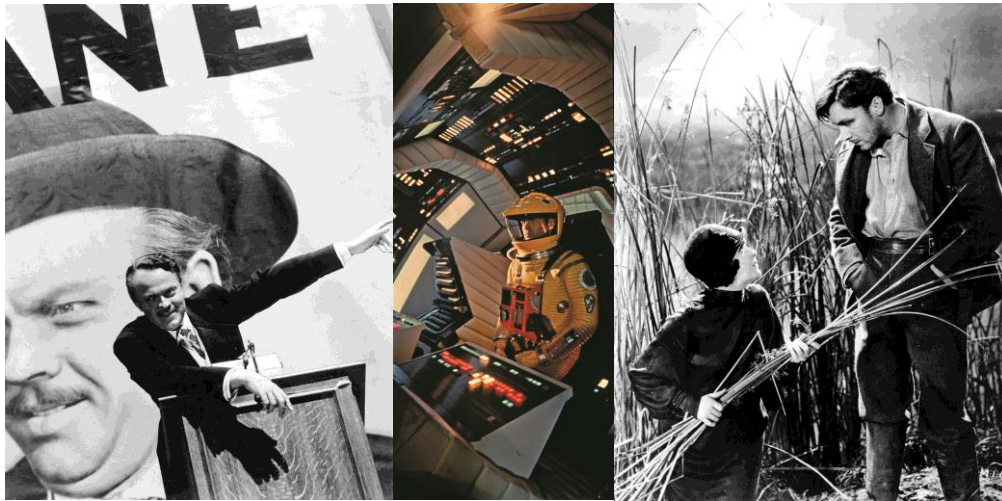


12/50

Sight & Sound Poll Winners Season



Tuesday 7 August - London Following on from the BFI's major announcement last week that Alfred Hitchcock's *Vertigo* has topped **Sight & Sound** magazine's **Ten Greatest Films of All Time**, the BFI announces that throughout September **BFI Southbank** will host a season of the top ten films from the poll. The season will comprise of some stalwarts of the poll including *Citizen Kane* (1941), *8 ½* (1963) and *La Règle du jeu* (1939), as well as less frequent entries such as *The Passion of Joan of Arc* (1928), *Sunrise: A Song of Two Humans* (1927) and *Man With a Movie Camera* (1929). This season will give cinephiles and newcomers alike a chance to see the most critically acclaimed films ever made on the big screen, and will once again prompt people to question what makes a film a 'classic'. A question which will be further 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?**

The Sight & Sound poll is the most comprehensive and eagerly anticipated international film poll in the world. Once-a-decade, since 1952, Sight & Sound has asked international critics and filmmakers to choose their Top Ten greatest films, from across the history of world cinema. Over 800 film experts (critics, archivists, curators, programmers and academics) and over 400 directors from all over the world have contributed to the 2012 poll, voting for over 2000 films. This is the seventh time that the critics' poll has been conducted, and the third time that the directors' poll has been published. 2012 also sees the 80th birthday of Sight & Sound, which will be marked with a re-launch of the magazine and the release of the comprehensive digital archive of Sight & Sound and The Monthly Film Bulletin.

The season will begin with **Call It a Classic?**, a panel discussion which will ask questions pertinent to the Sight & Sound poll such as How does a film achieve classic status? Should there be a canon of 'great' films? And who gets to decide what's a classic? To mark the publication of the poll and the 20th Anniversary of the BFI Film Classic Series,

Sight & Sound editor Nick James is joined by a panel of distinguished film historians, critics, and BFI Film Classic authors, including critic, programmer and filmmaker Ben Walters and former Head of Publishing at the BFI, Edward Buscombe, to debate these questions and more.

The 1960s produced two of the films in this year's top ten, the first of which is Fellini's *8 ½* (Dir. Federico Fellini, 1963). The film depicts the agonies of the creative process of filmmaking in wildly inventive ways as the viewer follows director Guido Anselmi while he struggles with 'director's block'. A film which repeatedly breaks the conventions of storytelling through self aware moments such as Guido whistling a tune that has just been heard on the soundtrack, *8 ½* is a film which has continued to charm film fans ever since its release in 1963. The second 60s classic, and the youngest film to appear in this year's top ten, is Stanley Kubrick's *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968). Laden with groundbreaking special effects and iconic moments, *2001* is cited as a major influence by such directors as George Lucas and Steven Spielberg (who then went on to make *Star Wars* and *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* respectively) and is a seminal Sci-Fi film which must be seen on the big screen to be fully appreciated.

