



MONDAY, MARCH 20, 2017

## IRAs: The Best Movies Of The 1940s

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 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 1940s. Below you'll find our list of the Best Films Of The 1940s.

The IRAs began when passionate film students complained about annual awards shows, declaring "We could do better!" What followed was 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 known as the IRAs has been profiled in *The New Yorker*. Over the years they've 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 decades so hey, it's tradition.

If you're like me, the list of the Best Films of the 1940s 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. 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.

How to use this list: scoff at it, argue with it, agree with it, mock it. For us, the list is not nearly as important as the process. We re-watch some of our favorite films of the decade, check out movies we've missed but other members are passionate about, discover some new favorites of our own and others that don't work as well any more. So debate the list. "How could you leave off...??" "How could you include...??" And if you use it to check out some films you've never seen, we'll be happy.

### IRAs: THE BEST MOVIES OF THE 1940s

1. *Citizen Kane* (Orson Welles, 1941)
2. *Letter From An Unknown Woman* (Max Ophüls, 1948)
3. *The Magnificent Ambersons* (Orson Welles, 1942)
4. *Notorious* (Alfred Hitchcock, 1946)
5. *The Big Sleep* (Howard Hawks, 1946)
6. *Shadow Of A Doubt* (Alfred Hitchcock, 1943)
7. *Red River* (Howard Hawks, 1948)
8. *It's A Wonderful Life* (Frank Capra, 1946)
9. *To Have And Have Not* (Howard Hawks, 1944)
10. *The Palm Beach Story* (Preston Sturges, 1942)

11. *Pinocchio* (Ben Sharpsteen and Hamilton Luske, 1940)
12. *Double Indemnity* (Billy Wilder, 1944)
13. *The Miracle Of Morgan's Creek* (Preston Sturges 1944)
14. *The Shop Around The Corner* (Ernst Lubitsch, 1940)
15. *Late Spring* (Yasujiro Ozu, 1949)
16. *My Darling Clementine* (John Ford, 1946)
17. *His Girl Friday* (Howard Hawks, 1940)
18. *Out Of The Past* (Jacques Tourneur, 1947)
19. *Laura* (Otto Preminger, 1944)
20. *The Lady Eve* (Preston Sturges, 1941)

21. *The Reckless Moment* (Max Ophüls, 1949)
22. *Bicycle Thieves* (Vittorio De Sica, 1948)
23. *The Killers* (Robert Siodmak, 1946)
24. *Day Of Wrath* (Carl Theodore Dryer, 1943)
25. *White Heat* (Raoul Walsh, 1949)
26. *Casablanca* (Michael Curtiz, 1942)
27. *The Lady From Shanghai* (Orson Welles, 1948)
28. *The Life And Death Of Colonel Blimp* (Michael Powell and Emeric Pressburger, 1943)
29. *The Philadelphia Story* (George Cukor, 1940)
30. *Germany, Year Zero* (Roberto Rossellini, 1948)

31. *Mildred Pierce* (Michael Curtiz, 1945)
32. *Force Of Evil* (Abraham Polonsky, 1948)
33. *The Long Voyage Home* (John Ford, 1940)
34. *The Shanghai Gesture* (Josef von Sternberg, 1941)
35. *The Grapes Of Wrath* (John Ford 1940)
36. *How Green Was My Valley* (John Ford 1941)
37. *The Third Man* (Carol Reed, 1949)
38. *Moonrise* (Frank Borzage, 1948)
39. *Caught* (Max Ophüls, 1949)
40. *Rome, Open City* (Roberto Rossellini, 1945)

41. *The Clock* (Vincente Minnelli, 1945)
42. *Beauty And The Beast* (Jean Cocteau, 1946)
43. *To Be Or Not To Be* (Ernst Lubitsch, 1942)
44. *The Great Dictator* (Charlie Chaplin, 1940)
45. *I Know Where I'm Going!* (Michael Powell and Emeric Pressburger, 1945)
46. *Heaven Can Wait* (Ernst Lubitsch, 1943)
47. *The Southerner* (Jean Renoir, 1945)
48. *Sullivan's Travels* (Preston Sturges, 1941)
49. *Hail The Conquering Hero* (Preston Sturges, 1944)
50. *A Matter Of Life And Death* aka *Stairway To Heaven* (Michael Powell and Emeric Pressburger, 1946)

51. *They Live By Night* (Nicholas Ray, 1949)
52. *Bambi* (David D. Hand, 1942)
53. *I Walked With A Zombie* (Jacques Tourneur, 1943)
54. *Cat People* (Jacques Tourneur, 1942)
55. *The Maltese Falcon* (John Huston, 1941)
56. *Meet Me In St. Louis* (Vincente Minnelli, 1944)
57. *Shoeshine* (Vittorio De Sica, 1946)
58. *Les Dames du Bois de Boulogne* (Robert Bresson, 1945)
59. *Great Expectations* (David Lean, 1946)
60. *Unfaithfully Yours* (Preston Sturges, 1948)

