



Classic Films 1931-1960

A celebration of the Hollywood Golden Age




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DIRECTOR

John Huston

PRODUCER

Hal B. Wallis

WRITER

John Huston

Based on "The Maltese Falcon" by
Dashiell Hammett**STARRING**Humphrey Bogart
Mary Astor
Gladys George
Peter Lorre
Barton MacLane
Lee Patrick
Sydney Greenstreet**MUSIC**

Adolph Deutsch

CINEMATOGRAPHY

Arthur Edson

EDITOR

Thomas Richards

RUNNING TIME

101 minutes

AWARDS

National Film Registry, 1989

ALSO**RECOMMENDED**"High Sierra" (1941)
"The Big Sleep" (1946)
"The Treasure of the Sierra
Madre" (1948)
"Key Largo" (1948)
"The African Queen" (1951)

Humphrey Bogart in "The Maltese Falcon." [Gatehouse Media archive]

1941

'The Maltese Falcon'

The Maltese Falcon" launched the careers of drinking buddies John Huston and Humphrey Bogart while propelling the film noir genre that remained popular for the next two decades. Huston would have likely found success as a filmmaker regardless of who played the iconic detective Sam Spade. Bogart, though, might have spent the rest of his career in supporting roles if it weren't for wrongheaded decisions by George Raft.

Huston co-wrote the screenplay for "High Sierra," which also came out in 1941, about nine months before "The Maltese Falcon." The story goes that Bogart, who had been acting in Hollywood movies since the late 1920s but never as a leading man, somehow convinced Raft not to take the Roy Earle role in "High Sierra" offered to him by director Raoul Walsh. Bogart landed it and plenty of praise. Plus, the movie was a box office hit.

A fixture in popular culture since the publication of Dashiell Hammett's novel of the same name in 1930 and the first film version that came out the following year, the 1941 version of "The Maltese Falcon" would mark the directing debut of Huston, who also wrote the screenplay. Producer Hal B. Wallis wanted Raft to play Sam Spade, probably because of his great gangster roles in "Scarface" (1932) and "Each Dawn I Die" (1939). Perhaps second guessing his decision not to work with Walsh on "High Sierra," Raft passed on "Maltese Falcon" to work with Walsh on "Manpower" alongside Edward G. Robinson and Marlene Dietrich. Bad decision. During filming, Raft and Robinson got in a fistfight with photographs of the scrap running in newspapers nationwide.

A huge critical and commercial success upon release, "The Maltese Falcon" remains the quintessential private eye film noir with its only rival being "The Big Sleep," starring Bogart as Philip Marlowe, the Raymond Chandler character clearly inspired by Sam Spade. Bogart plays Sam Spade with utter authority, making audiences cheer for a character who was sleeping with his business partner's wife and who does not exactly appear saddened by his murder. No nonsense Sam Spade is determined, though, to clear his own name and find the actual killer, which he does with panache in the beautiful black and white lighting by cinematographer Arthur Edson.

Oh, and then there's the matter of the titular bird, a black statuette that is actually "a Golden Falcon encrusted from beak to claw with rarest jewels." Not only will Sam Spade solve the murder case but he'll also track down the black bird while being pursued by a bunch of baddies, with Peter Lorre turning in an outstanding performance that conveys the character's homosexuality while cleverly evading the censors.

Huston's next gig would be in the army making documentaries during World War II before returning to make 1948's "The Treasure of the Sierra Madre" with Bogart, who by then had established himself as one of Hollywood's top stars with some more help from Raft. Like something out of, yes, a movie, Raft also turned down the lead in "All Through the Night," which then went to Bogart for his follow up to "Maltese Falcon." But the biggest mistake of them all? There's pretty strong evidence suggesting Raft turned down the role of Rick that Bogart played in "Casablanca," released in 1942, and co-starring Ingrid Bergman.

"Whoever heard of Casablanca?" Raft is quoted as saying. "I don't want to star opposite an unknown Swedish broad."



Humphrey Bogart, left, and Ingrid Bergman in "Casablanca." [Gatehouse Media archive]

'Casablanca'

It's hard to imagine such real life horror would serve as the catalyst for one of the most charming films ever made.

The idea for what would become "Casablanca" came to English teacher Murray Burnett after assisting Jewish relatives get their money out of German-occupied Vienna in 1938. Upon return to the United States, Burnett wrote an anti-Nazi play about a cynical barkeeper who helps a Czech newspaperman escape from Casablanca with the saloon owner's love interest. "Everybody Comes to Rick's," co-authored with Joan Alison, could not find a Broadway producer, the New York Times noted, but was sold to Warner Brothers for a nice sum and renamed "Casablanca."

The woefully underappreciated studio director Michael Curtiz, who made nearly 100 films during his years at Warner Bros., would helm "Casablanca," which started production in May of 1942, almost to the day of the release of Curtiz's excellent masterful musical "Yankee Doodle Dandy." A master of various genres, the Hungarian-born director's previous credits at the time already included such acclaimed hits as "The Adventures of Robin Hood" and "Angels with Dirty Faces," as well as the Jack London adaptation "The Sea Wolf." Yes, Curtiz definitely deserves credit for the balance of romance and drama with a touch of humor that makes "Casablanca" so universally appealing.

Before being cast to play the bitter expatriate Rick Blaine who owns the ritzy nightclub and covert casino Rick's Café Américain, Humphrey

Bogart had acted for Curtiz in 1938's "Angels with Dirty Faces" and then established himself as a leading man with his starring role in the 1941 hit "The Maltese Falcon." Swedish actress Ingrid Bergman, cast as the love interest Ilsa Lund, had only recently started making English-language films, most notably Victor Fleming's 1941 remake of "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde." On screen together in "Casablanca," though, it's clear throughout we're witnessing two titans at the top of their game.

1941

Of course, any discussion about "Casablanca" also has to include praise for the supporting actors, especially Claude Rains, who earned an Oscar nomination for his role as the corrupt Captain Louis Renault. It's also Rains who gets to deliver one of the film's most memorable lines: "Round up the usual suspects."

"Round up the usual suspects."

Another significant part of the film is its use of the song "As Time Goes By." Written in 1931, it did not become famous until sung by Sam (Dooley Wilson) in the movie. The ballad, one of Hollywood's most beautiful, prompts Rick's line that leads to the famous misquotation, "Play it again, Sam."

"Casablanca" earned strong reviews and became a box office success upon release, with much greater critical acclaim and profits coming with each passing decade.

While perhaps not the greatest film ever made, although there is a strong argument there, I can't think of a more wonderful movie, one that is more utterly entertaining after each repeated viewing, for adults of all backgrounds, than "Casablanca."

DIRECTOR

Michael Curtiz

PRODUCER

Hal B. Wallis

WRITERS

Julius J. Epstein
Philip G. Epstein
Howard Koch

STARRING

Humphrey Bogart
Ingrid Bergman
Paul Henreid
Claude Rains
Conrad Veidt
Sydney Greenstreet
Peter Lorre

MUSIC

Max Steiner

CINEMATOGRAPHY

Arthur Edson

EDITOR

Owen Marks

RATING

PG

RUNNING TIME

102 minutes

AWARDS

Academy Award, Best Picture
Academy Award, Best Director,
Michael Curtiz
Academy Award, Best Writing,
Screenplay, Julius J. Epstein, Philip
G. Epstein, Howard Koch
National Film Registry, 1989

ALSO RECOMMENDED

"The Adventures of Robin Hood"
(1938)
"Angels with Dirty Faces" (1938)
"Yankee Doodle Dandy" (1942)
"White Christmas" (1954)
"We're No Angels" (1955)

DIRECTOR

Frank Capra

PRODUCER

Frank Capra

WRITERS

Frances Goodrich

Albert Hackett

Jo Swerling

Frank Capra

Based on "The Greatest Gift" by
Philip Van Doren Stern**STARRING**

James Stewart

Donna Reed

Lionel Barrymore

Henry Travers

MUSIC

Dimitri Tiomkin

CINEMATOGRAPHY

Joseph Walker

EDITOR

William Hornbeck

RATING

PG

RUNNING TIME

130 minutes

AWARDS

Academy Award, Technical

Achievement Award, Russell

Shearman and RKO Radio Studio

Special Effects Dept. for the

development of a new method of
simulating falling snow on motion
picture sets.

Golden Globe, Best Director,

Frank Capra

National Film Registry, 1990

ALSO**RECOMMENDED**

"Lady for a Day" (1933)

"It Happened One Night" (1934)

"Mr. Deeds Goes to Town" (1936)

"You Can't Take It With You"

(1938)

"Mr. Smith Goes to Washington"

(1939)



James Stewart, center, embraces Donna Reed, left, in the last scene of "It's A Wonderful Life." [Gatehouse Media archive]

'It's a Wonderful Life'

Two Hollywood greats with a rich past together return from World War II as heroes and decide to make a Christmas movie. The resulting film is exceptional and all involved are thrilled but then, well, the public can be fickle. "It's a Wonderful Life" has a beautiful backstory and, yes, a happy ending, but it took years for it to gain its rightful place as a holiday classic.

Born in Sicily and raised in Los Angeles along with six siblings, Frank Capra walked away from one of the most successful directing careers in Hollywood within days of Pearl Harbor to join the United States Army. During World War II, Capra directed films in the Oscar-winning "Why We Fight" documentary series and returned to Tinseltown with a Distinguished Service Medal in 1945.

Capra co-founded Liberty Films and decided his first feature for the production company would be based on a virtually unknown short story called "The Greatest Gift." Assisted by the veteran screenwriting wife and husband team of Frances Goodrich and Albert Hackett, as well as Jo Swerling and an uncredited Dorothy Parker, Capra completed a screenplay he named "It's a Wonderful Life."

Jimmy Stewart, who collaborated with Capra on the back-to-back hits "You Can't Take It With You" (1938) and "Mr. Smith Goes to Washington" (1939) returned to Hollywood after being celebrated as the first American movie star to enlist and earning numerous military honors including an Air Medal and Distinguished Flying Cross for his heroics as a bomber pilot.

Capra gave Stewart the pitch about a guy who's about to commit suicide on Christmas Eve before being visited by an angel. The filmmaker feared Stewart would find the premise preposterous but before he could continue the actor agreed to the role.

1946

"Frank, if you want to do a picture about a guy who jumps off a bridge and an angel named Clarence who hasn't won his wings yet coming down to save him, well, I'm your man!" Stewart recalled in 1977, according to the piece "Jimmy Stewart Remembers 'It's a Wonderful Life.'"

Premiering Dec. 20, 1946, "It's a Wonderful Life" received mixed reviews with Bosley Crowther, the New York Times film critic, objecting to the "sentimentality of it." The public largely ignored the movie and it reportedly lost more than \$500,000.

"It's a Wonderful Life" had been forgotten for decades, so much so its copyright didn't get properly renewed in 1974. This meant television networks could start showing the movie for free, which they did, big time, during the holiday season. Thanks to all the home watching experiences, the movie finally found its audience, which turned out to be practically all of America.

"It's the damndest thing I've ever seen," Capra reportedly told The Wall Street Journal in 1984. "The film has a life of its own now, and I can look at it like I had nothing to do with it. I'm like a parent whose kid grows up to be president. I'm proud... but it's the kid who did the work. I didn't even think of it as a Christmas story when I first ran across it. I just liked the idea."



Humphrey Bogart as Fred C. Dobbs in a scene from "The Treasure of the Sierra Madre."
[Gatehouse Media archive]

1948

'The Treasure of the Sierra Madre'

There are at least a dozen Humphrey Bogart films I highly recommend, ranging from landmark titles such as "The Maltese Falcon" and "Casablanca" (see pages 10 and 11) to lesser known works like "The Petrified Forest" and "The Harder They Fall." Bogart exudes serious star power in all these movies but none feature a performance quite as arresting as "The Treasure of the Sierra Madre."

Bogart plays Fred C. Dobbs, a decent American down on his luck in Mexico who goes mad with greed while pursuing gold. No matter how many times I view the film — I lost count years ago — the transformation never fails to astound and terrify.

"The Treasure of the Sierra Madre" is the pinnacle of the exceptional run of films Bogart made with his good pal John Huston. The two men shot to stardom with the release of "The Maltese Falcon" in 1941. The film marked screenwriter Huston's directorial debut and cemented Bogart's status as a leading man following more than a decade in supporting roles.

An unlikely hit, "The Maltese Falcon" paved the way for Bogart to star in such great films as "Casablanca," "To Have and Have Not," "The Big Sleep" and "Dead Reckoning" while Huston spent those World War II years in the army making documentaries.

Huston's first film upon returning from the service would be "The Treasure of the Sierra Madre." The screenwriter and director of the film, Huston also plays a small but memorable role in the movie, which was shot on location in Mexico, a rarity for a Hollywood picture.

Huston cast Tim Holt, fresh off a run of Westerns, to play Bob Curtin, another American who, along with Bogart's character, gets cheated out of payment for work early in the film. The two then team up with an old-school gold prospector named Howard and head up the Sierra Madre mountains to make their fortune. Huston cast his father, veteran stage and screen actor Walter Huston, to play Howard, a character nearly as indelible as Bogart's.

Avarice has never before or since been so keenly depicted on screen, with the movie's theme and overriding tension perfectly intertwined so that each scene feels utterly essential. Universally praised by critics, the movie was a favorite of Stanley Kubrick and other filmmaking greats, with Paul Thomas Anderson reportedly viewing it before bed while writing "There Will Be Blood."

"The Treasure of the Sierra Madre" didn't exactly do blockbuster numbers at the box office upon release, but performed well enough, earning \$2,300,000 in the U.S., which placed the film at No. 50 on Variety's list of "Top grossers of 1948." Interestingly, Huston also made "Key Largo" with Bogart in 1948 and that film placed at No. 18 on the same list with a gross of \$3,250,000.

At the 21st Academy Awards both of Huston's films took home honors with Claire Trevor winning for Best Supporting Actress in "Key Largo," Huston for directing and writing "The Treasure of the Sierra Madre," and Walter Huston taking home the trophy for supporting actor, the first such occasion for a father and son. Infuriatingly, Bogart did not even receive a nomination, an incident now considered one of the worst Oscar snubs of all time.

