



Citizen Kane

United States 1941 119 mins Cert U

Citizen Kane, Orson Welles' masterpiece and the first feature film he ever made, has come back into the limelight during recent months - if it ever left, that is - after David Fincher's *Mank* (2020) dramatised the widely known melodrama of Welles' commissioning of screenwriter Herman J. Mankiewicz. Fincher's take highlights for us a key inspiration for the story that would initially fail to break even at the box office, only to become one of the most acclaimed films of all time. This is Mankiewicz's tumultuous relationship with the titan of the news industry, William Randolph Hearst. This integral real-world relationship underlines one of the key themes of *Kane* - the impressions we have of those around us.

After the news magnate Charles Foster Kane (played by director Orson Welles) dies, the reporter, Jerry Thompson (William Alland), is tasked with unravelling the mystery of Kane's final utterance - perhaps the most famous phrase in all cinema - "Rosebud". Through a series of encounters with those whose Kane's sprawling influence touched, Thompson's mission leads him to uncover the man's life in its entirety: from his innocent, humble beginnings, via his thrust into affluence at a young age, to his eventual rise to power as an industrial titan and fatalistic collapse. Kane's is a simple, yet powerful story of tragedy and power and loss. Thompson's, on the other hand, is a tapestry, a document of one man's kaleidoscopic identity as he himself is interpreted by different witnesses and beholders.

Citizen Kane is noted as being a landmark, not just in the history of cinema but also within that of the United States. A document of both a specific period and its socio-political baggage, as well as a revolutionary technical marvel. Of particular note is the film's deep-focus cinematography and the way this allows it to play with perspective, its elliptical editing methods, and its circular narrative structure. All things to keep an eye out for, on what is likely to be many members' second, third or even fourth viewing.

"*Citizen Kane*" knows the sled is not the answer. It explains what *Rosebud* is, but not what *Rosebud* means. The film's construction shows how our lives, after we are gone, survive only in the memories of others, and those memories butt up against the walls we erect and the roles we play.'

Roger Ebert, *rogerebert.com*

Leading Players

Orson Welles
William Alland
Dorothy Comingore
Joseph Cotten
Agnes Moorehead

Charles Foster Kane
Jerry Thompson
Susan Alexander Kane
Jedediah Leland
Mary Kane

Production Credits

Director
Producer(s)
Screenplay

Cinematography
Original Music

Orson Welles
Orson Welles, George Schaefer (uncredited)
Herman J. Mankiewicz,
Orson Welles
Gregg Toland
Bernard Herrmann

Zoom discussion meeting to take place
Thursday 25th March from 7.30pm to 8.15pm

Link: <https://zoom.us/j/97118382970?pwd=OVRmK05qd01PWDhQVHG1TlpFQjM1Zz09>

Meeting ID: 971 1838 2970

Passcode: abcdfilms



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