61. *They Were Expendable* (John Ford, 1945)
62. *Dumbo* (Ben Sharpsteen, 1941)
63. *Rebecca* (Alfred Hitchcock, 1940)
64. *Kind Hearts And Coronets* (Robert Hamer, 1949)
65. *Now, Voyager* (Irving Rapper, 1942)
66. *High Sierra* (Raoul Walsh, 1941)
67. *The Best Years Of Our Lives* (William Wyler, 1946)
68. *Fort Apache* (John Ford, 1948)
69. *Adam's Rib* (George Cukor, 1949)
70. *The Treasure Of The Sierra Madre* (John Huston, 1948)

71. *Criss Cross* (Robert Siodmak, 1949)
72. *Fallen Angel* (Otto Preminger, 1945)
73. *Brief Encounter* (David Lean, 1945)
74. *Scarlet Street* (Fritz Lang, 1945)
75. *Detour* (Edgar G. Ulmer, 1945)
76. *A Letter To Three Wives* (Joseph L. Mankiewicz, 1949)
77. *Ivan The Terrible, Part I* (Sergei M. Eisenstein, 1945)
78. *Spellbound* (Alfred Hitchcock, 1945)
79. *The Ghost And Mrs. Muir* (Joseph L. Mankiewicz, 1947)
80. *Monsieur Verdoux* (Charlie Chaplin, 1947)

81. *Pitfall* (André de Toth, 1948)
82. *Stray Dog* (Akira Kurosawa, 1949)
83. *She Wore A Yellow Ribbon* (John Ford, 1949)
84. *The Fallen Idol* (Carol Reed, 1948)
85. *The Heiress* (William Wyler, 1949)
86. *Odd Man Out* (Carol Reed, 1947)
87. *The Letter* (William Wyler, 1940)
88. *The 47 Ronin* (Kenji Mizoguchi, 1941)
89. *The Small Back Room* (Michael Powell and Emeric Pressburger, 1949)
90. *The Little Foxes* (William Wyler 1941)

91. *Foreign Correspondent* (Alfred Hitchcock, 1940)
92. *Body And Soul* (Robert Rossen, 1947)
93. *Saboteur* (Alfred Hitchcock, 1942)
94. *Meshes Of The Afternoon* (Maya Deren and Alexander Hammid, 1943)
95. *Daisy Kenyon* (Otto Preminger, 1947)
96. *Such A Pretty Little Beach* (Yves Allégret, 1949)
97. *The Woman In The Window* (Fritz Lang, 1944)
98. *I Was A Male War Bride* (Howard Hawks, 1949)
99. *Gaslight* (George Cukor, 1944)
100. *Cluny Brown* (Ernst Lubitsch, 1946)

POSTED BY MICHAEL GILTZ AT 3:17 AM  

NO COMMENTS :

[Post a Comment](#)

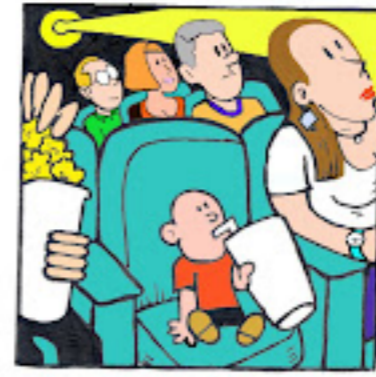
[Newer Post](#)

[Home](#)

[Older Post](#)

Subscribe to: [Post Comments \(Atom\)](#)

MICHAEL GILTZ AT WORK



Michael Giltz is a freelance writer based in NYC and can be reached at [mgiltz@pipeline.com](mailto:mgiltz@pipeline.com)

#### FAVORITE LINKS

[Americablog](#)  
[Five O'Clock Lightning baseball blog](#)  
[Deep Pop -- Lori Lakin's Blog](#)  
[The Back Page -- Jason Page on ESPN Radio](#)  
[Cine-Blog -- George Robinson's Blog](#)  
[Documents On Art & Cinema - Daryl Chin's Blog](#)  
[Bruce G's Wondrous Blog Of Adventure and Mystery -- Bruce Greenspan's Blog](#)

#### BLOG ARCHIVE

- ▶ [2021](#) (10)
- ▶ [2020](#) (15)
- ▶ [2019](#) (93)
- ▶ [2018](#) (34)
- ▼ [2017](#) (6)
  - ▶ [May](#) (1)
  - ▼ [March](#) (2)
    - [42nd Annual IRA Movie Awards -- History Is Made An...](#)
    - [IRAs: The Best Movies Of The 1940s](#)
- ▶ [February](#) (2)
- ▶ [January](#) (1)
- ▶ [2016](#) (2)
- ▶ [2015](#) (19)
- ▶ [2014](#) (2)
- ▶ [2013](#) (5)
- ▶ [2012](#) (17)
- ▶ [2011](#) (15)
- ▶ [2010](#) (10)
- ▶ [2009](#) (43)
- ▶ [2008](#) (86)
- ▶ [2007](#) (781)
- ▶ [2006](#) (2412)
- ▶ [2005](#) (5)