Bogart finally won an Oscar for his performance in 1951's "The African Queen," also directed and co-written by John Huston.

DIRECTOR

John Huston

PRODUCER

Henry Blanke

WRITER

John Huston

Based on "The Treasure of the Sierra Madre" by B. Traven

STARRING

Humphrey Bogart

Walter Huston

Tim Holt

Bruce Bennett

MUSIC

Max Steiner

CINEMATOGRAPHY

Ted D. McCord

EDITOR

Owen Marks

RATING

PG

RUNNING TIME

126 minutes

AWARDS

Academy Award, Best Actor in a

Supporting Role, Walter Huston

Academy Award, Best Director,

John Huston

Academy Award, Best Writing,

Screenplay, John Huston

Golden Globe, Best Picture

Golden Globe, Best Director, John

Huston

Golden Globe, Best Supporting

Actor, Walter Huston

National Film Registry, 1990

ALSO RECOMMENDED

"The Maltese Falcon" (1941)

"Across the Pacific" (1942)

"Key Largo" (1948)

"The African Queen" (1951)

"Beat the Devil" (1953)

DIRECTORS

Carol Reed
Producers:
Carol Reed
Alexander Korda
David O. Selznick

SCREENPLAY

Graham Greene

STARRING

Joseph Cotten
Alida Valli
Orson Welles
Trevor Howard

MUSIC

Anton Karas

CINEMATOGRAPHY

Robert Krasker

EDITOR

Oswald Hafenrichter

RUNNING TIME

108 minutes

AWARDS

Academy Award, Best
Cinematography, Black-and-White,
Robert Krasker
BAFTA Film Award, Best British
Film

ALSO**RECOMMENDED**

"Citizen Kane" (1941)
"Odd Man Out" (1947)
"The Fallen Idol" (1948)
"Our Man in Havana" (1958)
"Oliver!" (1968)



Joseph Cotten and Alida Valli in "The Third Man" [Gatehouse Media archive]

'The Third Man'

There's no real evidence to support the rumor that Orson Welles in fact directed "The Third Man." Like many filmmakers of the era, though, Sir Carol Reed had clearly studied Welles' pioneering "Citizen Kane" and subsequent 1940s films noir "The Stranger" and "The Lady from Shanghai" before directing "The Third Man" in late '48.

In "The Third Man," such characteristics as the black-and-white cinematography indebted to the German Expressionist films of the 1920s and the realistic use of overlapping dialogue are straight from the "Citizen Kane" playbook. And those off-angle shots Reed employs so well in "The Third Man," to make the audience feel as disoriented as the American protagonist does in the post-World War II Vienna setting, certainly are akin to the extreme low angles used in "Kane."

The most conspicuous kinship between "The Third Man" and "Citizen Kane" comes by way of the two main actors. Joseph Cotton plays the lead Holly Martins in "The Third Man" while Welles plays Harry Lime, the titular villain. The two men, in their respective film debuts, shared the screen in "Citizen Kane." Reed wanted Welles in the film and fought producer David O. Selznick for the opportunity.

Graham Greene, already an acclaimed author for such works as his 1940 novel "The Power and the Glory," wrote the Oscar-nominated screenplay for the 1948 Reed-directed hit "The Fallen Idol." Greene, again from his own story, wrote the screenplay for "The Third Man." However, neither Reed nor Welles exactly followed it verbatim.

For all the classic lines Welles wrote for himself and others in "Citizen

Kane," none are quite as memorable as the "Swiss cuckoo clock" speech he improvised for Lime. It's worth repeating:

"You know what the fellow said – in Italy, for 30 years under the Borgias, they had warfare, terror, murder and bloodshed, but they produced Michelangelo, Leonardo da Vinci and the Renaissance. In Switzerland, they had brotherly love, they had 500 years of democracy and peace – and what did that produce? The cuckoo clock."

1949

While authors have griped forever about their books being altered to have a happy "Hollywood ending" when filmed, the opposite happened with "The Third Man." Greene's screenplay ended with Cotton's character walking down the road accompanied by Alida Valli's captivating Anna Schmidt, former lover of Lime. "I insisted that she pass him by," Reed is quoted as saying. In the same interview from the early 1970s the director says "I don't think anything in life ends 'right.'"

Another brilliant move by Reed is the soundtrack. While on location, the director heard an unknown Anton Karas plucking and strumming his zither in what the Reed recalled as "a tiny beer and sausage restaurant." Karas would end up writing and performing the score, featuring only his zither, and the composition commonly titled "The Third Man Theme" became an international hit.

The film itself performed quite well at box offices on both sides of the Atlantic, as well. Given glowing reviews upon release, in recent years high praise has come from the likes of Martin Scorsese, who in 2015 said: "I hope 'The Third Man' reissue prompts re-evaluation of the work of Carol Reed, a wonderful film artist."



Gloria Swanson and William Holden in "Sunset Boulevard." [Gatehouse Media archive]

'Sunset Boulevard'

Opening with acidic narration from a young man found face down in a swimming pool, this pitch-black film noir just gets darker, weirder and increasingly cynical right up until the insane finale. William Holden plays Joe Gillis, the B-picture screenwriter telling his dead man's tale in flashback. Fleeing men attempting to repossess his car, Joe pulls into a mansion, the same one where he eventually meets his death, thinking it's abandoned.

The colossal, unkempt building tucked away off Sunset Boulevard houses reclusive silent-film star Norma Desmond (Gloria Swanson) and her butler Max (Erich von Stroheim). Norma has penned an epic screenplay about Salome and she will play the biblical seductress, her first role in probably two decades, if only she can get Cecil B. DeMille to direct. Joe takes a job as live-in script doctor and becomes a kept man, with Norma's feelings deepening for him as she loses her grip on reality.

A scathing satire on Hollywood and the fickle nature of fans, the movie is a meta masterpiece with no real precedent. For starters, there's Swanson, who gives one of the most memorably scary performances of the past century, one that includes her delivering such immortal lines as "I am big! It's the pictures that got small." And, in the end: "All right, Mr. DeMille, I'm ready for my close-up." Yeah, Gloria Swanson could sympathize with Norma Desmond. A real-life silent film star, Swanson starred in movies directed by a young DeMille and was nominated for the first Academy Award in the Best Actress category. That same year, Swanson attempted a transition into talkies and her career, in film at least, came to a halt.

Then there's the weighty presence of von Stroheim, the real-life director

of the 1924 silent film classic "Greed" who eventually had a falling out with Hollywood studio bosses because of his insistence on complete control of films. In "Sunset Boulevard," von Stroheim plays a former silent film director who launched Norma's career. Adding to the self-referential nature of the film, DeMille and gossip columnist Hedda Hopper play themselves and there are cameos by silent-film stars Buster Keaton, H. B. Warner, and Anna Q. Nilsson.

1950

An Austrian-American filmmaker who fled Berlin when the Nazis came to power in the 1920s, Billy Wilder established himself as a Hollywood great by directing and co-authoring the screenplay for 1944's "Double Indemnity." Wilder was reportedly inspired to write "Sunset Boulevard" while observing all the old mansions along that famous street that were occupied by the silent film stars of the Roaring Twenties, who were once admired by the masses but had become, by the '40s, all but forgotten.

"Sunset Boulevard" succeeds on so many levels, from the script to Franz Waxman's haunting score, but perhaps its greatest genius comes down to the casting. Gloria Swanson gives the performance of a lifetime, one that truly makes her seem bigger than the picture. It's a role she was apparently destined to play.

"At first, you know, this was supposed to be a comedy," Wilder recalls in a 1975 interview included in the book "Film Noir Reader 3." "We were going to get Mae West, but she turned us down. And then Swanson almost dropped out when Paramount asked for a screen test. There was a lot of Norma in her, you know."

DIRECTOR

Billy Wilder

PRODUCER

Charles Brackett

WRITERS

Charles Brackett

Billy Wilder

D. M. Marshman, Jr.

STARRING

William Holden

Gloria Swanson

Erich von Stroheim

Nancy Olson

MUSIC

Franz Waxman

CINEMATOGRAPHY

John F. Seitz

EDITOR

Doane Harrison

Arthur Schmidt

RUNNING TIME

110 minutes

AWARDS

Academy Award, Best Writing, Story and Screenplay, Charles Brackett, Billy Wilder, D.M. Marshman Jr.

Academy Award, Best Art Direction-Set Decoration, Black-and-White, Hans Dreier, John Meehan, Sam Comer, Ray Moyer
Academy Award, Best Music, Scoring of a Dramatic or Comedy Picture Franz Waxman
Golden Globe, Best Motion Picture - Drama
Golden Globe, Best Director, Billy Wilder

Golden Globe, Best Actress - Drama, Gloria Swanson
Golden Globe, Best Original Score, Franz Waxman
National Film Registry, 1989

ALSO RECOMMENDED

"Double Indemnity" (1944)
"The Lost Weekend" (1945)
"Ace in the Hole" (1951)
"Some Like It Hot" (1959)
"The Apartment" (1960)

DIRECTOR

Joseph L. Mankiewicz

PRODUCER

Darryl F. Zanuck

WRITER

Joseph L. Mankiewicz

"The Wisdom of Eve" by Mary Orr

STARRING

Bette Davis
 Anne Baxter
 George Sanders
 Celeste Holm
 Gary Merrill
 Thelma Ritter

MUSIC

Alfred Newman

CINEMATOGRAPHY

Milton R. Krasner

EDITOR

Barbara McLean

RATING

NR

RUNNING TIME

138 minutes

AWARDS

Academy Award, Best Picture,
 Darryl F. Zanuck
 Academy Award, Best Director,
 Joseph L. Mankiewicz
 Academy Award, Best Writing,
 Screenplay, Joseph L. Mankiewicz
 Academy Award, Best Actor in a
 Supporting Role George Sanders
 Academy Award, Best Costume
 Design, Black-and-White, Edith
 Head Charles Le Maire
 Academy Award, Best Sound,
 Recording Thomas T. Moulton
 Golden Globe, Best Screenplay,
 Joseph L. Mankiewicz
 National Film Registry, 1990

**ALSO
RECOMMENDED**

"The Ghost and Mrs. Muir"
 (1947)
 "A Letter to Three Wives" (1949)
 "Five Fingers" (1952)
 "Julius Caesar" (1953)
 "The Barefoot Contessa" (1954)



Anne Baxter, left, and Bette Davis in "All About Eve." Marilyn Monroe is pictured in the background. [Gatehouse Media archive]

'All About Eve'

One of the smartest and most contemptuous movies about the theater, "All About Eve" can be traced back to an actual Broadway incident in the 1940s that found an established Viennese actress befriending an unknown young woman who then attempts to steal the older actress' career and director husband. Actress Mary Orr wrote a short story titled "The Wisdom of Eve" after learning about the sordid affair and sold it to Cosmopolitan.

After spending about 15 years as a Hollywood screenwriter, Joseph L. Mankiewicz made his directorial debut with 1946's "Dragonwyck" and in subsequent years helmed the critically acclaimed hits "The Ghost and Mrs. Muir" (1947) and, from his own screenplay, "A Letter to Three Wives" (1949). Around this time he read "The Wisdom of Eve" and it became the basis for his "All About Eve" screenplay.

Bette Davis had become one of Hollywood's biggest stars in the 1930s with such films as "Of Human Bondage" (1934), "Dangerous" (1935), "Jezebel" (1938) and "Dark Victory" (1939). By 1949, though, her star had faded, Warner Bros. failed to renew her contract, and she had earned a reputation for being difficult on set. The juiciest role in "All About Eve," veteran theater actress Margo Channing, originally went to Claudette Colbert but she got hurt early in filming and Davis landed the part, giving perhaps her greatest, most focused performance.

Sharing the screen with future real-life husband Gary Merrill, who played her boyfriend-director Bill Sampson, probably helped; or she simply recognized the importance of the role, especially at this point in her career.

"Bette was letter perfect," Mankiewicz reportedly said after the film's

release. "She was syllable-perfect. The director's dream: the prepared actress."

Anne Baxter, who shot to prominence after winning the 1946 Academy Award for Best Supporting Actress in "The Razor's Edge," also found herself cast in "All About Eve" after another actress had to drop out. While the story goes that producer Darryl F. Zanuck thought Baxter didn't have the "bitch virtuosity" to play Eve Harrington, she received the role nonetheless after original choice Jeanne Crain became pregnant.

Celeste Holm, who won an Academy Award for her performance in 1947's "Gentleman's Agreement," plays Margo's friend Karen Richards, the wife of the playwright Lloyd Richards (Hugh Marlowe) and the person responsible for introducing fangirl Eve Harrington to meet Margo backstage.

Mankiewicz's screenplay featured several characters not included in the original short story, too. Most notably there's the sinister film critic Addison DeWitt played delightfully by George Sanders and Margo's perceptive maid Birdie Coonan, a role written for Thelma Ritter after Mankiewicz worked with her on "A Letter to Three Wives." The all-star cast even features Marilyn Monroe, memorable in one of her earliest roles.

A sophisticated drama filled with wit and humor, "All About Eve" has been a universally praised commercial success since its release. There will likely never be a better film about theater life and I can't recall a single Hollywood film from Hollywood's Golden Age that features more great roles for women. In fact, it's the only film in Academy Award history to receive four female acting nominations with Davis and Baxter for Best Actress, and Holm and Ritter for Best Supporting Actress.

1950



Marlon Brando as Stanley Kowalski in "A Streetcar Named Desire." [Gatehouse Media archive]

1951

'A Streetcar Named Desire'

Reality crushes fantasy on every level in Tennessee Williams' drama about exiled neurotic Blanche DuBois desperately seeking sanctuary only to find herself driven to madness by her brutish brother-in-law Stanley Kowalski. Boiling from start to finish with the intensity of the punishing New Orleans summer heat inundating the Kowalskis' two-bedroom apartment in the rowdy French Quarter, the human emotions depicted are as raw and hurtful as any in American literature. Williams knew first-hand how the men of the South could punish the women still dependent on them in the first half of the 20th century and used his experiences in writing "A Streetcar Named Desire."

