



Von Sternberg (Screen Classics)

John Baxter

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Belligerent and evasive, Josef von Sternberg chose to ignore his illegitimate birth in Austria, deprived New York childhood, abusive father, and lack of education. The director who strutted onto the set in a turban, riding breeches, or a silk robe embraced his new persona as a world traveller, collected modern art, drove a Rolls Royce, and earned three times as much as the president.

Von Sternberg traces the choices that carried the unique director from poverty in Vienna to power in Hollywood, including his eventual ostracism in Japan. Historian John Baxter reveals an artist few people knew: the aesthete who transformed Marlene Dietrich into an international star whose ambivalent sexuality and contradictory allure on-screen reflected an off-screen romance with the director.

In his classic films *The Blue Angel* (1930), *Morocco* (1930), and *Blonde Venus* (1932), von Sternberg showcased his trademark visual style and revolutionary representations of sexuality.

Drawing on firsthand conversations with von Sternberg and his son, *Von Sternberg* breaks past the classic Hollywood caricature to demystify and humanize this legendary director.

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