

It's A Wonderful Offer

*Film Streams to give out free popcorn for one-week run of holiday classic
 IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE (December 25-31)*

Omaha, Nebraska (Monday, December 14, 2009)—This Christmas, one of the most beloved films of all time will return to the big screen at Film Streams' Ruth Sokolof Theater with a gift: a small FREE popcorn when you purchase a ticket to see Frank Capra's IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE.

From Friday, December 25 to Thursday, December 31, the holiday classic starring James Stewart will screen at Film Streams' Ruth Sokolof Theater, Omaha's nonprofit cinema, located at the corner of 14th and Mike Fahey Street (formerly Webster Street). Tickets for all showtimes of IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE are \$8 general, \$6 for seniors, students and teachers, and \$4 for Film Streams Members.

Released in 1946, IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE stars James Stewart as George Bailey, a good man who's spent his entire life putting other people before himself. When George falls victim to the antics of a greedy banker, he's cast into a life-threatening despair — that is, until a guardian angel named Clarence shows George what the world would have been like had he never been born.

Film Streams will offer free popcorn for all screenings of IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE between December 25-31, 2009. Tickets for all showtimes can be purchased in advance at www.filmstreams.org or in person at the box office inside Film Streams' Ruth Sokolof Theater.

For more information about IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE, see Film Streams' Film Notes on the following pages or visit www.filmstreams.org.

IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE AT FILM STREAMS' RUTH SOKOLOF THEATER

Friday, December 25	4pm, 6:40pm, 9:15pm
Saturday, December 26:	3pm, 6pm, 8:45pm
Sunday, December 27:	12pm, 6pm, 8:45pm
Monday, December 28:	4pm, 6:40pm, 9:15pm
Tuesday, December 29:	4pm, 6:40pm, 9:15pm
Wednesday, December 30:	4pm, 6:40pm, 9:15pm
Thursday, December 31:	2pm, 6:40pm, 9:15pm

Film Streams is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization dedicated to enhancing the cultural environment of the Omaha-Council Bluffs area through the presentation and discussion of film as an art form. In July 2007, we opened the Ruth Sokolof Theater, our two-screen cinema located within the Saddle Creek Records complex north of downtown Omaha. For more information, visit us online at www.filmstreams.org.



Film Streams Presents

It's A Wonderful Life 1946

Friday, December 25 - Thursday, December 31, 2009



Film Information

Directed by
Frank Capra

Language
English

Running Time
130 minutes

Film Notes

It's hard to believe now, but when Frank Capra's *IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE* was first released in 1946, it was considered something of a box office failure. The critical reaction was mixed, too, with *The New York Times'* famously cranky Bosley Crowther dismissing the movie for its "sentimentality." All was not lost—*IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE* earned five Academy Award nominations and attendance was actually pretty strong (and only disappointing because of the film's extravagant production costs)—but at the time, no one could have predicted its remarkable, perhaps even unprecedented, staying power. "The film has a life of its own now and I can look at it like I had nothing to do with it," Capra himself said in a 1984 interview with *The Wall Street Journal*. "I'm like a parent whose kid grows up to be president. I'm proud... but it's the kid who did the work. I didn't even think of it as a Christmas story when I first ran across it. I just liked the idea."

Whether you're seeing *IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE* for the first time or the fortieth, there are some fun things to note. For instance, the holiday classic set a new standard for the creation of movie snow. Prior to *IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE*, painted cornflakes were used to mimic falling snow—an effective but noisy technique that meant any dialogue during snowfall scenes had to be re-recorded later. To avoid that inconvenience, Capra had his special effects crew develop new fake snow using a mixture of sugar, water, and foamite (the stuff in fire extinguishers).

According to a 2002 *New York Times* story, more than 50 tons of the stuff was created for *IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE*, turning a studio-owned acreage in Encino, California, (where daytime temperatures hit 90 degrees) into the wintry scene of Bedford Falls.

The origins of *IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE*, based on the short story "The Greatest Gift" by Philip Van Doren Stern, are worth noting, too. After trying unsuccessfully to get his story published, Stern mailed it to friends and family as a Christmas card in December 1943. As a result, the story landed on the desk of RKO producer David Hempstead, who acquired the rights and planned to adapt it into a film starring Cary Grant. When a series of scripts failed to get off the ground, RKO sold the rights to Frank Capra's production company, Liberty Films. The script was overhauled, James Stewart was recruited to star (see the reverse side for more on that), and that's how Stern's unpublished short story became a Christmas card that became one of the most beloved holiday movies of all time.

—Casey



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“Merry Christmas, movie house!”

More Information

Screenplay by

Frances Goodrich
Albert Hackett
Frank Capra
Jo Swerling
Michael Wilson

Featuring

James Stewart
Donna Reed
Lionel Barrymore
Thomas Mitchell
Henry Travers
Beulah Bondi
Frank Faylen
Ward Bond

Cinematography by

Joseph F. Biroc
Joseph Walker
Victor Milner

Original Music by

Dimitri Tiomkin

Film Editing by

William Hornbeck

Country of Origin

USA

“[IT’S A WONDERFUL LIFE] was the first picture I did after I got out of the service... It was after being unemployed for quite a while after the War. Frank [Capra] called me one day and said, ‘I have an idea for a movie, why don’t you come over and I’ll tell you?’ So I went over and we sat down and he said, ‘This picture starts in heaven’. That shook me. He said, ‘You’re in terrible trouble and you are about to commit suicide by jumping off a bridge and an angel comes down and he tries to save you, but he can’t swim. So you save him.’ And then Frank got a little mixed up. He said, ‘This sounds terrible doesn’t it?’ So I said, ‘Frank, if you want to do a picture that starts in heaven, where I have a guardian angel then I’m your boy’. That’s the way it started.”

—James Stewart

Also Recommended

It Happened One Night 1934 (Dir. Frank Capra)
The Shop Around the Corner 1940 (Dir. Ernst Lubitsch)
The Bells of St. Mary’s 1945 (Dir. Leo McCarey)
Miracle on 34th Street 1947 (Dir. George Seaton)