The play premiered on Broadway in December of 1947 with established theater star Jessica Tandy as Blanche DuBois alongside virtual unknown Marlon Brando (as Stanley Kowalski) with rising stars Kim Hunter (as Stella Kowalski), and Karl Malden (as Harold "Mitch" Mitchell). Elia Kazan, who had recently directed Malden in the hit Broadway production of Arthur Miller's "All My Sons," as well as directing the Oscar-winning Hollywood films "A Tree Grows in Brooklyn" and "Gentleman's Agreement," directed the original stage production of "A Streetcar Named Desire." A box office smash, the play ran for two years, with Williams winning a Pulitzer Prize for best drama and Tandy taking home a Tony for best actress.

When it came time to adapt the play for the screen, Kazan again directed with Brando — who had only appeared in one film before, the commercial flop "The Men" — Malden and Hunter all reprising their Broadway roles. Tandy, though, lost out to English actress Vivien Leigh, who had played Blanche DuBois in the London West End stage production and brought more Hollywood star power thanks to her iconic performance a decade prior in "Gone with the Wind," which MGM had successfully re-released to theaters in 1942 and again in '47.

Williams wrote the screenplay, which unlike the play features scenes outside the Kowalski apartment. Alas, because of the Hollywood Production Code the part about Blanche's husband committing suicide after she discovers he had a homosexual affair is altered, with a much more vague reason given for how she drove her young husband to his death.

Also, the movie features an upbeat ending with Stella planning to leave Stanley in the final scene.

Despite the changes, the film version loses little, if any, of the play's potency, with Brando's portrayal of machismo as equal parts animal sex appeal and inner ugliness one of the finest ever shown on the silver screen. Like most people alive today, I never saw Tandy play opposite Brando, but Leigh more than holds her own as the fading beauty who has "always depended on the kindness of strangers."

"A Streetcar Named Desire" hit theaters in September of 1951 and became an instant critical and commercial success. The first film to win in three Academy Award acting categories, the Oscars went to Leigh for Actress in a Leading Role, Malden for Actor in a Supporting Role, and Hunter for Actress in a Supporting Role. Brando earned his first of three consecutive Oscar nominations and then won in 1955 for his performance in "On the Waterfront," also directed by Kazan.

DIRECTOR

Elia Kazan

PRODUCER

Charles K. Feldman

WRITER

Tennessee Williams

Based on his play of the same name

STARRING

Vivien Leigh
Marlon Brando
Kim Hunter
Karl Malden

MUSIC

Alex North

CINEMATOGRAPHY

Harry Stradling

EDITOR

David Weisbart

RATING

PG

RUNNING TIME

125 minutes

AWARDS

Academy Award, Best Actress in a Leading Role, Vivien Leigh
Academy Award, Best Actor in a Supporting Role, Karl Malden
Academy Award, Best Actress in a Supporting Role, Kim Hunter
Academy Award, Best Art Direction-Set Decoration, Black-and-White, Richard Day
George, James Hopkins
Golden Globe, Best Supporting Actress Kim Hunter
National Film Registry, 1999

ALSO

RECOMMENDED

"A Tree Grows in Brooklyn" (1945)
"Gentleman's Agreement" (1947)
"On the Waterfront" (1954)
"East of Eden" (1955)
"A Face in the Crowd" (1957)

DIRECTORS

Gene Kelly
Stanley Donen

PRODUCER

Arthur Freed

WRITERS

Betty Comden
Adolph Green

STARRING

Gene Kelly
Donald O'Connor
Debbie Reynolds

MUSIC

Lennie Hayton (original score)
Songs: Nacio Herb Brown (music)
Arthur Freed (lyrics)

CINEMATOGRAPHY

Harold Rosson

EDITOR

Adrienne Fazan

RATING

G

RUNNING TIME

103 minutes

AWARDS

Golden Globe, Best Actor -
Comedy or Musical, Donald
O'Connor
National Film Registry, 1989

**ALSO
RECOMMENDED**

"Anchors Aweigh" (1945)
"The Pirate" (1948)
"Take Me Out to the Ballgame"
(1949)
"On the Town" (1949)
"An American in Paris" (1951)



Debbie Reynolds and Gene Kelly star in the 1952 MGM musical "Singin' in the Rain." [Gatehouse Media archive]

1952

'Singin' in the Rain'

Square-jawed handsome and built like he could have been playing for the Boston Bruins, Gene Kelly reached what would have been the pinnacle of most mortal's careers with 1951's "An American in Paris," which won six Academy Awards, including Best Picture. At the same March, 1952, ceremony, Kelly also earned a much-deserved honorary Oscar "in appreciation of his versatility as an actor, singer, director and dancer, and specifically for his brilliant achievements in the art of choreography on film."

A week later, "Singin' in the Rain" premiered at Radio City Music Hall. As co-director, lead star, and choreographer, Kelly somehow managed to make a movie even more timelessly entertaining than it's near-perfect predecessor. Filled with laugh-aloud comedy and dance numbers showcasing Kelly's exceptional combination of creativity and incredible athleticism, "Singin' in the Rain" is a romantic comedy with a heart of gold, set against Hollywood's transition in the late 1920s from silent to "talkie" pictures.

Kelly stars as leading man Don Lockwood, with Donald O'Connor as his best friend and career-long musical collaborator Cosmo Brown. A former child star, O'Connor nearly became a Hollywood footnote lost in the silly "Francis the Talking Mule" franchise of comedies. Fortunately, he broke free from Francis and other less-than-sophisticated comedies to make "Singin' in the Rain" and history.

Firing off spot-on zingers throughout the film, O'Connor also turns in one of the most hilarious song-and-dance numbers ever filmed, the solo standout "Make 'Em Laugh." A physically demanding performance for any actor, O'Connor reportedly needed several days of hospitalized convalescence after filming the sequence. His four-pack-a-day smoking habit probably didn't help.

Kelly's eye for talent brought French ballerina Leslie Caron to Hollywood to make her glorious debut opposite him in "An American in Paris." For "Singin' in the Rain," Kelly and co-director Stanley Donen wanted 18-year-old Debbie Reynolds to have her first starring role as Kathy Selden, the young actress who dubs the vocals for the vocally challenged Lina Lamont, a performance by Jean Hagen that earned her an Oscar nomination for Best Supporting Actress.

"Singin' in the Rain" did not earn Reynolds any award nominations. It made her a star, though, and proved a young woman with no dancing experience but tremendous raw talent and determination could more than hold her own with a Hollywood legend in his prime. The story goes Kelly was not exactly nice to Reynolds as she initially struggled to learn the complicated dance sequences. Fred Astaire, of all people, found Reynolds weeping under a piano and volunteered to mentor her — but even the most influential dancer in Hollywood history couldn't help the recent teenage beauty queen with Kelly's often cruel demands. After spending 15 hours filming the "Good Morning" number, for instance, Reynolds' feet reportedly bled.

"Singin' in the Rain" and childbirth were the two hardest things I ever had to do in my life," she would say years later.



James Stewart and Grace Kelly in "Rear Window." [Gatehouse Media archive]

DIRECTOR

Alfred Hitchcock

PRODUCER

Alfred Hitchcock

SCREENPLAY

John Michael Hayes

Based on "It Had to Be Murder"
short story by Cornell Woolrich**STARRING**

James Stewart

Grace Kelly

Wendell Corey

Thelma Ritter

Raymond Burr

MUSIC

Franz Waxman

CINEMATOGRAPHY

Robert Burks

EDITOR

George Tomasini

RUNNING TIME

112 minutes

AWARDS

National Film Registry, 1997

**ALSO
RECOMMENDED**

"Rope" (1948)

"Rear Window" (1954)

"The Man Who Knew Too Much"
(1956)

"North by Northwest" (1959)

"Psycho" (1960)

'Rear Window'

"Rear Window" gave Alfred Hitchcock, at this time entering the greatest period of his unsurpassed career, the perfect platform to explore one of his favorite themes: voyeurism.

James Stewart plays L. B. "Jeff" Jefferies, a daredevil magazine photojournalist wheelchair-bound after busting his leg while getting too close to the action at a car race. It's the middle of a heatwave and just about everyone in the courtyard surrounding his humble Greenwich Village apartment has their windows open and blinds raised. One married couple has even opted to sleep on the fire escape.

"Miss Torso," taut midriff exposed, practices her dance routines in between entertaining gentlemen callers. "Miss Lonelyhearts" pretends to have a date over just as an excuse to drink for two. A middle-aged single man attempts to compose a hit tune on the piano. There are more married couples, as well, visible from the rear window, including a costume jewelry salesman and his bedridden wife. It all becomes so distracting, Jeff can't even pay proper attention to his charming girlfriend, the socialite Lisa Fremont, portrayed by Grace Kelly.

Jeff becomes a voyeur. Lisa becomes a voyeur. Even Jeff's street-smart insurance company nurse Stella, played by superb supporting actress Thelma Ritter, eventually becomes dangerously intrigued by what's happening across the courtyard. Of course, we, the audience, become

voyeurs, too, and feel like we're right there in that cramped bachelor pad reaching for the binoculars — and then, bam, all of us are confronted by the killer.

1954

Scary stuff. And it builds so neatly, never hurried. "Rear Window" has humor, too, with smart romantic-comedy touches as Jeff attempts to convince Lisa, and mostly himself, that he's not the marrying kind. How could Jimmy Stewart's character not want to marry her?

Hitchcock was working with Kelly on "Dial M for Murder," also released in 1954, when he cast her in "Rear Window." She would also star in 1955's "To Catch a Thief," her third and final film with Hitchcock. All were hits upon release and remain beloved classics today. By '56, though, Kelly had become Princess of Monaco after marrying Prince Rainier III. Her legendary Hollywood career lasted a mere five years. After learning of her acting-ending marriage, Hitchcock reportedly said he was "very happy that Grace has found herself such a good part."

As for Hitchcock and Stewart, the director and actor first collaborated on the initially underappreciated "Rope" (1948) before making the box office and critical smash "Rear Window." They would work together on "The Man Who Knew Too Much" (1956) before teaming one final time for Hitchcock's masterpiece, perhaps the the greatest film ever made by anyone, the 1958 psychological thriller "Vertigo."



Classic Films: 1931-1960

A celebration of the Hollywood Golden Age

By Wade Tatangelo, Gatehouse Media
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Thanks to modern technology, us fans of classic cinema can now watch pretty much any old movie whenever we want. It's wonderful. We can go on binges of films by John Ford, Orson Welles, John Huston, Billy Wilder or Alfred Hitchcock; spend days at a time with stars such as Judy Garland, Ingrid Bergman, Bette Davis, Grace Kelly or Debbie Reynolds. Often, though, it's nice to have a guide of movies to watch or rewatch. Plus, many people are still discovering these eternally appealing "old movies."

When given the opportunity to create a premium edition of classic films similar to my "Classic Albums" one published last year, I decided to highlight the Hollywood Golden Age and limit the list to features released between 1931 and 1960. That means only one silent movie made the cut, Charlie Chaplin's "City Lights," no foreign-language films, and

only a couple British films: "The Third Man," which was produced by Hollywood's David Selznick and distributed by his company in the U.S; and "The Bridge on the River Kwai," produced by Hollywood's Sam Spiegel and distributed by Los Angeles-based Columbia Pictures.

I tried to cover all the classic genres but failed to include any science fiction films, which for me at least, do not start really holding up to contemporary viewings until the release of Stanley Kubrick's "2001: A Space Odyssey" in 1968; although strong arguments can be made for the 1950s films "The Day the Earth Stood Still" and "Invasion of the Body Snatchers." I also avoided including films simply because of historic or influential value. I wanted to spotlight films that are timeless, that remain highly entertaining and can be enjoyed by people of all ages and backgrounds.

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DIRECTOR

John Ford

PRODUCER

Cornelius Vanderbilt Whitney

SCREENPLAY

Frank S. Nugent Based on "The Searchers" novel by Alan Le May

STARRINGJohn Wayne
Jeffrey Hunter
Vera Miles
Ward Bond
Natalie Wood**MUSIC**Original Score: Max Steiner
Title Song: Stan Jones**CINEMATOGRAPHY**

Winton C. Hoch

EDITOR

Jack Murray

RUNNING TIME

119 minutes

AWARDSGolden Globe, Most Promising
Newcomer - Male, Patrick Wayne
National Film Registry, 1989**ALSO
RECOMMENDED**"Stagecoach" (1939)
"Fort Apache" (1948)
"She Wore a Yellow Ribbon"
(1949)
"Rio Grande" (1950)
"The Man Who Shot Liberty
Valance" (1962)

John Wayne plays Ethan Edwards in "The Searchers." [Gatehouse Media archive]

'The Searchers'

John Ford and John Wayne are a pair of Hollywood icons who made many great films independent of each other, but they will forever be linked thanks to numerous collaborations like their masterpiece, "The Searchers."

Ford had been directing Wayne since the height of the silent era when the broad-shouldered former high school football standout started his career as an extra. Ford made Wayne a star with the excellent and highly influential 1939 western "The Stagecoach" and the two men successfully collaborated again on the 1940 drama "The Long Voyage Home" as well as the 1945 war film "They Were Expendable."

But it took another director, one who greatly admired Ford, to show cinemagoers the villainous side of the actor nicknamed Duke. Howard Hawks' 1948 western "Red River" stars Wayne as Thomas Dunson, a man who goes nearly mad to the point of murder while leading a cattle drive along the Chisholm Trail. Upon seeing the film, Ford reportedly said of Wayne, "I didn't know that big-son-of-a-bitch could act."

Ford and Wayne had recently completed "Fort Apache" and, after seeing "Red River," Ford cast Wayne in the more demanding role of the older Captain Brittles in 1949's "She Wore a Yellow Ribbon." Ford and Wayne concluded their so-called Cavalry trilogy of westerns with "Rio Grande," and then Wayne starred in the 1952 romantic comedy "The Quiet Man," which won Ford his fourth and final Best Director Academy Award. It's a record to this day, with no living director having more than two Oscars in the category.

