

May 7, 2014

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POST

ENTERTAINMENT

Movies: The Best Films of the 1950s (and 2012!)

Posted: 04/01/2013 12:40 am

The IRAs are a mysterious but august film society that has voted on the best films of the year since 1976. More international and indie focused than the Oscars, more mercurial than the LA Film Critics, more loyal to their favorites than the Golden Globes, the IRAs have just had a weekend in Provincetown, Massachusetts where the winners for the Best Films of 2012 were voted on and announced. The IRAs also followed up months of discussion and debate and balloting and re-watching of DVDs and DVRing of TCM to determine the best films of the 1950s. Below you'll find the list of the Best Films Of The 1950s, followed by our picks for the Top Films Of 2012.

The IRAs began when passionate film students complained about the annual awards shows, declared "We could do better" and had an all-night, knock-down, drag-out fight to establish the very first winners of the IRAs. (One of the members is named Ira but how his name became the name of the award is a story lost in the mist of time.) The rotating group of members have been profiled in the New Yorker and over the years have included Oscar-winning writers, major directors, top studio executives, best-selling and critically acclaimed authors on movies, critics and others. They have no more claim to pronounce the best films of the year than anyone else but they've been doing it for 37 years so hey, it's tradition.

If you're like me, the list will infuriate you -- some movies should be higher up, some should be lower down and some shouldn't be on the list at all. That's half the fun. If you're passionate about movies or TV or books or music or any art form, chances are you've bristled over awards season and known you and your friends have better taste. How come *Archer* doesn't win Best Comedy? And *Breaking Bad* Best Drama? Or *Borgen*? Or *The Good Wife*?

So why not form your own group? It's not just fun to hand out awards; it's the best way to make certain your youthful enthusiasm for TV or music or books or whatever doesn't lose focus when work and life intrude. When all your friends tell you you have to read such and such a book or listen to a certain CD before the annual get-together, guess what? You do! Sometimes homework can be fun.

IRAs: The Best Movies of The 1950s

1. *The Earrings of Madame de...* (Max Ophüls, 1953) 1058 pts/81 pts

(See note at bottom for explanation of point totals.)

2. *Touch of Evil* (Orson Welles, 1958) 940/55

3. *Vertigo* (Alfred Hitchcock, 1958) 820/49

4. *Rear Window* (Alfred Hitchcock, 1954) 856/49

5. *The Searchers* (John Ford, 1956) 801/48

6. *In a Lonely Place* (Nicholas Ray, 1950) 776/45

7. *Anatomy of a Murder* (Otto Preminger, 1959) 787/44

8. *Tokyo Story* (Yasujiro Ozu, 1953) 885/44
9. *North by Northwest* (Alfred Hitchcock, 1959) 918/41
10. *Pickpocket* (Robert Bresson, 1959) 798/39

11. *A Man Escaped* (Robert Bresson, 1956) 738/61
12. *Some Came Running* (Vincente Minnelli, 1958) 773/55
13. *Ordet* (Carl Theodor Dreyer, 1955) 776/53
14. *Pickup on South Street* (Samuel Fuller, 1953) 732/52
15. *Written on the Wind* (Douglas Sirk, 1956) 766/50
16. *The Big Heat* (Fritz Lang, 1953) 732/50
17. *Kiss Me Deadly* (Robert Aldrich, 1955) 711/49
18. *The River* (Jean Renoir, 1951) 713/49
19. *Sunset Blvd.* (Billy Wilder, 1950) 725/44
20. *Some Like It Hot* (Billy Wilder, 1959) 713/32

21. *The Naked Spur* (Anthony Mann, 1953) 693/67
22. *Ugetsu* (Kenji Mizoguchi, 1953) 681/55
23. *Night and the City* (Jules Dassin, 1950) 656/50
24. *Rio Bravo* (Howard Hawks, 1959) 651/48
25. *The Band Wagon* (Vincente Minnelli, 1953) 666/47
26. *French Cancan* (Jean Renoir, 1954) 681/47
27. *Imitation of Life* (Douglas Sirk, 1959) 672/47
28. *Pather Panchali* (Satyajit Ray, 1955) 702/47
29. *Rebel Without a Cause* (Nicholas Ray, 1955) 667/45
30. *The Night of the Hunter* (Charles Laughton, 1955) 660/42

