

Document Citation

Title	Grand hotel
Author(s)	
Source	<i>Film Circle</i>
Date	1958
Type	program note
Language	English
Pagination	
No. of Pages	1
Subjects	
Film Subjects	Grand Hotel, Goulding, Edmund, 1932

A kaleidoscopic close-up of the goings-on in a fashionable Berlin hotel based on the novel and play, Menschen im Hotel, by Vicki Baum & the American play version by William A. Drake. Screenplay by William A. Drake. Continuity by Hans Kräly. Photography by William A. Daniels. Edited by Blanche Sewell. Directed by Edmund Goulding. Produced by Irving Thalberg. Released nationally 10 IX 1932 by Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Distributing Corp.

The original length was 12 reels, 115 minutes. In national release the film was cut to 105 mts. To-night's 16mm. print runs 115 mts.

Chosen as the "best all-around production" of 1932 by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences at its annual banquet in Hollywood on November 18, 1932.

The world première took place at the Astor Theatre, New York, on Tuesday, 12 April 1932, at 8:40 p.m.

[C A S T]

Greta Garbo--Grusinskaya, a Russian ballet dancer--bored, temperamental, unhappy
John Barrymore--Baron Geigern, a debonair criminal--sly, fast-working, money-hungry
Joan Crawford--Flämmchen, a stenographer--hard, efficient, accommodating, realistic
Wallace Beery--Preysing, a German industrialist, uncouth, hard-fisted, pathetic
Lionel Barrymore--Otto Kringelein, an underpaid, obsequious bookkeeper about to die
Lewis Stone--Dr. Otternschlag, a world-weary, unobservant, bored old physician
Jean Hersholt--Senf, the head porter at Grand Hotel, an expectant father
Ferdinand Gottschalk--Pimenov, Grusinskaya's manager and loyal underling
Rafaela Ottiano--Suzette, Grusinskaya's personal maid
Tully Marshall--Gerstenkorn, a visiting business man
Frank Conroy--Rohna, manager of the Grand Hotel
& Robert McWade (Meierheim), Purnell B. Pratt (Zinnowitz), Morgan Wallace (Chauffeur), Murray Kinnell (Schweimann), Edwin Maxwell (Dr. Waitz).

[C O M M E N T A R Y]

So far as the direction is concerned, Edmund Goulding has done an excellent piece of work, but occasionally it seems as though he relies too much on close-ups. Nevertheless he has sustained a steady momentum in darting here & there in the busy hostelry & working up to an effective dramatic pitch at the psychological moment. In all, the picture adheres faithfully to the original & while it undoubtedly lacks the life & depth & color of the play, by means of excellent characterizations it keeps the audience on the qui vive.--Mordaunt Hall in The New York Times 81:27108 13 April 1932, p. 23.

The screen edition of Grand Hotel...is brilliant motion-picture entertainment, chiefly because it is so admirable in its acting & in its direction. The Vicki Baum work was never a play of genuine distinction; was never more than a lively and resourceful melodrama. As it has been transferred to the films under the shrewd hands of Mr. Goulding, the director, & Irving Thalberg, the producer, it is still less than an immortal melodrama, but it does take on superb qualities as a straightforward show. For one thing, the rather jumpy form of the original is more fitted to screen than to stage. The most important feature, of course, is the casting, which is chiefly responsible for its distinction.

This brings us back to where we should be: the performance of Miss Garbo. Her rôle of the bored & weary dancer, whose ebbing spirits & career are restored when she falls in love with a dashing brigand, is really not the most important one of the play. Although most of the action revolves about her, she is chiefly a motivating influence, rather than an active participant in the proceedings. She has, for example, fewer scenes than Lionel Barrymore as the invalid, Kringelein. Yet so lovely & exciting is her portrayal, so lyric & yet so lively & humorous & human in all of its shifting phases, that those who had predicted that some one else would steal the picture from her must today be feeling pretty much ashamed of themselves.--Richard Watts, Jr., in New York Herald Tribune 92:31196 14 April 1932, p. 12:1.

...there is a captivating pattern of unexpected comedy that runs through it all, always fresh & always pat.--Rush [Alfred Rushton Greason] in Variety: 19 IV 1932.

Shown to members of The Film Circle of Milwaukee on Saturday, 6 September 1958.