Ford and Wayne's greatest collaboration, though, would be "The Searchers." The film noir-style western stars Wayne as the racist Ethan Edwards who spends five years trying to track down the Comanches who kidnapped his nieces after slaughtering his brother and sister-in-law. Ethan's hatred for Indians is so great we truly believe he will kill his youngest niece, played by Natalie Wood, after he learns she has become a Comanche bride. In fact, if Ethan's younger companion Martin Pawley (Jeffrey Hunter) had not stood in the line of fire, Ethan, in all likelihood, would have murdered the girl rather than seeing her live as a Comanche.

Wayne has never been more terrorizing on screen, with the film's grittiness cleverly juxtaposed against the Technicolor majesty of Ford's sweeping shots of Monument Valley. It's Wayne's greatest acting achievement and the best western ever made. "The Searchers," better than any film in the genre, addresses the dark heart of the cowboys-and-Indians dynamic, showing the utter racism of Ethan's character along with a scene depicting U.S. Cavalry troops raiding a Comanche village and murdering at least one unarmed woman. The Comanches are shown as proud warriors who murder to get even with their white oppressors.

"The Searchers" has been a commercial and critical hit since its release, aging incredibly well. For instance, when the American Film Institute released its list of 100 greatest movies in 1998 "The Searchers" ranked No. 96. The updated 10th anniversary edition finds the film at No. 12, just ahead of "Star Wars," one of numerous movies it has clearly influenced. As of spring 2018, "The Searchers" maintained a perfect 100 percent rating on the popular online review aggregator site Rotten Tomatoes.

1956



Henry Fonda, center, is one of the stars in "12 Angry Men." [Gatehouse Media archive]

'12 Angry Men'

For many people, the thought of spending an entire day stuck in a cramped jury room arguing about the fate of a stranger sounds like torture. For young writer Reginald Rose, though, the experience could not have been more exhilarating. Yes, the inspiration for the classic courtroom drama "12 Angry Men" came from Rose's own experience.

"It was such an impressive, solemn setting in a great big wood-paneled courtroom, with a silver-haired judge," reads Rose's quote from the Internet Movie Database. "It knocked me out. I was overwhelmed. I was on a jury for a manslaughter case, and we got into this terrific, furious, eight-hour argument in the jury room. I was writing one-hour dramas for Studio One in Hollywood then and I thought, 'Wow, what a setting for a drama!'"

Rose's subsequent teleplay "Twelve Angry Men" first aired as a CBS live production in 1954 as part of the network's Studio One series and then Rose rewrote the drama for the stage before revising it once again for the "12 Angry Men" screenplay. Henry Fonda had never before produced a film but agreed to the share the duties along with Rose for the 1957 film adaptation, in which Fonda also would star as Juror 8. After directing off-Broadway productions, Sidney Lumet spent the 1950s becoming one of the most respected and prolific directors in television, leading Fonda and Rose to choose him to helm "12 Angry Men," his first feature film.

In addition to Fonda, an outstanding cast of character actors included Lee J. Cobb as the last man to vote "not guilty," Ed Begley as the racist who finally sees the light, E. G. Marshall as the somber stockbroker only interested in facts and Jack Warden as the smart-ass salesman who just wants a quick decision. Cobb had recently been nominated for the Best Supporting Actor Oscar for his role in "On the Waterfront" (1954). In 1956, Begley played Matthew Harrison Brady in the Broadway production of "Inherit the Wind" and earned a Tony Award, while "12

Angry Men" was Warden's breakout role following a smaller part in 1953's "From Here to Eternity."

1957

The screenplay wastes no time telling the story of a jury made up of 12 white men as they decide the fate of an 18-year-old Puerto Rican from a bad neighborhood accused of stabbing his father to death. The verdict must be unanimous and if the defendant is found guilty he will be executed. When the men first enter the jury room each one, except for Fonda's character, believes "the boy" to be guilty.

For all but a few minutes of the film's 96-minute running time the action takes place inside the jury room. Lumet maximizes the tight space to create additional anxiety by changing lenses throughout the film so that background appears to close in on the characters, explains legendary film critic Roger Ebert, before quoting Lumet from the director's highly recommended book "Making Movies" regarding another clever camera trick.

"I shot the first third of the movie above eye level, shot the second third at eye level and the last third from below eye level," Lumet writes. "In that way, toward the end the ceiling began to appear. Not only were the walls closing in, the ceiling was as well. The sense of increasing claustrophobia did a lot to raise the tension of the last part of the movie."

"12 Angry Men" did not initially perform well at the box office despite glowing reviews from critics and three Oscar nominations including for Best Picture. It's one of those movies that generations came to love thanks to TV viewings, school showings and rentals, with it now practically universally acclaimed — 100% approval rating on the review aggregate website Rotten Tomatoes — as one of the greatest courtroom dramas ever made. The disappointing box office performance, though, prompted Fonda to never produce a film again.

DIRECTORS

Sidney Lumet
Producers:
Henry Fonda
Reginald Rose

SCREENPLAY

Reginald Rose

STARRING

Henry Fonda
Lee J. Cobb
Ed Begley
E. G. Marshall
Jack Warden

MUSIC

Kenyon Hopkins

CINEMATOGRAPHY

Boris Kaufman

EDITOR

Carl Lerner

RUNNING TIME

96 minutes

AWARDS

BAFTA, Best Foreign Actor Henry Fonda
National Film Registry, 2007

ALSO RECOMMENDED

"Fail-Safe" (1964)
"Serpico" (1973)
"Dog Day Afternoon" (1975)
"Network" (1976)
"The Verdict" (1982)

DIRECTOR

David Lean

PRODUCER

Sam Spiegel

SCREENPLAY

Carl Foreman Michael Wilson
Based on "The Bridge over the River Kwai" novel by Pierre Boulle

STARRING

William Holden
Jack Hawkins
Alec Guinness

MUSIC

Malcolm Arnold

CINEMATOGRAPHY

Jack Hildyard

EDITOR

Peter Taylor

RUNNING TIME

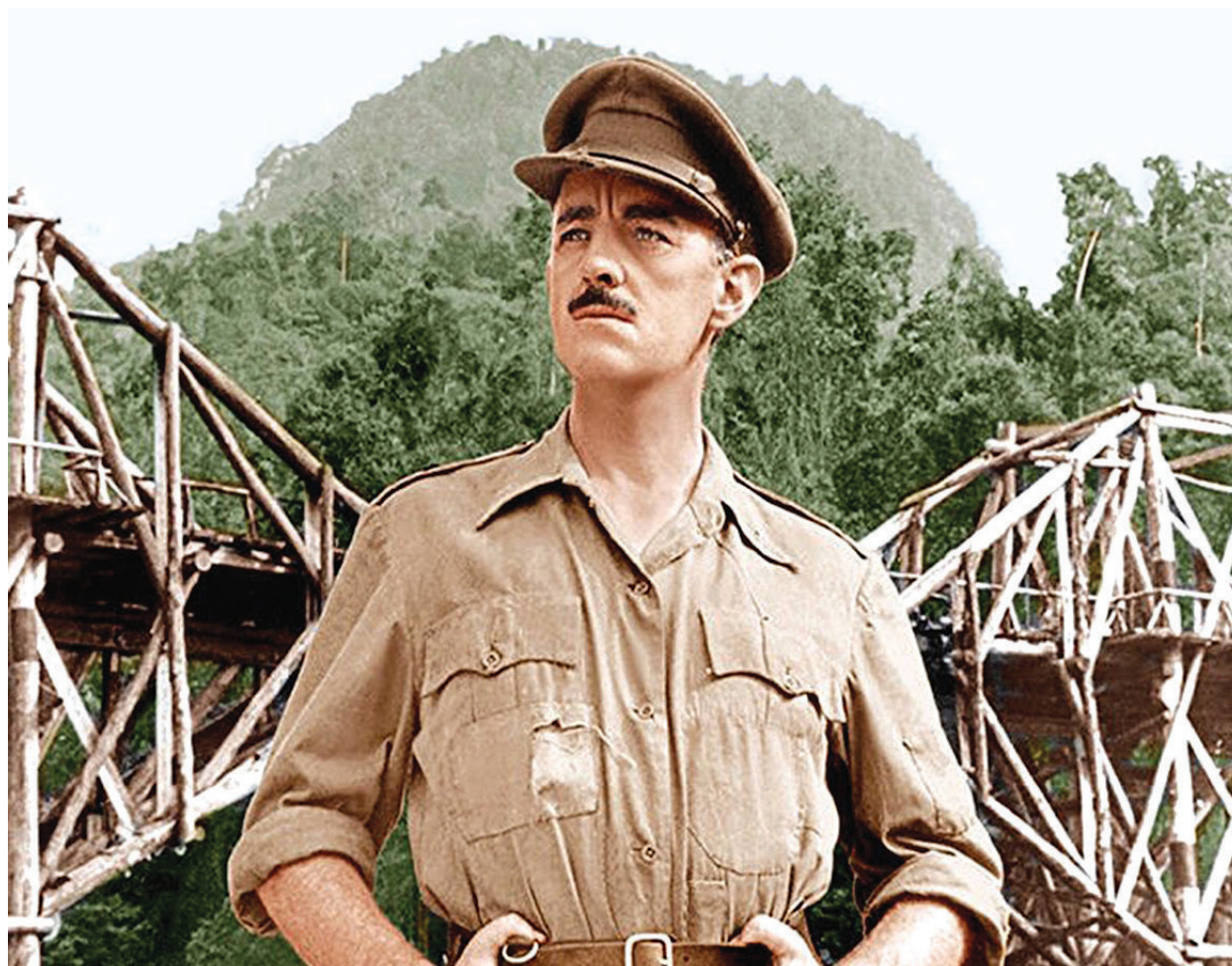
161 minutes

AWARDS

Academy Award, Best Picture, Sam Spiegel
Academy Award, Best Actor in a Leading Role, Alec Guinness
Academy Award, Best Director, David Lean
Academy Award, Best Writing, Screenplay Based on Material from Another Medium, Pierre Boulle, Carl Foreman, Michael Wilson
Academy Award, Best Cinematography, Jack Hildyard
Academy Award, Best Film Editing, Peter Taylor
Academy Award, Best Music, Scoring Malcolm Arnold
Golden Globe, Best Motion Picture - Drama
Golden Globe, Best Actor - Drama Alec Guinness
Golden Globe, Best Director, David Lean
BAFTA, Best British Actor, Alec Guinness
BAFTA, Best British Film
BAFTA, Best British Screenplay Pierre Boulle
BAFTA, Best Film from any Source
National Film Registry, 1997

ALSO RECOMMENDED

"Brief Encounter" (1945)
"Great Expectations" (1946)
"Lawrence of Arabia" (1962)
"Doctor Zhivago" (1965)
"A Passage to India" (1984)



Alec Guinness in "The Bridge on the River Kwai." [Gatehouse Media archive]

'The Bridge on the River Kwai'

The madness of war has never been better personified by a single performance than Alec Guinness' as Lieutenant Colonel Nicholson, the senior British officer in "The Bridge on the River Kwai." While Nicholson's initial stubbornness in the face of his Japanese captors appears heroic, by midway through the epic World War II film it becomes increasingly clear that Guinness' character might be even more flawed than the perceived villain, Colonel Saito. Filmed on location in Ceylon (now Sri Lanka) and filled with stunning visuals, nothing on screen is more awesome than watching Guinness, who almost didn't get the role.

While best known for directing three of the greatest epic movies ever made, consecutively from the mid-1950s to mid-'60s, David Lean spent the '40s distinguishing himself as a top filmmaker in Great Britain with much smaller features, starting with the romantic drama "Brief Encounter." Lean then cemented his reputation with the Charles Dickens adaptations "Great Expectations" and "Oliver Twist," which both featured Guinness. When Lean inked a Hollywood deal with Columbia Pictures to make "The Bridge on the River Kwai," though, he reportedly wanted Charles Laughton, who starred in his 1954 film "Hobson's Choice," to play Nicholson.

Roger Ebert, in a review posted online in 1999, writes that Laughton was

originally cast as Nicholson, but "could not face the heat of the Ceylon location, the ants, and being cramped in a cage," according to his wife, Elsa Lanchester, in her autobiography. Ebert notes that Guinness, in his autobiography, says that Lean "didn't particularly want me" for Nicholson.

And then there are the stories of Lean and Guinness bickering on set.

The story goes that Guinness wanted to bring some levity to the part and that Lean strongly objected, leading to ongoing clashes. Then there's the often repeated anecdote about Guinness questioning Lean about filming the scene where Nicholson contemplates his long military career from behind. After completing the scene, Lean said, "Now you can all (expletive) off and go home, you English actors. Thank God that I'm starting work tomorrow with an American actor (William Holden)."

Of course, while Holden does a fine job in the starring role of U.S. Navy Commander Shears, it's Guinness who delivers the performance of a lifetime. A rare film immediately adored by audiences and critics alike, "The Bridge on the River Kwai" won seven Academy Awards, including Best Picture and Best Actor in a Leading Role for Guinness. The film was also the biggest box office success of 1958.

1957



Kirk Douglas in "Paths of Glory." [Courtesy photo via IMDB.com]

DIRECTOR

Stanley Kubrick

PRODUCER

James B. Harris

SCREENPLAY

Stanley Kubrick

Calder Willingham

Jim Thompson

Based on "Paths of Glory" by
Humphrey Cobb

STARRING

Kirk Douglas

Ralph Meeker

Adolphe Menjou

George Macready

Wayne Morris

Richard Anderson

MUSIC

Gerald Fried

CINEMATOGRAPHY

Georg Krause

EDITOR

Eva Kroll

RUNNING TIME

88 minutes

AWARDS

National Film Registry, 1992

ALSO RECOMMENDED

"The Killing" (1956)

"Spartacus" (1960)

"Dr. Strangelove" (1964)

"2001: A Space Odyssey" (1968)

"Barry Lyndon" (1975)

"Paths of Glory" brings to screen one of the most morally corrupt acts committed by an Allied Power during World War I: the execution of four French soldiers under the order of General Géraud Réveilhac in 1915 for cowardice (they were exonerated years later). It's a sad story and a smart premise for an anti-war film, with both the battlefield and courtroom scenes rendered brilliantly by director/co-writer Stanley Kubrick and star/producer Kirk Douglas. A film as aesthetically pleasing as it is emotional, "Paths of Glory" essentially launched Kubrick's career.