31. *Kanal* (Andrzej Wajda, 1956) 608/62
32. *On Dangerous Ground* (Nicholas Ray, 1952) 600/56
33. *Sansho the Bailiff* (Kenji Mizoguchi, 1954) 649/54
34. *Bigger Than Life* (Nicholas Ray, 1956) 641/54
35. *Early Summer* (Yasujiro Ozu, 1951) 604/51
36. *Diary of a Country Priest* (Robert Bresson, 1951) 605/48
37. *Floating Weeds* (Yasujiro Ozu, 1959) 628/48
38. *Smiles of a Summer Night* (Ingmar Bergman, 1955) 607/45
39. *All About Eve* (Joseph L. Mankiewicz, 1950) 618/40
40. *Sweet Smell of Success* (Alexander Mackendrick, 1957) 600/37

41. *Strangers on a Train* (Alfred Hitchcock, 1951) 580/57
42. *The Man From Laramie* (Anthony Mann, 1955) 553/56
43. *Johnny Guitar* (Nicholas Ray, 1954) 595/56
44. *Gun Crazy* (Joseph H. Lewis, 1950) 564/54
45. *All That Heaven Allows* (Douglas Sirk, 1955) 566/51
46. *The 400 Blows* (François Truffaut, 1959) 559/49
47. *Lola Montès* (Max Ophüls, 1955) 560/49
48. *Viaggio in Italia* (Roberto Rossellini, 1953) 546/44
49. *The Bad and the Beautiful* (Vincente Minnelli, 1952) 558/42
50. *Bob le Flambeur* (Jean-Pierre Melville, 1956) 536/37

51. *Ashes and Diamonds* (Andrzej Wajda, 1958) 524/68
52. *Ride Lonesome* (Budd Boetticher, 1959) 532/62
53. *Late Chrysanthemums* (Mikio Naruse, 1954) 523/55
54. *The Asphalt Jungle* (John Huston, 1950) 512/51
55. *Senso* (Luchino Visconti, 1954) 507/51
56. *I Vitelloni* (Federico Fellini, 1953) 498/48
57. *Bend of the River* (Anthony Mann, 1952) 497/47
58. *The Quiet Man* (John Ford, 1952) 495/43
59. *A Star Is Born* (George Cukor, 1954) 524/38
60. *Pyaasa* (Guru Dutt, 1957) 494/32

61. *The Killing* (Stanley Kubrick, 1955) 480/56
62. *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* (Don Siegel, 1956) 471/55
63. *Winchester '73* (Anthony Mann, 1950) 486/55
64. *99 River Street* (Phil Karlson, 1953) 469/54
65. *Bonjour Tristesse* (Otto Preminger, 1958) 468/53
66. *It's Always Fair Weather* (Stanley Donen, Gene Kelly, 1955) 469/53
67. *The Life of Oharu* (Kenji Mizoguchi, 1952) 459/47
68. *Seven Samurai* (Akira Kurosawa, 1954) 492/41
69. *Mr. Arkadin* (Orson Welles, 1955) 474/41
70. *Stalag 17* (Billy Wilder, 1953) 463/40

71. *Where the Sidewalk Ends* (Otto Preminger, 1950) 449/65
72. *The Big Combo* (Joseph H. Lewis, 1955) 458/62
73. *Forty Guns* (Samuel Fuller, 1957) 426/60
74. *The Tall T* (Budd Boetticher, 1957) 456/57
75. *Touchez Pas au Grisbi* (Jacques Becker, 1954) 436/49
76. *Rashomon* (Akira Kurosawa, 1950) 445/46
77. *Wagon Master* (John Ford, 1950) 408/45
78. *The Girl Can't Help It* (Frank Tashlin, 1956) 418/45
79. *East of Eden* (Elia Kazan, 1955) 405/40
80. *Hiroshima, Mon Amour* (Alain Resnais, 1959) 414/32

81. *The Man Who Knew Too Much* (Alfred Hitchcock, 1956) 396/59
82. *Stars in My Crown* (Jacques Tourneur, 1950) 402/58
83. *Ace in the Hole* (Billy Wilder, 1951) 363/53
84. *The Phenix City Story* (Phil Karlson, 1955) 362/51
85. *Rififi* (Jules Dassin, 1955) 393/48
86. *Nights of Cabiria* (Federico Fellini, 1957) 389/48
87. *The Golden Coach* (Jean Renoir, 1952) 361/47
88. *Street of Shame* (Kenji Mizoguchi, 1956) 402/46
89. *3:10 to Yuma* (Delmer Daves, 1957) 370/45
90. *The Flowers of St. Francis* (Roberto Rossellini, 1950) 363/40

