

Sights and Sounds

Ninotchka



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I have a confession to make. For years, I had a secret crush on a much older woman. She passed away in 1990 at the age of 84. I was 34 at the time. I only knew her through her films, and one, in particular, stirred me. The woman was Greta Garbo and the film that burrowed a special place in my heart was *Ninotchka*. The script was written by Charles Brackett and Billy Wilder and directed by Ernst Lubitsch and tells the story of a down to business, emotionally cold Russian official sent to Paris to check on the status of Russia's sale of the nation's former crown jewels which were being sold to help support Russia's recovery after the revolution. Upon arriving in Paris she finds herself involved in a legal battle with Russia's exiled Grand Duchess for possession of the jewels and finds that the Russian representatives sent originally to sell the jewels seem to have given in to the temptations and pleasures of the rich Paris life. Her mission is complicated by the attentions of Count Leon d'Algout (Melvyn Douglas) who after meeting her on the street is determined to win her heart. Unknown to her is that he is also the lawyer representing the Grand Duchess in court. Unknown to him at the time is her relationship to his case. Can the heart win over political philosophy and the law? [Read more](#)

Posted by Keith C. on September 14, 2016

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Gene Wilder (1933 ? 2016)



I can still remember the first time I saw Gene Wilder in a film. He was playing a

mousey accountant by the name of Leo Bloom who, while going over the books of once-famous Broadway Producer Max Bialystock makes the casual observation that it would be possible, though dishonest, to make more money with a Broadway flop than a successful production. The film was *The Producers*, and the rest they say is history and Gene Wilder screamed his way into being one of my favorite comedic actors as Zero Mostel stood over him while he lay on the floor in a panic screaming, "Don't Jump on me. Don't Jump on me."

Gene went on to star in many well-known comedies: *Blazing Saddles*, *Young Frankenstein*, *Stir Crazy*, *Silver Streak* and many others. His role as candy maker Willy Wonka in *Willy Wonka & the Chocolate Factory* will likely never be forgotten. The library owns a number of Gene Wilder's Films and books. You did know he was also a writer, didn't you? The link below will create a list of items to choose from. He will be missed.

The Films and Book of Gene Wilder

Posted by Keith C. on August 31, 2016

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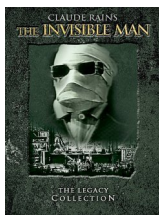
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The Invisible Man (1933)



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Claude Rains was perhaps one of the most recognizable character actors from the classic era of film. He was able to play almost any part. Among his best known roles were Captain Louis Renault in *Casablanca* and Prince John in *The Adventures of Robin Hood*. *The Invisible Man* was his first major film role. Prior to this film he had only appeared on screen in one silent film short. The rest of his early acting life had been spent on the hardwood stages. In *The Invisible Man*, Mr. Rains stars as Dr. Jack Griffin, who disappears one day while working in the lab of his friend and mentor Dr. Cranley. His mysterious disappearance from the lab has Flora, Dr. Cranley's daughter and Jack's girlfriend, worried regarding his whereabouts. Unbeknownst to the two of them Jack Griffin has done more than simply walked away from the lab and them. He has literally disappeared, becoming completely invisible. Wrapped in bandages to hide his invisibility he sets up a lab in a local Inn to work on a way to bring himself back to normalcy. Sadly the formula which made him invisible is also affecting his mind and he is becoming more unbalanced and violent as time passes. [Read more](#)

Posted by Keith C. on August 30, 2016

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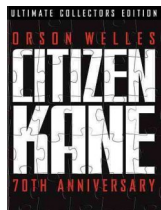
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Citizen Kane



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Citizen Kane tells the fictional story of rich newspaper publisher Charles Foster Kane, his rise to power and eventual decline as he shifts from an idealistic publisher/editor into egotist whose power has gone to his head. It was based loosely on the life of William Randolph Hurst, but not loosely enough to suit Hurst. The film pulled few punches and Hurst was not amused at being the subject, even if indirectly of such a movie. *Citizen Kane* almost completely failed at the box office when it was released and even before the production was finished the film was wrapped in controversy. Director and writer Orson Wells was accused by Hurst of the being a communist, and a homosexual, both of which were considered major issues in 1941. Interestingly he also accused Wells of being a womanizer and Socialist as well. As you can see the accusations leveled at Wells were often contradictory and usually untrue. The major newspapers, owned by Hurst refused to review the film or allow it to be advertised in their pages. In fact, no review of *Citizen Kane* appeared in any paper owned by Hurst until the mid- seventies over 30 years after its release. [Read more](#)

Posted by Keith C. on August 17, 2016

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Cheyenne Social Club



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Harley Sullivan: What kind of business you figure your brother left you?

John O'Hanlan: Well, the letter don't say - but that's just like a lawyer. They don't tell you no

more than it takes to confuse you. But it's a... something called the Cheyenne Social Club.

After receiving a letter informing him of the death of his brother John O'Hanlan (James Stewart) leaves his position as a hired hand on a cattle drive to take over the Cheyenne Social Club the business his brother left him in his will. It might seem obvious to us by the name of the business and the movie just exactly what the nature of the business is, but this is a story about a more innocent time and John O'Hanlan is a more innocent man. He is joined on his trek across the country and into Cheyenne by his good friend Harley (Henry Fonda). The film which was directed by Gene Kelly moves fluidly through the story from one situation to another. Low Key? may be the best way to describe this film about a man of high morals, and a kind heart who suddenly finds himself the owner of the most famous brothel in Wyoming. [Read more](#)

Posted by Keith C. on August 5, 2016

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The Great Race



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A while back I posted an entry about the 1965 movie *Those Magnificent Men and their Flying Machines*. In that post, I mentioned another film that came out the same year called *The Great Race*. While I am entranced by the old planes in *Those Magnificent Men in Their Flying machines*, *The Great Race* is really my favorite of the two. The film stars Tony Curtis as 'The Great Leslie,' a stereotype 1910 pure as gold hero in white and Jack Lemmon as Professor Fate, a stereotype 1910 pure villain in black and tells the story of their race around the world by automobile. Leslie and Professor Fate are not the only cars racing. The race starts with a much larger pack of automobiles; [Read more](#)

Posted by Keith C. on July 21, 2016

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