'Paths of Glory'

1957

picture.' Stanley never blinked an eye. We shot the original script. I think the movie is a classic, one of the most important pictures—possibly the most important picture—Stanley Kubrick has ever made."

Douglas, in one of his finest performances, plays Colonel Dax, who courageously leads his French troops into a hopeless battle against the Germans. The French generals responsible for the loss decide to execute their own soldiers, randomly, for cowardice to set an example. Douglas'

character, a well-known criminal defense lawyer before the war, volunteers to defend his three men sentenced to death. His powerful speeches go unheeded.

Not that Kubrick didn't already brim with self-confidence. A filmmaker in his late 20s without a single box office hit on his resume, Kubrick landed the job of directing "Paths of Glory" for Douglas' Bryna Productions based on his film noir "The Killing," which had a barely-there theatrical run but earned much-deserved critical praise. Douglas, meanwhile, ranked as one of the biggest stars in Hollywood, with Oscar nominations for "Champion," "The Bad and the Beautiful" and, most recently, for portraying Vincent van Gogh in the previous year's film "Lust for Life." Still, Kubrick battled for control over "Paths of Glory" — even before the start of production — when he did a rewrite on the screenplay without telling Douglas.

"I called Stanley to my room (and) hit the ceiling," Douglas is quoted as saying. "I called him every four-letter word I could think of ... 'I got the money, based on that script. Not this shit!' I threw the script across the room. 'We're going back to the original script, or we're not making the

"Paths of Glory" shows the senseless execution of the French soldiers followed, in the finale, by Kubrick's most poignant scene. Dax's soldiers are drinking at a saloon when the owner brings up an attractive young German woman to sing (Christiane Harlan, who then married Kubrick). The men jeer like drunken pigs until she starts singing "The Faithful Hussar." A heartbreaking ballad sung in German with no subtitles, we watch the soldiers transformed from animals into human beings, many with tears in their eyes just like the woman singing.

Criticized for its anti-military message, "Paths of Glory" did not get shown in France until 1975, with Spain banning the film until 1986. Even Germany didn't allow the film to be screened in theaters until a couple years after its release and the U.S. military reportedly discouraged the movie from being shown on its European bases. Nominated for a Best Film BAFTA Award, "Paths of Glory" lost to "The Bridge on the River Kwai."

DIRECTOR

Alfred Hitchcock

PRODUCER

Alfred Hitchcock

SCREENPLAY

Alec Coppel

Samuel Taylor

Based on "D'entre les morts" by

Pierre Boileau Thomas Narcejac

STARRING

James Stewart

Kim Novak

Barbara Bel Geddes

Tom Helmore

Henry Jones

MUSIC

Bernard Herrmann

CINEMATOGRAPHY

Robert Burks

EDITOR

George Tomasini

RUNNING TIME

128 minutes

AWARDS

National Film Registry, 1989

ALSO**RECOMMENDED**

"Rope" (1948)

"Rear Window" (1954)

"The Man Who Knew Too Much"
(1956)

"North by Northwest" (1959)

"Psycho" (1960)



Kim Novak in "Vertigo." [Gatehouse Media archive]

A dark romantic thriller, "Vertigo" allows Alfred Hitchcock to offer a bewitching

cautionary tale about the perils of lust. Considering the way the Master of Suspense has been portrayed in biographies such as Peter Ackroyd's from 2015 — which depicts Hitchcock as a filmmaker fascinated with guilt, punishment and sex; as a man who hated his own body and often lusted after his leading ladies — "Vertigo" might just be his most personal film. Regardless, "Vertigo" now comfortably ranks as Hitchcock's masterpiece, which means it also ends up being considered for the top spot of any respectable list of greatest films ever made.

"Vertigo" stars James Stewart as John "Scottie" Ferguson, a middle-aged man who must quit his job as a police detective after developing a debilitating fear of heights that causes vertigo. He's hired by old college mate Gavin Elster to follow Elster's wife, the alluring 20-something Madeleine (Kim Novak), who is behaving oddly. Scottie's obsession with Madeleine leads him to being duped, driven mad and then at least partially responsible for her death. It's a haunting, deliberately paced film set in San Francisco and shot in beautiful Technicolor, with a spot-on score by composer Bernard Herrmann.

The beloved star of such feel-good films as "Mr. Smith Goes to Washington" (1939), "The Shop around the Corner" (1940) and "It's a Wonderful Life" (1946), Stewart first worked with Hitchcock in the underrated "Rope" (1948) followed by the universally-praised "Rear Window" (1954) and then the entertaining box office hit "The Man Who Knew Too Much" (1956). While "Rope" finds Stewart playing a character who does not display an heroism until the final act and the actor showed

"Vertigo"

1958

"Vertigo" seems poised for a return to the sanatorium.

While it's difficult today to imagine anyone other than Novak in her career-defining role of Madeleine, Hitchcock envisioned Vera Miles playing the character. He had directed

her in his 1956 docudrama film "The Wrong Man" opposite Henry Fonda and is quoted as saying "Vertigo" would be Miles' "chance to become a beautiful sophisticated blonde, a real actress." She became pregnant, much to Hitchcock's chagrin, so the director went with Novak, who had earned acclaim with the 1955 releases "Picnic" and "The Man with the Golden Arm." Novak has been quoted as saying she had a wonderful experience working with Stewart, while Hitchcock was indifferent. "It was only after the film was finished that I heard how much he thought I'd wrecked his picture," Novak is quoted as saying. "I felt I did a lot of good work in that movie, and I got some of the best notices of my career. But Hitchcock couldn't blame himself, so he blamed me."

Largely ignored by the masses and dismissed by most critics as a mediocre Hitchcock murder mystery upon release, "Vertigo" has aged better than perhaps any film in the history of cinema. For instance, the British Film Institute's magazine "Sight & Sound" has published a list of top films based on picks by the world's leading film critics every 10 years since 1952. "Vertigo" didn't even make the list until 1982 when it entered at seventh place. In 2012, "Vertigo" was voted greatest film of all time, dethroning "Citizen Kane" from the top spot it had held since 1962.

a darker side in the westerns he made with director Anthony Mann in the 1950s, none of these previous movies required Stewart to play someone like Scottie, who is guided foremost by lust and at the end of



Cary Grant in the crop-duster sequence from "North by Northwest." [Gatehouse Media archive]

After making his romance-as-obsession murder mystery "Vertigo," Alfred Hitchcock aimed to film "something fun, light-hearted, and generally free of the symbolism permeating (his) other movies," he's quoted as saying. The Master of Suspense succeeded with "North by Northwest."

A commercial and critical hit upon release, it remains one of the most influential and entertaining films of the past century. Featuring fabulous VistaVision cinematography and another exceptional score by Bernard Hermann, it's a first-rate thriller with plenty of action, adventure, romance, and humor, concluding with one nice touch of cheeky symbolism: The heroic newlyweds embrace in the upper berth of their sleeper car followed by a shot of the train speeding through a tunnel.

Incorporating many of the classic plot devices and themes of his previous films, Hitchcock's "North by Northwest" finds Madison Avenue advertising exec Roger O. Thornhill (Cary Grant) mistaken for a murderous secret agent and forced to embark on a suspense-filled escapade from Manhattan to Mount Rushmore. The star-studded cast includes Eva Marie Saint as Thornhill's mysterious accomplice Eve Kendall, James Mason as the villainous Phillip Vandamm and Martin Landau, in his first major film appearance, as Vandamm's henchman Leonard. Jessie Royce Landis, only seven years older than Grant at the time, plays Thornhill's mother, who doesn't believe, and even ridicules, her son.

The screenplay came from conversations between Hitchcock and Ernest Lehman, whose writing credits at the time were a string of hits including "Sabrina" (1954), "Somebody Up There Likes Me" (1956) and "Sweet Smell of Success" (1957). "I said, 'I want to make the Hitchcock picture to

'North by Northwest'

1959

how much he liked the first 65 pages. That's priceless."

Hitchcock knew he had a potential hit and went with his favorite actor. Of all the director's male leads, none had a better run of successes than Grant, who starred in "Suspicion" (1941), "Notorious" (1946) and "To Catch a Thief" (1955)

before "North By Northwest," his final collaboration with Hitchcock. While the film itself works on every level, it's largely carried by Grant's wit and charm. Grant "was never more at home than in this role of the advertising-man-on-the-lam," reads the 1959 review by New York Times film critic A.H. Weiler. "He handles the grimaces, the surprised look, the quick smile, the aforementioned spooning and all the derringdo with professional aplomb and grace."

Eva Marie Saint, who won an Academy Award for Best Supporting Actress for "On the Waterfront" (1954), earned similar praise from the famed critic for her performance of the blonde heroine. "In casting Eva Marie Saint as his romantic vis-à-vis, Mr. Hitchcock has plumbed some talents not shown by the actress heretofore," Weiler wrote. "Although she is seemingly a hard, designing type, she also emerges both the sweet heroine and a glamorous charmer."

Finally, if you're looking for deeper meaning in "North by Northwest," don't bother. It's entertainment, of the highest order. "It's a fantasy," Hitchcock reportedly said in an interview with Peter Bogdanovich in 1963. "The whole film is epitomized in the title—there is no such thing as north-by-northwest on the compass."

DIRECTOR

Alfred Hitchcock

PRODUCER

Alfred Hitchcock

SCREENPLAY

Ernest Lehman

STARRING

Cary Grant
Eva Marie Saint
James Mason
Jessie Royce Landis

MUSIC

Bernard Herrmann

CINEMATOGRAPHY

Robert Burks

EDITOR

George Tomasini

RUNNING TIME

136 minutes

AWARDS

National Film Registry, 1995

ALSO RECOMMENDED

"Suspicion" (1941)
"Notorious" (1946)
"To Catch a Thief" (1955)
"Vertigo" (1958)
"Psycho" (1960)

DIRECTOR

Billy Wilder

PRODUCER

Billy Wilder

SCREENPLAY

Billy Wilder

I.A.L. Diamond

STARRING

Jack Lemmon

Shirley MacLaine

Fred MacMurray

Jack Kruschen

MUSIC

Adolph Deutsch

CINEMATOGRAPHY

Joseph LaShelle

EDITOR

Daniel Mandell

RUNNING TIME

125 minutes

AWARDS

Academy Award, Best Picture, Billy Wilder

Academy Award, Best Director, Billy Wilder

Academy Award, Best Writing, Story and Screenplay - Written Directly for the Screen, Billy Wilder and I.A.L. Diamond

Academy Award, Best Art Direction-Set Decoration, Black-and-White, Alexandre Trauner and Edward G. Boyle

Academy Award, Best Film Editing Daniel Mandell

Golden Globe, Best Motion Picture - Comedy

Golden Globe, Best Actress -

Comedy or Musical, Shirley MacLaine

Golden Globe, Best Actor - Comedy or Musical Jack Lemmon

National Film Registry, 1994

ALSO**RECOMMENDED**

"Double Indemnity" (1944)

"The Lost Weekend" (1945)

"Sunset Boulevard" (1950)

"Ace in the Hole" (1951)

"Some Like It Hot" (1959)



From left: Jack Lemmon, Shirley MacLaine and Fred MacMurray in "The Apartment." [20th Century Fox Courtesy photo via IMDB.com]

'The Apartment'

An equally gifted screenwriter and director who then started producing his own films in the 1950s, Billy Wilder gave us an amazingly diverse collection of classics. There's the chilling 1944 film noir "Double Indemnity" and the 1945 drama about the disastrous effects of alcoholism "The Lost Weekend." There will probably never be a better movie made about Hollywood than "Sunset Boulevard" (1950) and the media gets the same grippingly brutal treatment with "Ace in the Hole" (1951). Many critics consider "Some Like it Hot" (1959) the greatest comedy ever made and, truth be told, it was the final film cut from this list. Instead, I went with Wilder's final masterpiece, "The Apartment."

A romantic comedy but with a dramatic realism rarely seen in the genre, "The Apartment" allows us to empathize with an unlikely protagonist: Manhattan insurance company worker C. C. "Bud" Baxter (Jack Lemmon), an average-looking bachelor in his early 30s willing to stand in the rain while his bosses use his apartment for extramarital activities so he might be promoted one day from the rows of typewriter-topped desks to an office. Essentially, though, "The Apartment" is a movie about loneliness. Lonely Baxter and the beautiful but similarly lonely elevator operator in her early 20s Fran Kubelik (Shirley MacLaine).

Wilder had just released the highly successful "Some Like it Hot,"

co-starring Lemmon, and wanted to make another picture with the actor (who would go on to star in five more of his films). Wilder and his screenwriting partner I.A.L. Diamond were inspired to write "The

Apartment" after reading about a Hollywood agent who used an employee's apartment to have an affair that got him shot by the woman's producer husband. Diamond was also reportedly inspired by the story of a friend who came home after breaking up with his girlfriend to find her dead in his bed after committing suicide. Yes, bleak subject matter for a film that ultimately does have a happy ending and is filled with charm thanks to the chemistry between Lemmon and MacLaine.

Fred MacMurray, playing against type like he did in "Double Indemnity," is outstanding again in "The Apartment" as despicable Jeff D. Sheldrake, Baxter's married boss and apartment user. MacMurray, who had just starred in the 1959 Disney film "The Shaggy Dog," played the slimey, womanizing boss so well that after the film's release he reportedly was scolded by women on the street for making a "dirty filthy movie." Despite its controversial subject matter, "The Apartment" was a big box office hit that received 10 Academy Award nominations, winning five.

It's essential viewing, especially for anyone who has ever been single and stuck in a job where the best you can hope for is a move from the cubicle farm to an office.

1960



Janet Leigh in the shower scene from "Psycho." [Gatehouse Media archive]

At the height of his popularity thanks to the hit film "North by Northwest" and the television series he hosted and produced — "Alfred Hitchcock Presents" — the Master of Suspense would have the biggest box office success of his career in 1960 with "Psycho." However, Hitchcock struggled to get the movie made.