91. *Wild Strawberries* (Ingmar Bergman, 1957) 346/63
92. *The Big Knife* (Robert Aldrich, 1955) 315/58
93. *The Cranes Are Flying* (Mikhail Kalatozov, 1957) 359/57
94. *The Wages of Fear* (Henri-Georges Clouzot, 1953) 294/56
95. *Paths of Glory* (Stanley Kubrick, 1957) 341/54
96. *Will Success Spoil Rock Hunter?* (Frank Tashlin, 1957) 262/54
97. *Mon Oncle* (Jacques Tati, 1958) 276/42
98. *Singin' in the Rain* (Stanley Donen, Gene Kelly, 1952) 328/40
99. *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* (Howard Hawks, 1953) 297/39
100. *M. Hulot's Holiday* (Jacques Tati, 1953) 255/36

Note: The first point total is overall points to establish the order on the list. (Many prior ballots determined the Top 100.) This point total determined what "group" it was in (eg. 91-100, 61-70 and so on.) The second point total is for position in that group (eg. among those ten films, which one should be ranked first, which second and so on). Some groups saw very little change in order; others saw substantial fluidity. When two or more films in a group received the same point total, we voted to break the tie. For example, "Ordet" and "In A Lonely Place" were tied for 10th place but the vote to break the tie placed "In A Lonely Place" in the Top 10 and "Ordet" in the #11-20 group. Even though it originally had the most points of any of those films, the final balloting placed "Ordet" at #13 instead of #11. On the other hand, "The Earrings of Madame de..." ranked #1 from beginning to end.

So how many movies have you seen from this list of the 1950s? What movie is missing? Thanks to [Criterion](#) for making the Visconti classic *Senso* available to me so I could catch up with it before the final vote. A remarkable number of these movies are in the Criterion

Collection, so if you want to catch up and are looking for great prints, start with them.

THE BEST MOVIES OF 2012

BEST PICTURE

Once Upon A Time In Anatolia --- By Acclamation
(won a majority of the ballots on the first round)

1. *Once Upon A Time In Anatolia* - 28 pts.
 2. (tie) *The Deep Blue Sea* - 13 pts.
- and
- The Loneliest Planet* - 13 pts.
 4. *The Kid With A Bike* - 12 pts.
 5. *Django Unchained* - 9 pts.

BEST DIRECTOR

1. Nuri Bilge Ceylan for *Once Upon A Time In Anatolia* - 28 pts.
2. Jean-Pierre Dardenne and Luc Dardenne for *The Kid With A Bike* - 15 pts.
3. Terence Davies for *The Deep Blue Sea* - 12 pts.
4. Quentin Tarantino for *Django Unchained* - 10 pts.
5. Julia Loktev for *The Loneliest Planet* - 9 pts.

BEST ACTOR

1. Jean-Louis Trintignant for *Amour* - 24 pts.
2. Jack Black for *Bernie* - 21 pts.
3. Lior Ashkenazi for *Footnote* - 18 pts.
4. Christoph Waltz for *Django Unchained* - 9 pts.
5. Joaquin Phoenix for *The Master* - 7 pts.

BEST ACTRESS

1. Rachel Weisz for *The Deep Blue Sea* - 27 pts.
2. Emmanuelle Riva for *Amour* - 26 pts.
3. Hani Furstenberg for *The Loneliest Planet* - 23 pts.
4. Ariane Labed for *Attenberg* - 19 pts.
5. Michelle Williams for *Take This Waltz* - 8 pts.

BEST SUPPORTING ACTOR

1. Taner Birsel for *Once Upon A Time In Anatolia* - 21 pts.
 2. Leonardo DiCaprio for *Django Unchained* - 12 pts.
 3. Samuel L. Jackson for *Django Unchained* - 10 pts.
 4. (tie) Zachary Booth for *Keep The Lights On* - 9 pts.
- and
- Robert De Niro for *Silver Linings Playbook* - 9 pts.
- and
- Dwight Henry for *Beasts Of The Southern Wild* - 9 pts.
- and
- Matthew McConaughey for *Bernie*, *Killer Joe*, *Magic Mike* and *The Paperboy* - 9 pts.

