



## HITCHCOCK'S *VERTIGO* TOPPLES *CITIZEN KANE* TO BECOME NEW 'GREATEST FILM OF ALL TIME'

### Sight & Sound magazine's 2012 once-a decade international Critics' film poll reveals first new winner for 50 years

London – Strictly embargoed until 6.30pm 1<sup>st</sup> August 2012 The BFI's *Sight & Sound* magazine today announced that the winner of its hugely anticipated and world-renowned Greatest Films of All Time poll is Alfred Hitchcock's *Vertigo*, ending the 50-year reign of Orson Welles' mighty *Citizen Kane*, winner of the once-a-decade poll since 1962 and now in second place. 846 film experts participated in the poll, placing Yasujiro Ozu's *Tokyo Story* 3<sup>rd</sup> and Jean Renoir's *La Règle du jeu* 4<sup>th</sup>. Two new films to make the Top Ten are both silent – Dziga Vertov's *Man With a Movie Camera* at no.8, the first documentary to make the Top Ten since 1952, and Carl Theodor Dreyer's *The Passion of Joan of Arc* in 9<sup>th</sup> place. The most recent film in the Top Ten is Stanley Kubrick's *2001 A Space Odyssey* (1968) in 6<sup>th</sup> place. The poll is *Sight & Sound's* seventh and most ambitious to date; the full results are published in the September issue, on sale from August 4<sup>th</sup> which also celebrates the magazine's 80<sup>th</sup> birthday and a new re-launch, with a new look and new digital edition and archive. Visit [www.bfi.org.uk/sightsoundpoll2012](http://www.bfi.org.uk/sightsoundpoll2012) for the results in full.

In a separate poll, 358 film directors from all over the world, including **Martin Scorsese**, **Quentin Tarantino**, **Francis Ford Coppola** (who has three films in the Top 50), **Woody Allen** and **Mike Leigh**, voted Ozu's *Tokyo Story* the Greatest Film of All Time, again knocking *Citizen Kane* off the top spot to share the no.2 position with Kubrick's *2001: A Space Odyssey*; *Vertigo* was voted 7th place.

Made in 1958, psychological suspense drama *Vertigo* first entered the Sight And Sound poll only in 1982 in 7<sup>th</sup> place - two years after the director died. *Vertigo* was largely ignored by the critics for most of his career; its rise in the poll is testament to how Hitchcock's reputation has steadily increased over time. He is now generally regarded as a master filmmaker, innovator and genius of cinema. Starring **Kim Novak** and **James Stewart**, *Vertigo* trumped *Citizen Kane* by 34 votes this time around, compared to the 5 votes short of *Kane* that *Vertigo* achieved 10 years ago.

Kim Novak said in a recent interview with the BFI that '*I remember when I played it I felt absolutely stripped naked. I felt so vulnerable. He knew exactly what he wanted. The façade was everything to him (Hitchcock) ... He was obsessed with the look. It was as if he was Jimmy Stewart, making sure that she was dressed exactly the way Madeleine was. He was playing the part of Jimmy Stewart.*'

#### **The Critics' Top Ten Greatest Films of All Time are:**

1. *Vertigo* (Hitchcock, 1958)
2. *Citizen Kane* (Welles, 1941)
3. *Tokyo Story* (Ozu, 1953)
4. *La Règle du jeu* (Renoir, 1939)
5. *Sunrise: a Song of Two Humans* (Murnau, 1927)
6. *2001: A Space Odyssey* (Kubrick, 1968)
7. *The Searchers* (Ford, 1956)
8. *Man with a Movie Camera* (Dziga Vertov, 1929)
9. *The Passion of Joan of Arc* (Dreyer, 1927)

10. 8 ½ (Fellini, 1963)

**The Directors' Top Ten Greatest Films of All Time are:**

1. Tokyo Story (Ozu, 1953)
- =2 2001: A Space Odyssey (Kubrick, 1968)
- =2 Citizen Kane (Welles, 1941)
- 4 8 ½ (Fellini, 1963)
- 5 Taxi Driver (Scorsese, 1980)
- 6 Apocalypse Now (Coppola, 1979)
- =7 The Godfather (Coppola, 1972)
- =7 Vertigo (Hitchcock, 1958)
- 9 Mirror (Tarkovsky, 1974)
- 10 Bicycle Thieves (De Sica, 1948)

Since it was first conducted in 1952, Sight & Sound's ten yearly Poll has become world-famous as the ultimate arbiter of the greatest films in cinema history. This year's poll reached a wider and more democratic group than ever before and incorporates the top ten lists of 846 of the most influential film critics, academics, distributors, writers and programmers from all corners of the globe who voted for 2045 films overall. This compares to the 144 that were asked 10 years ago and reflects the impact of the internet and proliferation and increased influence of film commentators using this new medium. Respondents were asked to interpret 'Greatest' as they chose: whether the film was most important to film history, represented the aesthetic pinnacle of achievement or perhaps had a personal impact on their own view of cinema.