Two seemingly permanent fixtures in the top ten which continue to hold their own this year are *Citizen Kane* (Dir. Orson Welles, 1941) and *La Règle du jeu* (Dir. Jean Renoir, 1939). In *Citizen Kane* Orson Welles tells the story of publishing tycoon Charles Foster Kane (largely rumoured to be based on the newspaper magnate William Hearst). The film did not do particularly well at the box office on its initial release in 1941, but with a combination of critical acclaim and a 1956 re-release it eventually became a hit, and has been atop the Sight & Sound Poll ever since 1962. *La Règle du jeu* has been in the top ten since 1952 despite it being derided by Parisian audiences for its satire of the French upper classes and being subsequently banned by the French government. Despite this, Renoir's film about the loves and lives of the upper classes soon came to be regarded as a masterpiece and its appearance in the Sight & Sound top ten yet again reflects this critical consensus.

Fans of silent cinema will be thrilled to hear that this year there are three silent masterpieces in the top ten which will be shown at **BFI Southbank**. Entering the top ten for the first time is *Man With a Movie Camera* (Dir. Dziga Vertov, 1929) the non-narrative silent film about a day in the life of the Soviet Union. The second silent film in the top ten is *The Passion of Joan of Arc* (Dir. Carl Dreyer, 1928). A masterpiece which is both highly experimental and utterly accessible, Dreyer's last silent film chronicles the final day of Joan of Arc's life, at the centre of which is a remarkable performance by Marie Falconetti as Joan. The final silent film which will screen as part of the season is *Sunrise: A Song of Two Humans* (Dir. FW Murnau, 1927). Hailed in the US as 'the German genius' after having made *Nosferatu* (1922) and *The Last Laugh* (1924), Murnau was given unprecedented freedom on this his first US feature about a married farmer who becomes involved in an obsessive adulterous affair.

Also included in the top ten are films by some of the most prolific directors in the history of cinema. Between them, Alfred Hitchcock, Yasujiro Ozu and John Ford have made well over 200 feature films, therefore gaining a critical consensus as to which of their films surpasses the rest is quite a feat in itself. Ozu's *Tokyo Story* (1953) is a beautifully nuanced exploration of familial duty, expectation and regret. From the simple tale of an elderly husband and wife's visit to Tokyo to see their grown-up children, Ozu draws a compelling contrast between the dignity of age and the hurried insensitivity of a younger generation. By the time John Ford made his 115th feature film *The Searchers* (1956) he had already won the Oscar for best director four times. *The Searchers* was not just a simple 'Western' tale of good guys versus bad guys, but a film about the

perpetual problem of race in America, which would go on to be considered by many to be the pinnacle of his already illustrious career. Alfred Hitchcock's *Vertigo* (1957) has cemented itself in the top ten since 1982 and is widely acknowledged as one of Hitchcock's greatest achievements. James Stewart and Kim Novak star in this psychological suspense drama which will get a theatrical re-release on 7 September and also play at **BFI Southbank** as part of the **BFI's Genius of Hitchcock** retrospective. The memorable Bernard Herrmann score and camerawork from Robert Burke combines with Hitchcock at his very best to ensure that *Vertigo* is a classic that should be visited and re-visited on the big screen time and again.

Screenings taking place in the Sight & Sound Poll Winners season:

Call It a Classic?

How does a film achieve classic status? Should there be a canon of 'great' films? Who gets to decide what's a classic? How can we spot the classics of the future? TO mark the publication of the once-a-decade *Sight & Sound* Greatest Films of All Time Poll and the 20th Anniversary of the BFI Film Classic Series, *Sight & Sound* editor Nick James is joined by a panel of distinguished film historians, critics, and BFI Film Classic authors, including critic, programmer and filmmaker Ben Walters and former Head of Publishing at the BFI, Edward Bescombe, to debate these questions and more, exploring the idea of the classic in cinema, and asking what relevance the term still has today. Please check bfi.org.uk for further updated information on panellists.

