

Document Citation

Title	Forgotten classics get new life on screen
Author(s)	Roger Ebert
Source	<i>Publisher name not available</i>
Date	1983
Type	article
Language	English
Pagination	
No. of Pages	1
Subjects	Todd, Michael (1909-1958), Minneapolis, Minnesota, United States Hitchcock, Alfred (1899-1980), Leytonstone, London, Great Britain
Film Subjects	Oklahoma!, Zinnemann, Fred, 1955 The trouble with Harry, Hitchcock, Alfred, 1955 Rope, Hitchcock, Alfred, 1948 A Star is born, Cukor, George Dewey, 1954

THE HITCHCOCK PACKAGE: For at least 10 years, and in one case for 35 years, five films by Alfred Hitchcock have been held completely out of sight.

This autumn, they will return. They were the five that Hitchcock personally controlled the rights to, including all four movies he made with James Stewart.

They included "Rear Window" (1954), with Stewart and Grace Kelly, which ranked with "Psycho" and "North by Northwest" as one of the master's most famous films; "Vertigo" (1958), with Stewart and Kim Novak, considered by many critics to be his best film; "The Man Who Knew Too Much" (1956), with Stewart and Doris Day; "Rope" (1948), with Stewart and Farley Granger, and "The Trouble With Harry" (1955), with John Forsyth and Shirley MacLaine.

"Rope," based on the Leopold-Loeb murder case, was an experiment that Hitchcock believed had failed; he tried to create the illusion that the entire movie had been filmed in one uninterrupted shot. "The Trouble With Harry" was a macabre comedy about a dead body that kept popping up; Hitchcock liked it, but the public hated it. The other three movies were box-office hits.

Hitchcock kept them out of release to increase the demand for them, enhancing their value to his estate. Now the estate has sold them to Universal Classics, which is striking new prints from the master negatives and will release them starting in October.

"Oklahoma!" will be the first of these rediscovered classics to play around the country, and the Goldwyn Co. hopes it will tap a national vein of affection for its big, simple, cheerful and hopelessly energetic production. The movie version was personally supervised by Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein, who had held it off the screen for 12 years. They insisted on a film version that would remain faithful to the stage production — and, indeed, the characters, dialogue and songs remain essentially unchanged from the theater ver-

sion. In that sense, "Oklahoma!" is a very traditional screen musical.

But director Fred Zinnemann, fresh from his success with "From Here to Eternity" (1953), added his own cinematic touches, including filming great sections of the movie outdoors.

Although soundstages and sets are used for some of the scenes, many of the big ones (including "Oh, What a Beautiful Morning!" and "Kansas City") were shot and recorded outdoors, with vast open spaces of cloud and land and cattle herds in the background. The movie picks up an exuberance from its locations (which were mostly in Texas, not Oklahoma), and it picks up additional freshness from its then-little-known stars, Gordon MacRae, Shirley Jones and Rod Steiger.