, the book is riddled with errors in terms of dates and chronology. For example, throughout the text, Vogel refers to award years according to the dates the ceremonies were held rather than the period for which work is being honored. Thus, Vogel states: "Gene lost the 1946 Academy Award for Best Actress to Joan Crawford ..." when in truth, Tierney lost the 1945 Academy Award for Best Actress to Crawford at the ceremony held on March 7, 1946. Similar discrepancies appear throughout the text. A more serious gaffe appears in a photo caption (and is repeated in the filmography) where it falsely states that "Hudson's Bay" was filmed before "The Return of Frank James"; curiously, this error is (correctly) contradicted within the text. Conversely, Vogel fails to mention or explain why "Dragonwyck" (filmed February - May 1945) was pulled from its scheduled September 1945 release date (after having been favorably reviewed by the press) and was shelved by 20th Century-Fox until Easter 1946; and she completely omits any mention within the text of Tierney's appearance on an episode of "G. E. Theatre", which served as the actress' 1960 comeback vehicle after years of treatment for mental illness.

While the photographs in the book are adequately reproduced, many of them - including the bulk of the film scene stills - will already be familiar to dedicated Tierney fans, and do not justify the book's high suggested retail price. Nor does the filmography serve as an adequate selling point; it is filled with errors and required more careful proofreading prior to publication (release and premiere dates are frequently incorrect; top-billed Jean Simmons and Victor Mature have been dropped from the cast listing for "The Egyptian"; cast and production credits for Tierney's television appearances are not included, etc., etc.). Overall, this book is regrettably not recommended. Gene Tierney and her legion of fans deserve much better than what is offered here.

33 of 34 people found the following review helpful.

Melodramatic and Error-prone

By Howard

After having carefully combed through this book, I am very disappointed with my purchase. I've read Gene Tierney's autobiography 5 or 6 times, and kept referring back to it as I read this new biography. Michelle Vogel repeats many specific passages from Tierney's book: for example, both authors conclude the story of Gene's acting being complimented by Noel Coward with a reference to the actress' Aunt Lelia thwarted theatrical ambitions ("If only Lelia could see me now!"). And Vogel recounts quotes made by Tierney differently than did the actress herself: for example, Tierney says she answered John F. Kennedy's question about the end of their romance being final by saying simply "It is," while Vogel writes that Tierney repeated the phrase, declaring "It is. It is." It's this kind of soap operatic invention that makes Vogel's reporting both suspect and overly melodramatic.

About half of the much-lauded photos in the book were familiar to me from other publications. The most interesting of the photographs are the personal and candid shots. I had hoped to find a photo of Tierney and Kennedy together, but none was included. The extensive filmography in the back of the book is full of errors and typos: the names of actors and their characters are frequently incorrect. (Dana Andrews played Thomas Crail in BELLE STARR; that's John Shepperd in RINGS ON HER FINGERS; the portrait of Gene in LAURA does indeed appear in the final cut of ON THE RIVIERA; THAT WONDERFUL URGE is based on the 1937 Tyrone Power vehicle LOVE IS NEWS; the top-billed cast members in the listing for THE EGYPTIAN are missing; etc. etc.) Most perturbing of all is the mangling of dates concerning the films were released and awards were given out.

Overall, this was a far cry from the definitive biography of Miss Tierney that I had expected when I bought it. Those looking for a scholarly reference-quality volume will not find it here. Those who are less exacting about accuracy and fond of florid sentimentality may be more appreciative of this pricey tome.

42 of 46 people found the following review helpful.

Good Pictures, But Largely Superficial and Disappointing

By A Reviewer

The strengths of the book are the pictures of Gene Tierney and the filmography in the back with some interesting tidbits. However, the book is largely superficial, and contains relatively little information beyond that included in Ms. Tierney's autobiography published in 1979.

One of the major disappointments is that beyond her former husband, and a few people in Houston where Gene settled in retirement, the author apparently conducted very few, if any, interviews of people who worked with and knew Ms. Tierney. Yet there are many actors, actresses and other film professionals living today who worked with and knew Ms. Tierney. They could have shed a lot more insight on what Gene was really like, as well as her acting ability and style.

The book, in general, lacks much, if any, analysis of Gene's acting talent and style or the quality of her films. There were many themes that could have been pursued, such as why the quality of her roles declined sharply after 1948, as well as her relationships with her co-stars, but in general, this was not done. There was also relatively little about her life after 1960, beyond what was already included in the 1979 autobiography. (Ms. Tierney died in 1991.) In addition, the author did not include notes on sources of information, as would be expected in a more thorough book.

As someone who was eagerly awaiting the publication of this book, I was disappointed. There's just not much depth in the book. Without the filmography and the index, the book is less than 200 pages.

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