Tickets £5

Monday 3 Sept 18:30 NFT1

8 ½ Otto e Mezzo

Italy. 1963. Dir Federico Fellini. With Marcello Mastroianni, Claudia Cardinale, Anouk Aimée, Barbara Steele. 138mins. EST. 15.

The fact that Fellini's wildly inventive film is about the agonies of the creative process – with Marcello Mastroianni starring as a film director juggling his love life, meddling producers and searching for artistic inspiration – means that it has unsurprisingly been a favoured film of film directors; it took third place in the 2002 directors' poll. However it has also been a favourite of the critics', appearing in the top ten in each of the polls since 1972. It came ninth in 2002; how with it fare this time around?

Sat 1 Sept 20:20 NFT1

Sun 16 Sept 20:20 NFT1

Tue 25 Sept 20:20 NFT1

2001: A Space Odyssey

UK 1968. Dir Stanley Kubrick. With Keir Dullea, Gary Lockwood, William Sylvester, Leonard Rossiter. 141min. 70mm

In a career made up of masterpieces, Kubrick's wondrous epic nonetheless stands proud, and remains a touchstone for all sci-fi cinema since, from *Solaris* to *Star Wars* to *Prometheus*. It first broke into the critics' poll top ten in 1992, coming tenth, then moving up to sixth by 2002. Will the Kubrick vote in this year's poll be split across his other great films such as *Barry Lyndon*, *The Shining* or *A Clockwork Orange*, or will *2001* continue its ascension?

***Introduced by Peter Kramer**

Fri 21 Sept 18:00 NFT1*

Sun 23 Sept 20:20 NFT1

Citizen Kane

USA 1941. Dir Orson Welles. With Welles, Joseph Cotten, Everett Sloane, Dorothy Comingore, Agnes Moorehead. 119min. U

'No one who is really interested in the cinema can afford to miss it', reckoned the *BFI Monthly Film Bulletin* of Welles' debut back in 1941, and it's a verdict that *Sight & Sound's* Top Ten poll has emphatically upheld over the years. *Kane* didn't figure in the first poll, in 1952, but it has held the top spot ever since. It topped both the critics' and the directors' polls in 2002, and the burning question this year is whether it will extend its fifty-year reign.

***Introduced by Laura Mulvey**

Wed 5 Sept 20:30 NFT2*
Sun 9 Sept 18:10 NFT3

Man With a Movie Camera Chelovek s Kinoapparatom

USSR 1929. Dir Dziga Vertov. c64min. With live piano accompaniment

Making its first appearance in the critics' poll top ten, Dziga Vertov's thrillingly audacious non-narrative silent film about a day in the life of the Soviet Union opens with a prologue announcing, 'Attention viewers, this experimental work aims at creating a truly international language of cinema based on its absolute separation from the language of theatre and literature'. It's a radical statement of intent for a film that still seems radically modern and pertinent today, 83 years on. Could its time have finally come?

Wed 12 Sept 20:40 NFT2
Sat 22 Sept 16:15 NFT1

The Passion of Joan of Arc La Passion de Jeanne d'Arc

France 1928. Dir Carl Dreyer. With Falconetti, Eugene Silvain, Michel Simon, Antonin Artaud. 96min. PG

Overwhelming in its intensity, Dreyer's captivating and deeply moving silent masterpiece famously boasts one of the most powerful performances ever captured on film in Maria Falconetti's portrayal of Joan of Arc, facing trial and execution for heresy. Interestingly, the film has dropped in and out of the critics' poll top ten over the years; it was there in 1952, 1972 and 1992, but not in the other years. It's back in this year's top ten, but where will it rank?

Tue 25 Sept 18:15 NFT1
Sat 29 Sept 18:00 NFT1

La Règle du jeu

France 1939. Dir Jean Renoir. With Marcel Dalio, Nora Gregor, Gaston Modot, Jean Renoir. 110min. EST. PG

Renoir's masterful ensemble drama has been a permanent fixture in the critics' poll top ten since its inception. *La Règle du jeu* was joint tenth in 1952, third in 1962 and then second only to *Kane* from 1972 through to 2002, when it slipped to third behind *Vertigo*. Will support for Renoir's poetic-humanist vision have swelled in the decade since, or has the critical opinion turned elsewhere?

