

Oscar Week 2021: Spotlight on Best Actor Nominee Chadwick Boseman

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CHICAGO – In one of the crueler events during the cruel year of 2020, the actor Chadwick Boseman died from cancer at age 43. But he left us two prominent roles in 2020, as a pivotal character in Spike Lee’s “Da Five Bloods” and in his 2021 Oscar nominated performance as Levee in “Ma Rainey’s Black Bottom.”

Boseman broke out in a sympathetic and courageous performance as Jackie Robinson in “42” (2013), which landed him other biographical roles as singer James Brown in “Get On Up” (2014) and Supreme Court justice Thurgood Marshall in “Marshall” (2017). But it was his unforgettable Marvel Universe turn as T’Challa/Black Panther (2018 in “Black Panther”) that uplifted Boseman to iconic status as an actor.



Chadwick Boseman in Chicago, circa 2017

Photo credit: Joe Arce of Starstruck Foto for HollywoodChicago.com

As Levee in “Ma Rainey’s Black Bottom,” Boseman was in the spotlight as a “modern” black man who plays horn in the back-up band for Ma Rainey (Viola Davis) in 1920s Jim Crow America. He is a study in evolution and anger, as white America seeks to keep him down, but he has nowhere to go but up. In several searing monologues – adapted from the play by August Wilson – he expresses the frustration of race relations, which resonates all the way to the our current times.

Patrick McDonald of HollywoodChicago.com talked briefly with Chadwick Boseman in 2017 on the Red Carpet at the 53rd Chicago International Film Festival. Photographer Joe Arce captured the Exclusive photo above.

The 93rd Academy Awards is on Sunday, April 25th at 8pmET/7pmCT on ABC-TV, and will take place at the Los Angeles Dolby Theatre and Union Station.

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