Hollywood hits dating back to "Rebecca" in 1940 and at his current home, Paramount Pictures, since 1954's "Rear Window," were not enough to convince studio executives it would be profitable to film Robert Bloch's newly published novel "Psycho," which alludes to real-life murderer Ed Gein. Hitchcock eventually financed "Psycho" himself, using his TV crew to make the black-and-white movie on the cheap.

Janet Leigh had spent more than a decade as one of Hollywood's top leading ladies before agreeing to appear in "Psycho" for less than her usual fee; likely, so she could work with Hitchcock, following her enjoyable experience working with another genius filmmaker, Orson Welles, on "Touch of Evil," released in 1958. Leigh's character, sympathetic thief-on-the-run Marion Crane, would be famously killed off halfway through the film, an unprecedented move then and now in Hollywood.

Perhaps the most terrifying and scrutinized scene ever filmed, the "shower scene," with its multiple stabbings, relentless montage editing and Bernard Herrmann's screeching violins, traumatized Leigh. After viewing the on-screen murder, Leigh recalled in a 1995 New York Times interview that she stopped taking showers, only baths.

A hotel or friend's home with only a shower would cause Leigh great

'Psycho'

1960

Rising star Anthony Perkins earned an Oscar nomination for his supporting role in William Wyler's 1956 Civil War film "Friendly Persuasion," followed by praise for playing baseball player Jimmy Piersall in the 1957 biopic "Fear Strikes Out" and also with Shirley MacLaine and Shirley Booth in 1958 comedy "The Matchmaker." Playing Norman Bates in "Psycho" would be both a blessing and curse for Perkins, who would suffer from one of the most damaging cases of typecasting. After Hitchcock died in 1980, "Psycho" was revived as a horror franchise with Perkins reprising the role of Bates for several sequels, starting with "Psycho II" in 1983.

When "Psycho" came out in 1960 it broke new ground in its depiction of sex and violence and initial reviews by critics were mixed. At the box office, though, "Psycho" quickly became a box office smash around the world. Arguably the most commercially successful black-and-white sound film ever made, Hitchcock himself reportedly made \$15 million dollars (about \$125 million in today's money).

For better or worse, "Psycho" proved highly influential, launching the slasher film genre best known for such movies as "Halloween," starring Janet Leigh's daughter Jamie Lee Curtis. In 1998, Gus Van Zant released a nearly shot-by-shot remake of "Psycho," albeit in color, that bombed at the box office and earned scathing reviews. Hitchcock's original is now pretty much universally praised as a classic with a 97-percent rating on the popular online review aggregator site Rotten Tomatoes.

anxiety. "I make sure the doors and windows of the house are locked," she said, "and I leave the bathroom door open and shower curtain open. I'm always facing the door, watching, no matter where the shower head is."

DIRECTOR

Alfred Hitchcock

PRODUCER

Alfred Hitchcock

SCREENPLAY

Joseph Stefano

Based on "Psycho" by Robert Bloch

STARRING

Anthony Perkins

Vera Miles

John Gavin

Martin Balsam

John McIntire

Janet Leigh

MUSIC

Bernard Herrmann

CINEMATOGRAPHY

John L. Russell

EDITOR

George Tomasini

RUNNING TIME

109 minutes

AWARDS

Golden Globe, Best Supporting Actress, Janet Leigh
National Film Registry, 1992

ALSO

RECOMMENDED

"Strangers on a Train" (1951)

"Rear Window" (1954)

"Vertigo" (1958)

"North by Northwest" (1959)

"The Birds" (1963)



Classic film trivia

▼ ‘City Lights’ (1931)

Charles Chaplin invited Albert Einstein and his wife Elsa to join him at the Los Angeles premiere on January 30, 1931. When the house lights came up, Chaplin was surprised to see Einstein’s eyes tearing at the final scene. Chaplin said in his autobiography that he had not known Einstein to be so “sentimental.”



▼ ‘The Thin Man’ (1934)

Although the “Thin Man” of the title was the character Clyde Wynant, fans of the picture and the subsequent series began to refer to the Nick Charles character as “The Thin Man,” and all subsequent films included “The Thin Man” in their titles.

▼ ‘Snow White And The Seven Dwarfs’ (1937)

When the movie was released, it was generally accepted that the correct plural form of “dwarf” was “dwarfs.” J.R.R. Tolkien’s “The Hobbit” (published the same year) and later “Lord of the Rings” gradually popularized the uncommon variant “dwarves,” so that the dwarfs in this movie are today often erroneously referred to as “dwarves” and the title even given as “Snow White and the Seven Dwarves.”





‘The Wizard of Oz’ (1939)

Many of The Wicked Witch of the West’s scenes were either trimmed or deleted entirely, as Margaret Hamilton’s performance was thought to be too frightening for audiences.

‘His Girl Friday’ (1940)

Ginger Rogers wrote that she was offered the role of Hildy Johnson. She read the script, but this was before Cary Grant was cast, and she turned it down. After learning that Grant was cast, she regretted it.

‘The Grapes of Wrath’ (1940)

Prior to filming, producer Darryl F. Zanuck sent undercover investigators out to the migrant camps to see if John Steinbeck had been exaggerating about the squalor and unfair treatment meted out there. He was horrified to discover that, if anything, Steinbeck had actually downplayed what went on in the camps.

‘Citizen Kane’ (1941)

William Randolph Hearst was so angered by the film that he accused Orson Welles of being a Communist in order to keep the film from being released.

◀ ‘The Maltese Falcon’ (1941)

A few of the principal actors became close friends during the shooting. Humphrey Bogart, Peter Lorre, Ward Bond, and Mary Astor would often join John Huston at the Lakeside Country Club for drinks, buffet supper, and good conversation, usually until midnight. Bogart always considered Lorre and Huston great pals, mostly because they met two principal criteria: they weren’t boring and they could drink like fish.

‘Casablanca’ (1942)

In the 1980s this film’s script was sent to readers at a number of major studios and production companies under its original title, “Everybody Comes to Rick’s.” Some readers recognized the script but most did not. Many complained that the script was “not good enough” to make a decent movie. Others gave such complaints as “too dated,” “too much dialogue” and “not enough sex.”

‘It’s A Wonderful Life’ (1946)

For the scene that required Donna Reed to throw a rock through the window of the Granville house, director Frank Capra hired a marksman to shoot it out on cue. To everyone’s amazement, Reed broke the window by herself. She had played baseball in high school and had a strong throwing arm.

‘The Treasure of the Sierra Madre’ (1948)

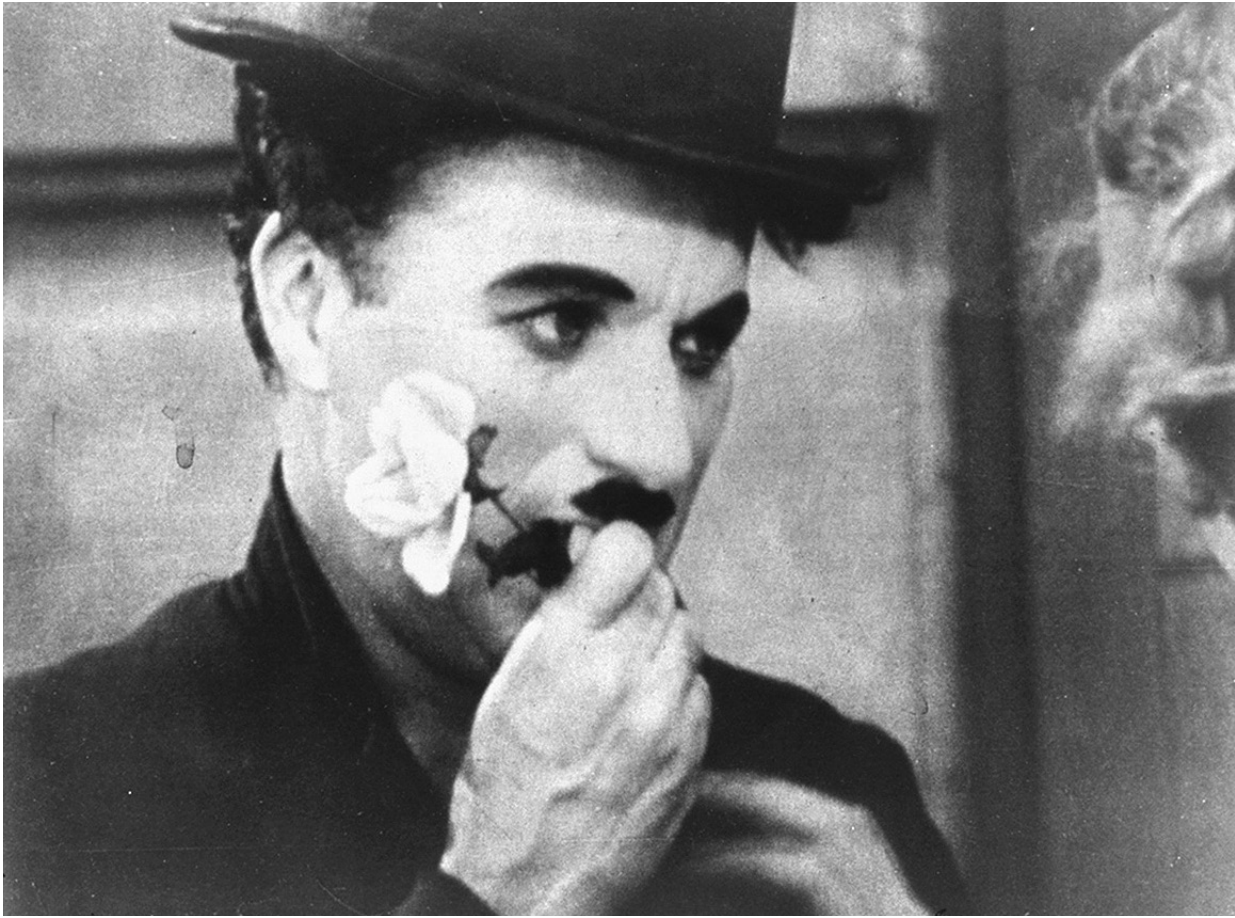
In his Oscar acceptance speech, Walter Huston said, “Many, many years ago, I brought up a boy and I said to him, ‘Son, if you ever become a writer, try to write a good part for your old man sometime.’ Well, by cracky, that’s what he did!”

‘The Third Man’ (1949)

A huge fan of the film, Martin Scorsese wrote a major thesis on it while in film school. He got a B+ for it, his professor remarking, “Forget it, it’s just a thriller.”

‘Sunset Boulevard’ (1950)

As a practical joke, during the scene where William Holden and Nancy Olson kiss for the first time, Billy Wilder let them carry on for minutes without yelling cut (he’d already gotten the shot he needed on the first take). Eventually it wasn’t Wilder who shouted “Cut!” but Holden’s wife, who happened to be on set that day.



Charlie Chaplin holds a rose in this photo from the final scene in his 1931 silent film "City Lights." [Gatehouse Media archive]

City Lights'

Talkies were taking over and synchronized sound reverberated through cinema like a death knell.

"They are spoiling the oldest art in the world — the art of the pantomime," Charlie Chaplin told a reporter in 1929.

"They are ruining the great beauty of silence. They are defeating the meaning of the screen."

Undeterred by the popularity of talking pictures, Chaplin would write, direct, edit and produce "City Lights" as a silent film starring his beloved Little Tramp character that dated back to 1915. The romantic comedy would also feature Chaplin's first self-composed film score.

"City Lights" opens with a large gathering for the unveiling of a public artwork. The veil rises and there's the Tramp, resting in the lap of the sculpture. He evades capture by police after delivering several minutes of brilliant, laugh-out-loud slapstick that soon leads to him meeting the charming flower-girl who is blind and mistakes him for the wealthy owner of a chauffeured automobile.

Fast forward 80 or so minutes to the film's end and the Tramp encounters the flower girl again, but now she can see. He's overjoyed that the

procedure he secretly funded has been successful but fears she will be disappointed in his true identity. Their exchange, which ends the film, is a tear-inducing triumph, one of the most poignant scenes in the history of cinema.

"City Lights," subtitled "a comedy romance in pantomime," had a January 1931 premiere in Los Angeles and on the way to the theater Chaplin second-guessed his decision to release a silent film in the new era of sound. It earned a standing ovation and a few days later in New York audiences greeted the film with the same adulation. While it first received mixed reviews from critics, "City Lights" was a box office success during its initial run and then again during its re-release in 1950.

"I was depressed by the remark of a young critic who said that 'City Lights' was very good, but that it verged on the sentimental, and that in my future films I should try to approximate realism," Chaplin writes in his autobiography published in 1964. "I found myself agreeing with him. Had I known what I do now, I could have told him that so-called realism is often artificial, phoney, prosaic and dull; and that it is not reality that matters in a film but what the imagination can make of it."

DIRECTOR

Charlie Chaplin

PRODUCER

Charlie Chaplin

SCREENPLAY

Charlie Chaplin

STARRING

Charlie Chaplin

Virginia Cherrill

Florence Lee Harry Myers

MUSIC

Charlie Chaplin

"Flower Girl's Theme" by José Padilla

EDITOR

Charlie Chaplin

CINEMATOGRAPHY

Rollie Theroeh

Gordon Pollock

Mark Marklatt

RUNNING TIME

87 minutes

AWARDS

Top Ten Films, National Board of Review, 1931

National Film Registry, 1992

Film Hall of Fame, Online Film &

Television Association, 2005

ALSO

RECOMMENDED

"The Kid" (1921)

"The Gold Rush" (1925)

"Modern Times" (1936)

"The Great Dictator" (1940)

"Monsieur Verdoux" (1947)

1931



‘All About Eve’ (1950)

Zsa Zsa Gabor kept arriving on the set because she was jealous of her husband George Sanders in his scenes with the young blonde ingenue Marilyn Monroe.

‘A Streetcar Named Desire’ (1951)

Vivien Leigh, who was only 36 at the time of filming, had to be made up to look older.

▲ ‘Singin’ In The Rain’ (1952)

Only 19 years old when cast in the film, Debbie Reynolds lived with her parents and commuted to the set. She had to wake up at 4 a.m. and ride three different buses to the studio; sometimes, to avoid the commute, she would just sleep on the set.