BEST SUPPORTING ACTRESS

Cecile De France for *The Kid With A Bike* - By Acclamation
(won a majority of votes in first round balloting)

1. Cecile De France for *The Kid With A Bike* - 32 pts.
2. Shirley MacLaine for *Bernie* - 22 pts.
3. Sally Field for *Lincoln* - 11 pts.
4. Juliette Binoche for *Cosmopolis* - 8 pts.
5. Amy Adams for *The Master* - 6 pts.

BEST SCREENPLAY

1. Ebru Ceylan and Nuri Bilge Ceylan and Ercan Kesal for *Once Upon A Time In Anatolia* - 23 pts.
2. Joseph Cedar for *Footnote* - 19 pts.
3. Quentin Tarantino for *Django Unchained* - 18 pts.
4. Jeanne-Pierre Dardenne and Luc Dardenne for *The Kid With A Bike* - 13 pts.
5. (tie) Joe Carnahan and Ian McKenzie Jeffers for *The Grey* 10 pts.
and
Tony Kushner for *Lincoln* - 10 pts.

BEST CINEMATOGRAPHY

1. Gokhan Tiryaki for *Once Upon A Time In Anatolia* - 25 pts.
2. Inti Briones for *The Loneliest Planet* - 22 pts.
3. Mihai Malaimare Jr. for *The Master* - 12 pts.
4. Florian Hoffmeister for *The Deep Blue Sea* - 10 pts.
5. Peter Suschitzky for *Cosmopolis* - 7 pts.

BEST PRODUCTION DESIGN

1. Arvinder Grewal for *Cosmopolis* - 20 pts.
2. James Merifield for *The Deep Blue Sea* - 17 pts.
3. Hugh Bateup and Uli Hanisch for *Cloud Atlas* - 14 pts.
4. Rick Carter for *Lincoln* - 12 pts.
5. (tie) David Crank and Jack Fisk for *The Master* - 8 pts.
and
Alex DiGerlando for *Beasts Of The Southern Wild* - 8 pts.

BEST SCORE

1. Dan Romer and Benh Zeitlin for *Beasts Of The Southern Wild* - 19 pts.
2. Jonny Greenwood for *The Master* and *Norwegian Wood* - 17 pts.
3. Johann Johannsson for *The Miners' Hymns* - 15 pts.
4. (tie) Reinhold Heil and Johnny Klimek and Tom Tykwer for *Cloud Atlas* - 10 pts.
and
Samuel Barber for *The Deep Blue Sea* - 10 pts.

BEST EDITING

1. Todd Woody Richman and Tyler H. Walk for *How To Survive A Plague* - 20 pts.
2. Bora Goksingol for *Once Upon A Time In Anatolia* - 17 pts.
3. Bill Morrison for *The Miners' Hymns* - 12 pts.
4. Wolfgang Widerhofer for *Michael* 10 pts.
5. Nicolas Chaudeurge for *Wuthering Heights* - 9 pts.

BEST COSTUME

1. Kari Perkins for *Bernie* - 22 pts.
2. Colleen Atwood for *Snow White and the Huntsman* and *Dark Shadows* - 12 pts.
3. Steven Noble for *Wuthering Heights* - 10 pts.
4. (tie) Ruth Myers for *The Deep Blue Sea* - 9 pts.
and
Mark Bridges for *The Master* - 9 pts.

Nowadays, even the more obscure and international films of the sort that make the IRAs list are readily available on DVD, Bluray, VOD, streaming and the like. it's easier than ever to stay on top of the best movies that world cinema has to offer...even if you don't live in a major city like NYC or LA.

If you want to check out [past winners of the IRA awards](#), go here.

If you want to see the IRA picks for [The 100 Best Movies Of All Time](#) and [The 10 Best Movies of the 2000s Decade](#), go here.

Thanks for reading. Michael Giltz is the co-host of [Showbiz Sandbox](#), a weekly pop culture podcast that reveals the industry take on entertainment news of the day and features top journalists and opinion makers as guests. It's [available](#) for free on iTunes. Visit Michael Giltz at his [website](#) and his [daily blog](#). Download his podcast of celebrity interviews and his radio show, also called Popsurfing and also [available](#) for free on iTunes. Link to him on Netflix and [gain](#) access to thousands of ratings and reviews.

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