Mon 17 Sept 20:40 NFT3
Wed 19 Sept 20:50 NFT1
Sat 22 Sept 20:40 NFT2

The Searchers

USA 1956. Dir John Ford. With John Wayne, Jeffrey Hunter, Vera Miles, Ward Bond, Natalie Wood. 115min. U

John Ford's unforgettable, elegiac widescreen epic is now widely acknowledged as the summation of that great American art form, the movie western. So it's perhaps surprising that *The Searchers* didn't appear in the critics' poll top ten until 1982, when it came joint tenth. It rose to fifth place in 1992, before again falling out of the top ten in 2002. 'That'll be the day' is the favoured phrase of John Wayne's troubled wanderer Ethan Edwards; back again in the top ten this year, could *The Searchers* day have finally come?

***Introduced by Edward Buscombe**

Tue 2 Oct 20:40 NFT3
Sat 6 Oct 15:00 NFT1*

Sunrise: A Song of Two Humans

USA 1927. Dir FW Murnau. With Janet Gaynor, George O'Brien, Margaret Livingston. 94min. U

The great revival of interest in silent cinema has been one of the most remarkable stories in cinema in recent years, with the success of *The Artist* and numerous silent cinema festivals across the world vouching for its new popularity. Murnau's ground-breaking masterpiece reveals the silent film form at the apogee of its expression and sophistication, and yet surprisingly it didn't feature in the critics' poll top ten until 2002, when it ranked joint seventh. Could this be its year?

Mon 10 Sept 20:40 NFT2

Tue 18 Sept 18:10 NFT2

Tokyo Story Tokyo Monogatari

Japan 1953. Dir Yasujiro Ozu. With Chishu Ryu, Chiyeko Higashiyama, Setsuko Hara. 136min. EST. 15
Ozu's piercingly moving film didn't appear in the critics' poll top ten until 1992, when it came third, before slipping to fifth in 2002. Japanese cinema had been represented by Kurosawa's *Seven Samurai* and Mizoguchi's *Ugetsu Monogatari* in earlier *Sight & Sound* critics' polls, but critical consensus now seems to have moved firmly behind Ozu. With many of Ozu's previously more obscure films now readily available on DVD, will the Ozu vote be spread this year, or will *Tokyo Story's* stock only have risen still higher?

Sat 29 Sept 20:15 NFT1

Fri 5 Oct 18:00 NFT3

Mon 8 Oct 18:10 NFT2

Vertigo

USA 1957. Dir Alfred Hitchcock. With James Stewart, Kim Novak, Barbara Bel Geddes, Tom Helmore. 128min. Digital. PG

Received lukewarmly by many critics and audiences on its first release in 1958, Hitchcock's deeply personal and endlessly mysterious puzzle-box of a film has grown steadily in stature ever since. It didn't appear in the top ten of the critics' poll until 1982, when it came joint seventh, before climbing to fourth in 1992 and second only to *Citizen Kane* in 2002. Could 2012 be the year it finally triumphs?

Introduced by Charles Barr on Wed 12 Sept 18:00 NFT2

Fri 7 - Thu 27 Sept

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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

The BFI Southbank is open to all. BFI members are entitled to a discount on all tickets. BFI Southbank Box Office tel: 020 7928 3232. Unless otherwise stated tickets are £10.0, concs £6.75 Members pay £1.50 less on any ticket. Website www.bfi.org.uk/southbank

Tickets for FREE screenings and events must be booked in advance by calling the Box Office to avoid disappointment

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The BFI Filmstore is stocked and staffed by BFI experts with over 1,200 book titles and 1,000 DVDs to choose from, including hundreds of acclaimed books and DVDs produced by the BFI.

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Eat, drink and be merry in panoramic daylight. benugo's décor is contemporary, brightly lit and playful with a lounge space, bar and dining area. The place to network, hang out, unpack a film, savour the best of Modern British or sip on a cocktail.

There's more to discover about film and television through the BFI. Our world-renowned archival collections, cinemas, festivals, films, publications and learning resources are here to inspire you.

***** PICTURE DESK *****

A selection of images for journalistic use in promoting BFI Southbank screenings can be found at www.image.net under BFI / BFI Southbank / September 2012