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THURSDAY

Carol Reed's **ODD MAN OUT** (1947), from a screenplay by R. C. Sherriff and F. L. Green, based on Green's novel, with James Mason, Kathleen Ryan, F. J. McCormick, Robert Newton, Fay Compton, and Denis O'Dea, genuinely expanded the limits of cinema aesthetics in the late '40s as *Citizen Kane* had done at the end of the previous decade. One can harp about some of the film's strained allegory, its touch of sanctimoniousness (particularly in the strict accountability demanded of a largely incidental, but not accidental, killing), and the occasional excesses of shadowy pagantry, but this still does not diminish the sublimity of such scenes as the death-embracing romanticism of Ryan's heroine, of the chirping humanity of McCormick's bird peddler, and of the instinctive compassion of Compton's housewife. Mason, although not a fully articulated tragic hero, is also a magnetic presence as a

wounded IRA chieftain on a doomed nighttime odyssey in search of deliverance. Reed's stylized direction, the lyricism of the Sherriff-Green script, the William Allwyn score, and the darkling magic of Robert Krasker's night photography combine to make *Odd Man Out* one of the enduring masterpieces of the age of anguished black-and-white. Harold Pinter has even somewhat legitimized the film by having the characters of



CULVER PICTURES

Odd Man Out: expanding the limits of cinema