‘Rear Window’ (1954)

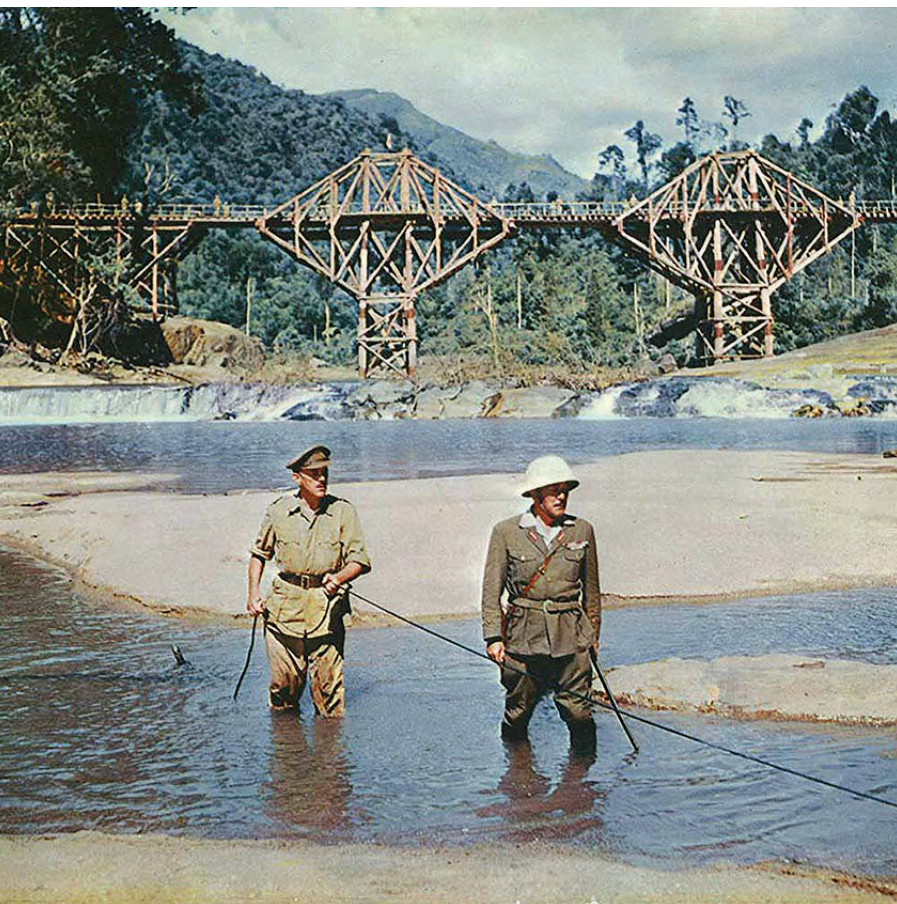
By most accounts, everyone was crazy about Grace Kelly. According to James Stewart, “Everybody just sat around and waited for her to come in the morning, so we could just look at her. She was kind to everybody, so considerate, just great, and so beautiful.” Stewart also praised her instinctive acting ability and her “complete understanding of the way motion picture acting is carried out.”

‘The Searchers’ (1956)

Considering the part of Ethan Edwards to be the best character that he ever portrayed on-screen and “The Searchers” to be his favorite film role, John Wayne named his youngest son Ethan Wayne in homage.

‘12 Angry Men’ (1957)

Director Sidney Lumet had the actors all stay in the same room for several hours on end and do their lines over and over without filming them. This was to give them a real taste of what it would be like to be cooped up in a room with the same people.



▲ ‘The Bridge on the River Kwai’ (1957)

Screenwriters Michael Wilson and Carl Foreman had been blacklisted in Hollywood after being accused of having Communist ties at the time the film was made, and went uncredited. The sole writing credit, and therefore the Oscar for best adapted screenplay, went to Pierre Boulle, who wrote the original French novel but did not speak English. Clearly he had not written the English script and this became a long-running controversy between the Academy and the actual authors to achieve recognition for their work. In 1984, the Academy retroactively awarded the Oscar to Wilson and Foreman. Sadly, Wilson did not live to see this; Foreman died the day after it was announced. When the film was restored, their names were added to the credits.

‘Paths of Glory’ (1957)

Winston Churchill said that the film was a highly accurate depiction of trench warfare and the sometimes misguided workings of the military mind.

‘Vertigo’ (1958)

Alfred Hitchcock was embittered at the critical and commercial failure of the film in 1958. He blamed this on James Stewart for “looking too old” to attract audiences any more. Hitchcock never worked with Stewart, previously one of his favorite collaborators, again.

‘North by Northwest’ (1959)

Hitchcock filmed Cary Grant’s entrance into the United Nations building from across the street with a hidden camera. When he gets to the top of the stairs a man about to walk down does a double take upon seeing the movie star.

‘The Apartment’ (1960)

This was the last black-and-white movie to win Best Picture at The Academy Awards until “The Artist” (2011). “Schindler’s List,” which won in 1994, was not completely black and white as some scenes were in color.

‘Psycho’ (1960)

When the cast and crew began work on the first day, they had to raise their right hands and promise not to divulge one word of the story. Hitchcock also withheld the ending part of the script from his cast until he needed to shoot it.

Trivia via IMDB.com



Wade Tatangelo is an entertainment editor for GateHouse Media who studied classic cinema in college and was the marketing director for Sarasota Film Society in Florida before becoming a full-time journalist covering various forms of entertainment including movies. He can be reached via email at wade.tatangelo@heraldtribune.com

DIRECTOR

W. S. Van Dyke

PRODUCER

Hunt Stromberg

WRITERS

Albert Hackett

Frances Goodrich

Based on "The Thin Man" by

Dashiell Hammett

STARRING

William Powell

Myrna Loy

Maureen O'Sullivan

Nat Pendleton

Minna Gombell

MUSIC

William Axt

CINEMATOGRAPHY

James Wong Howe

EDITOR

Robert Kern

RUNNING TIME

93 minutes

AWARDS

National Film Registry, 1997

**ALSO
RECOMMENDED**

"After the Thin Man" (1936)

"Another Thin Man" (1939)

"Shadow of the Thin Man" (1941)

"The Thin Man Goes Home"
(1945)

"Song of the Thin Man" (1947)



William Powell as Nick Charles, Myrna Loy as Nora Charles and wire-haired fox terrier Skippy as Asta in the 1934 film "The Thin Man." [Gatehouse Media archive]

Nick and Nora Charles are the eternally cool married couple at the center of "The Thin Man," a mystery and comedy that exemplifies on-screen chemistry with the performances of William Powell and Myrna Loy. Powell plays the detective Nick who has retired after marrying the younger and wealthier Nora, portrayed by Loy. Fueled by a nearly endless river of liquor, the couple teases each other with a playfulness that's downright sexy as they go about solving a murder.

For example, early in the film Nick is at a restaurant seen talking to an attractive young woman (played by Maureen O'Sullivan), and when he sits down for cocktails Nora quips, "Pretty girl."

Nick, droll as can be, responds, "Yes. She's a very nice type."

Nora casually shoots back: "You got types?"

"Only you, darling," Nick says. "Lanky brunettes with wicked jaws."

This is a couple so in love they don't need to take marriage too seriously and make it a point to have fun at all times, even when dealing with unsavory cocktail party guests or right after the bullets fly. Yes, "The Thin Man" has plenty of action and suspense. It's a well-paced whodunit that would work simply as a thriller if needed; if Powell and Loy weren't so perfect together under the unmessy direction of W. S. Van Dyke, aka "One Take Woody." Suspenseful throughout, "The Thin Man" features a finale that finds all the murder suspects gathered for dinner with Nick and Nora hosting. It's one of those endings that definitely catches you by surprise, sometimes even after repeated viewings.

The comedic charms of the movie are mainly the result of Powell and

'The Thin Man'

1934

Loy, sure, but I would be remiss not to mention the appeal of Asta, Nick and Nora's wire-haired fox terrier played by canine actor Skippy. The dog is remarkably well-trained and utterly adorable. He also set up another one of my favorite exchanges after dragging Nora through an upscale restaurant:

Nick: "Oh, it's all right, Joe. It's all right. It's my dog. And, uh, my wife. Nora"

Nora: "Well, you might have mentioned me first on the billing."

The success of "The Thin Man" starts with Dashiell Hammett's excellent novel of the same name and there's the screenplay by husband and wife team Albert Hackett and Frances Goodrich, because, really, only a first-rate husband and wife team could write such a splendid screenplay centered on a married couple. Their first hit, the Hacketts would go on to write the screenplays for such films as "It's a Wonderful Life," "Father of the Bride," and won a Pulitzer Prize for their original play "The Diary of Anne Frank."

"The Thin Man" was a big box office success that earned four Oscar nominations and spawned five sequels, all worth viewing, if only to spend some more time with Nick, Nora, and yes, Asta. Powell and Loy would make a total of 14 films together and, really, after viewing "The Thin Man" you'll likely want to see them all.

"When we did a scene together, we forgot about technique, camera angles, and microphones," Powell said about working with Loy. "We weren't acting. We were just two people in perfect harmony. Myrna, unlike some actresses who think only of themselves, has the happy faculty of being able to listen while the other fellow says his lines. She has the give and take of acting that brings out the best."



A scene from the 1937 film "Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs." [Gatehouse Media archive]

DIRECTORS

David Hand (supervising)
William Cottrell
Wilfred Jackson
Larry Morey
Perce Pearce
Ben Sharpsteen

PRODUCER

Walt Disney

WRITERS

Ted Sears
Richard Creedon
Otto Englander
Dick Rickard
Earl Hurd
Merrill De Maris
Dorothy Ann Blank
Webb Smith
Based on "Snow White" by The Brothers Grimm

STARRING

Adriana Caselotti
Lucille La Verne
Harry Stockwell
Roy Atwell
Pinto Colvig
Otis Harlan
Scotty Matraw
Billy Gilbert
Eddie Collins
Moroni Olsen
Stuart Buchanan

MUSIC

Frank Churchill
Paul Smith
Leigh Harline

RATING

G

RUNNING TIME

83 minutes

AWARDS

Honorary Academy Award to Walt Disney, 1939
Top Ten Films, National Board of Review, 1938
National Film Registry, 1989

ALSO RECOMMENDED

"Pinocchio" (1940)
"Fantasia" (1940)
"Dumbo" (1941)
"Bambi" (1942)
"Cinderella" (1950)

'Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs'

His brother and business partner didn't want him to do it. His wife tried to talk him out of it, too. When the rest of Hollywood heard about his plans the film became known as "Disney's Folly."

"Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs," Walt Disney's first full-length animated feature, went way over budget and the producer had to mortgage his house to pay for its completion.

"Snow White" was more than a picture to me," Walt Disney told a reporter about a year after the film's 1937 release. "It was a life saver. The bank had loaned me \$1,500,000, and they were getting jittery, because all I had to show them was drawings ... I sat there and sweat blood in the projection room as (the banker) watched it. 'It will be better when the music is behind it,' I whispered to him. Or I'd say: 'The color will be much better in that scene.'"

The vain and wicked Queen has a stately attractiveness that makes her downright scary as she utters, "Magic mirror on the wall, who is the fairest one of all?" She's a villain of the highest order driven by cruel jealousy toward her step-daughter Snow White, the beautiful princess

with the gorgeous singing voice and ability to communicate so kindly with animals.

From the frightening scene with the Huntsman to the charming musical number "With a Smile and a Song," we're completely invested in "Snow White" even before meeting the adorable seven dwarfs: Doc, Grumpy, Happy, Sleepy, Bashful, Sneezzy and Dopey. The bond between the princess and her new roommates forms while we're treated to the back-to-back musical numbers "Whistle While You Work" and "Heigh-Ho." Two of the most memorable songs from the past century, they are on a superb soundtrack also featuring the timeless ballad "Someday My Prince Will Come."

Snow White must live happily ever after but not before giving us quite a fright. It's the ending we expect and crave. Virtue triumphs over villainy and we walk away from the movie ready to sing our own "silly song." Family-friendly entertainment and a work of art, Disney's first animated feature enjoyed immediate critical and commercial success, paving the way for a bunch of Disney-produced animated hits that continue to bring joy to generation after generation.

1937

DIRECTORS

Victor Fleming
King Vidor
George Cukor
Norman Taurog

PRODUCER

Mervyn LeRoy

WRITERS

Noel Langley
Florence Ryerson
Edgar Allan Woolf
Based on "The Wonderful Wizard of Oz" by L. Frank Baum

STARRING

Judy Garland
Frank Morgan
Ray Bolger
Bert Lahr
Jack Haley
Billie Burke
Margaret Hamilton
Charley Grapewin

MUSIC

Herbert Stothart

CINEMATOGRAPHY

Harold Rosson

EDITOR

Blanche Sewell

RUNNING TIME

101 minutes

AWARDS

Academy Award, Best Music,
Original Song, Harold Arlen
(music) E.Y. Harburg (lyrics) for
"Over the Rainbow"
Academy Award, Best Music,
Original Score, Herbert Stothart
National Film Registry, 1989



From left, Ray Bolger, Bert Lahr, Judy Garland and Jack Haley in a scene from the "The Wizard of Oz." [Gatehouse Media archive]

'The Wizard of Oz'

Perhaps the most popular film ever made and definitely one of the most universally adored, "The Wizard of Oz" includes at least a handful of quotes known, loved and repeated by several generations:

"Toto, I've a feeling we're not in Kansas anymore."

"I'll get you, my pretty, and your little dog, too!"

"Lions and tigers and bears, oh my!"

"I'm melting! Melting! Oh, what a world! What a world!"

"Pay no attention to that man behind the curtain!"

"There's no place like home."

Then there's the iconic song. If "The Wizard of Oz" had only succeeded in giving the world "Over the Rainbow" it would have been a film well worth making. First heard performed onscreen by Judy Garland as Dorothy Gale, the ballad would become her signature song, with a stirring rendition included on the singer's classic 1961 album "Judy at Carnegie Hall." The list of others who have recorded hit versions of "Over the Rainbow" includes many of the most important recording artists of the past and current century.