Perhaps the most surprising result for the poll is the three silent films in the Top Ten, *Man with a Movie Camera* is a new addition and with *Sunrise* (Murnau) improving from 7<sup>th</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> and *The Passion of Joan of Arc* re-entering, together they have ousted perennial favourite *Battleship Potemkin* (Eisenstein), a Top Ten film for all of the poll's 60 years. This could be explained by both the availability of the films on DVD and also the resurgence in popularity

in recent years for different kinds of live accompaniment to the films, from the The Alloy Orchestra and Michael Nyman to prog rock.

The most recent film to make an impact is Wong Kar-Wai's *In the Mood for Love*, made in 2000 and a new entry at no.24. David Lynch's *Mulholland Dr.* (2001) comes in at no 28. Top British film was *The Third Man* (73<sup>rd</sup>) followed by *Lawrence of Arabia* (81<sup>st</sup>) and *A Matter of Life and Death* (90<sup>th</sup>). The top film made by a woman was Chantal Akerman's *Jeanne Dielman, 23 quai du Commerce 1080 Bruxelles* (35<sup>th</sup>) – the only other female director's film in the Top 100 is Claire Denis's *Beau Travail* (78<sup>th</sup>).

**Nick James, Editor, Sight and Sound Magazine** said '*This result reflects changes in the culture of film criticism. The new cinephilia seems to be not so much about films that strive to be great art, such as Citizen Kane, and that use cinema's entire arsenal of effects to make a grand statement, but more about works that have personal meaning to the critic. Vertigo is the ultimate critic's film because it is a dreamlike film about people who are not sure who they are but who are busy reconstructing themselves and each other to fit a kind of cinema ideal of the ideal soul mate. In that sense it's a makeover film full of spellbinding moments of awful poignancy that show how foolish, tender and cruel we can be when we're in love*'

Sight & Sound is read by anyone with an interest in film all over the world, from critics and academics to film fans and students. The September re-launch issue goes on sale from 4<sup>th</sup> August and will be bigger and better than ever, with 32 more pages including more film industry news, new sections including 'Wide Angle' (covering transmedia, Artists' film and video, television drama, documentary and production and costume design) and 'Forum' (dedicated to cinema debates, rethinks and controversies) and a fresh new design. Also appearing from August 7<sup>th</sup> is a new digital edition of Sight & Sound available on desktop and iPad, plus the unveiling of the complete digital archive of both Sight & Sound and long-running sister-title The Monthly Film Bulletin, containing all issues published since 1932. (Access to the archive is limited to subscribers to the magazine).

Throughout September **BFI Southbank** will celebrate Sight & Sound magazine's Ten Greatest Films of All Time with a season of screenings from the Top Ten. The BFI launches its **Genius Of Hitchcock** project this Summer with all 58 of the director's films showing at BFI Southbank from August 1<sup>st</sup> until October. *Vertigo* will screen at BFI Southbank in an Extended Run throughout September and goes on theatrical release in cinemas nationwide from 7<sup>th</sup> September.

As part of the BFI Southbank season, the question of what makes a film a 'classic' will be examined by a panel of industry experts including filmmaker Ben Walters and former Head of Publishing at the BFI, Edward Buscombe, in **Call It a Classic?** on Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> September.

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**Sight & Sound's Editor Nick James is available for interview.**

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**NOTES TO EDITORS**

**About the BFI**

The BFI is the lead body for film in the UK with the ambition to create a flourishing film environment in which innovation, opportunity and creativity can thrive by:

- Connecting audiences to the widest choice of British and World cinema
- Preserving and restoring the most significant film collection in the world for today and future generations
- Championing emerging and world class film makers in the UK
- Investing in creative, distinctive and entertaining work
- Promoting British film and talent to the world
- Growing the next generation of film makers and audiences

**\*\*\* PICTURE DESK \*\*\***

A selection of images for journalistic use in promoting Sight & Sound's The Greatest Films of All Time can be found at [www.image.net](http://www.image.net) under BFI / Sight & Sound from 6.30pm on 1 August