Dorothy sings "Over the Rainbow" about five minutes into the "The Wizard of Oz." A girl stuck on a farm with her aunt and uncle in Kansas,

its bleakness smartly portrayed in sepia tone, she dreams of a place where there isn't any trouble, where she and her dog Toto won't be harassed by mean, old Miss Gulch. It's the perfect setup to the magical journey that will soon unfold when Dorothy finds herself in a house lifted off the ground by a tornado, her entrance to the Land of Oz marked by the dazzling switch to Technicolor.

1939

Rewatching Dorothy and Toto journey down the yellow brick road with the Scarecrow, Tin Man, and Cowardly Lion to the Emerald City — where the Wizard of Oz might be able to help Dorothy get back home and give her companions the wanted brain, heart, and courage — it's hard to imagine the movie was not an immediate hit.

Despite mostly positive reviews, though, "The Wizard of Oz" reportedly lost money upon its initial release and MGM didn't profit off the film until a 1949 re-release. Where many of us first viewed the film, most likely as a small child, was on television, where "The Wizard of Oz" started being shown in 1956 and then became an annual TV tradition from '59 to 1991. When the Library of Congress started a National Film Registry in 1989 it included

"The Wizard of Oz" and named it the most-watched movie on television syndication. All those memories of seeing the movie every year on TV surely contribute to its place as one of the most cherished films of all time.

"There's no place like home."



Cary Grant, left, Ralph Bellamy, and Rosalind Russell in "His Girl Friday." [Gatehouse Media archive]

'His Girl Friday'

It's one of the great Hollywood backstories. One that altered the outcome of the film, transforming it from what would have likely been a fine screwball comedy to a comedy classic. Credit a secretary whose name has been lost to history.

Howard Hawks, who had been producing and directing hit films for the past decade, planned on simply reviving "The Front Page." A Broadway comedy by former newspaper reporters Ben Hecht and Charles MacArthur, it had been made into the successful 1931 film of the same name. The plot centers on a hotshot newspaper reporter named Hildy Johnson and his shady editor trying to hide a man accused of murder for an exclusive story that would be splashed across, yes, the front page.

The backstory goes that during auditions, Hawks' secretary read Hildy's lines and he liked the way they sounded delivered by a woman so much that he had the script revised to make Hildy the ex-wife of editor Walter Burns. The title became "His Girl Friday," a play on the term "Man Friday" from the name given to the loyal companion in the novel "Robinson Crusoe" by Daniel Defoe.

Turning Hildy into a woman makes the movie funnier, more timeless (hey, look, a woman "newspaperman"). Also credit Cary Grant's outstanding comedic performance as the scheming editor who will do just about anything to keep Hildy from remarrying because he still loves her, sure, but also because she's his best reporter.

Hawks and Grant had worked together on films released the two previous years with the screwball comedy "Bringing Up Baby" (1938)

and the drama "Only Angels Have Wings" (1939), both classics I highly recommend, and it seems likely Grant was the director's first choice to play Walter. Not so with Rosalind Russell, who landed the role of Hildy only after Katharine Hepburn, Claudette Colbert, Margaret Sullavan, Ginger Rogers, Irene Dunne and Jean Arthur turned it down, according to Turner Classic Movies.

1940

The network's longtime host Robert Osborne, who died in 2017, reportedly shared another great backstory regarding the filming of "His Girl Friday." Russell noticed that Hawks didn't exactly treat her like welcome company and snapped at him: "You don't want me, do you? Well, you're stuck with me, so you might as well make the most of it." Another story that makes me fond of Russell is the one about her hiring a writer to improve her lines, which she thought were inferior to Grant's, who knew what she was doing and would greet her by saying, "What have you got today?"

To Hawks' credit, ad-libbing was reportedly encouraged on set and the exchanges between Russell and Grant are some of the finest, rapid-fire, naturalistic dialogue heard in comedy, then or now. Grant and Russell have wonderful chemistry and were clearly good friends off screen. About a year after the film's release, Grant introduced Russell to producer Frederick Brisson, with Grant then serving as the best man at their wedding.

"His Girl Friday" has been popular and critically acclaimed since its release with its fans including "Pulp Fiction" and "Kill Bill" filmmaker Quentin Tarantino, who included it among his 12 picks in a Greatest Films of All Time poll by Sight & Sound magazine.

DIRECTOR

Howard Hawks

PRODUCER

Howard Hawks

WRITER

Charles Lederer

Based on "The Front Page" play by Ben Hecht Charles MacArthur

STARRING

Cary Grant

Rosalind Russell

Ralph Bellamy

Gene Lockhart

MUSIC

Sidney Cutner

Felix Mills

CINEMATOGRAPHY

Joseph Walker

EDITOR

Gene Havlick

RATING

N/A

RUNNING TIME

92 minutes

AWARDS

National Film Registry, 1993

ALSO

RECOMMENDED

"Scarface" (1932)

"Bringing Up Baby" (1938)

"Only Angels Have Wings" (1939)

"To Have and Have Not" (1944)

"The Big Sleep" (1946)

"Rio Bravo" (1959)

DIRECTOR

John Ford

PRODUCER

Darryl F. Zanuck

WRITER

Nunnally Johnson

Based on "The Grapes of Wrath"
by John Steinbeck**STARRING**

Henry Fonda

Jane Darwell

John Carradine

Shirley Mills

John Qualen

Eddie Quillan

MUSIC

Alfred Newman

CINEMATOGRAPHY

Gregg Toland

EDITOR

Robert L. Simpson

RUNNING TIME

129 minutes

AWARDSAcademy Award, Best Actress in a
Supporting Role, Jane Darwell
Academy Award, Best Director,
John Ford
National Film Registry, 1989**ALSO****RECOMMENDED**

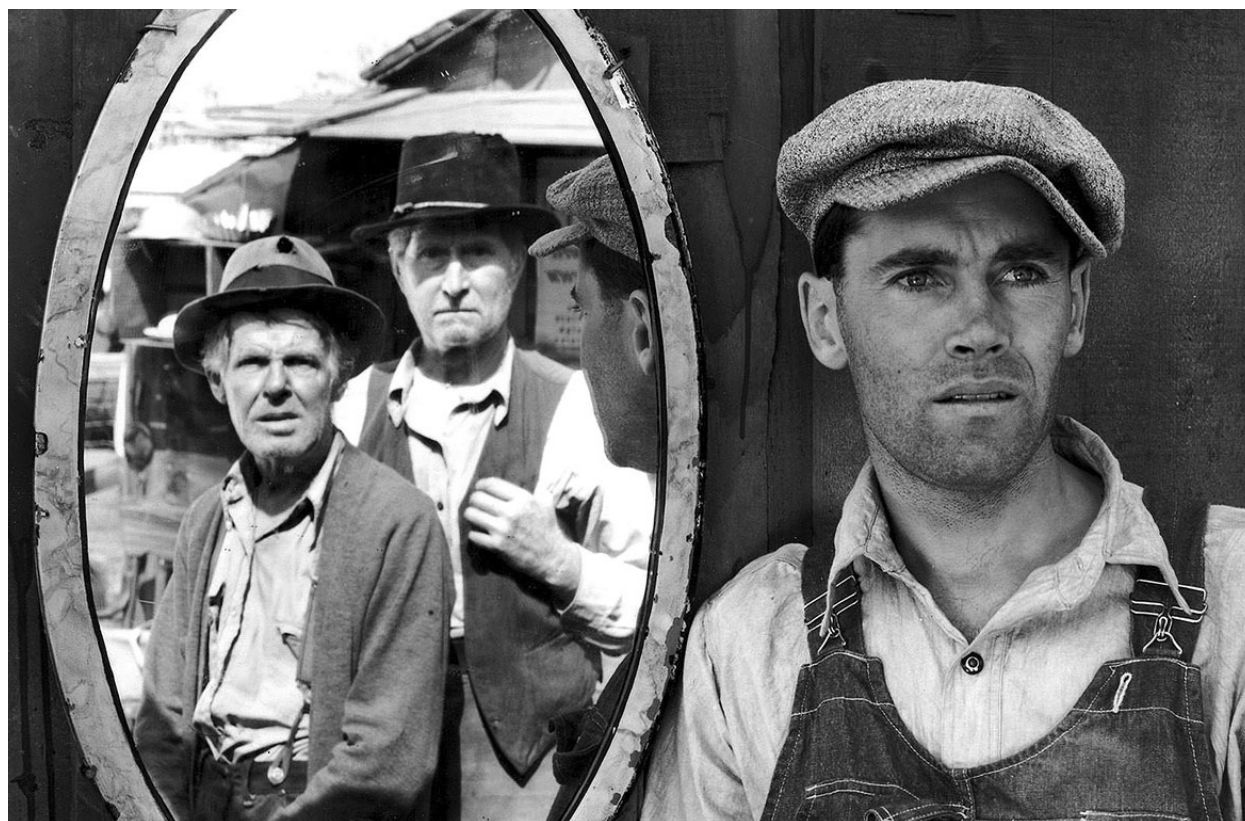
"Stagecoach" (1939)

"Young Mr. Lincoln" (1939)

"They Were Expendable" (1945)

"My Darling Clementine" (1946)

"The Searchers" (1956)



Henry Fonda in "The Grapes of Wrath." [Gatehouse Media archive via Twentieth Century Fox]

'The Grapes of Wrath'

The Grapes of Wrath" is a tour de force novel and equally commanding film that memorializes a sad, often shameful chapter in American history. Burned and

banned by those who deemed it communist propaganda, John Steinbeck's realistic novel that sheds light on the exploitation of the working class became the bestselling book of 1939. The movie of the same name would also appeal to the masses suffering through The Great Depression.

John Ford, fresh off directing the critically-acclaimed commercial hits "Stagecoach" and "Young Mr. Lincoln," landed the prestigious job of helming the screen adaptation of "The Grapes of Wrath," with production beginning less than six months after the novel's publication. At the time, the deplorable working conditions described in the book remained a reality across California, where some of the filming took place.

In telling the story of the Joads' journey from Oklahoma, where they're forced off their farm, to California, where they become

1940

migrant workers picking fruit for pitiful wages, Ford and cinematographer Gregg Toland manage to make practically each frame a work of art that serves as a haunting reminder of what happens when people, in this case Dust Bowl-ravaged

"Okies," are abandoned and abused by those in power.

It's a movie with a message, but like all such endeavors only works because it's so thoroughly entertaining. Henry Fonda plays ex-con Tom Joad pitch-perfect as a new kind of hero that really never existed before on screen. The rest of the cast turns in nuanced performances as well, with Jane Darwell's Ma Joad one for the ages. Just watch her face, filled with sadness and somehow determination, as she refuses to look back on the longtime home she will never see again.

Unlike the novel, the film ends on a more hopeful note. It's far from sappy, though. It's Tom Joad, having to leave his family for their own protection, an outlaw now determined to fight for the fair treatment of the worker. It's a chilling speech that contains the lines "Wherever you can look, wherever there's a fight, so hungry people can eat, I'll be there."

"Wherever
you can look,
wherever
there's a fight,
so hungry
people can eat,
I'll be there."



Orson Welles in the film "Citizen Kane." [Gatehouse Media archive via RKO Radio Pictures]

1941

'Citizen Kane'

An unparalleled cinematic work of disruption and beauty, Orson Welles' first and finest film stands the test of time not as much for its technical achievements and riveting acting, but for offering a singular character study reminding viewers of the old proverb "money can't buy happiness."

Lauded for Welles and cinematographer Gregg Toland's groundbreaking use of deep focus, artful camera angles, sets and lighting techniques, "Citizen Kane" continues to engross generations of filmmakers and film lovers because of its humanity. It's filled with drama, suspense, mystery and, most of all, poignancy.

"I wished to make a motion picture which was not a narrative of action so much as an examination of character," Welles is quoted in a piece by the American Film Institute. "There have been many motion pictures and novels rigorously obeying the formula of the 'success story.' I wished to do something quite different. I wished to make a picture which might be called a 'failure story.'"

Already famous for his Broadway production of William Shakespeare's "Julius Caesar" and the now legendary "The War of the Worlds" radio broadcast, Welles came to Hollywood wielding power only few filmmakers before or since have enjoyed. He had a contract to make a film of his choosing, with a cast and crew of his choosing, and with final cut privilege, meaning no studio boss could swoop in and alter anything. Age 25, and with no filmmaking experience, Welles produced, co-wrote, directed and starred in "Citizen Kane."

The film follows the life of Charles Foster Kane, a media magnate based on real-life businessman, politician, and newspaper publisher William Randolph Hearst. Employing a screenplay that largely relies on flashbacks, not always the most compelling form of storytelling, the movie traces the rise and fall of Kane by having a reporter trying, unsuccessfully, to track the tycoon's final word: "Rosebud."

Praised by critics upon release, at least by those not working for Hearst newspapers, "Citizen Kane" failed to find much of an audience during its initial theatrical run in 1941. Nominated for nine Academy Awards, it only won for its screenplay. In the mid-1950s, though, "Citizen Kane" started airing on television, returned to the big screen and enjoyed a big boost by film critic Andrew Sarris, who wrote an essay calling it "the great American film."

Around the time "Citizen Kane" came out, French film critics started using the term "auteur" to describe a filmmaker who controls all aspects of the film and puts his personal stamp on the picture. Welles would be the American auteur whose work, most notably "Citizen Kane," would go on to influence the likes of Francis Ford Coppola, Martin Scorsese, Steven Spielberg and Quentin Tarantino.

DIRECTOR

Orson Welles

PRODUCER

Orson Welles

WRITER

Herman J. Mankiewicz
Orson Welles

STARRING

Orson Welles
Joseph Cotten
Dorothy Comingore
Everett Sloane
Ray Collins

MUSIC

Bernard Herrmann

CINEMATOGRAPHY

Gregg Toland

EDITOR

Robert Wise

RATING

PG

RUNNING TIME

119 minutes

AWARDS

Academy Award, Best Writing, Original Screenplay, Herman J. Mankiewicz Orson Welles
National Board of Review, Best Film
National Film Registry, 1989

ALSO RECOMMENDED

"The Magnificent Ambersons" (1942)
"The Lady from Shanghai" (1947)
"Touch of Evil" (1958)
"Chimes at Midnight" (1965)

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