

It's a wonderful life



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Frank Capra's 1946 film *It's a Wonderful Life* is considered one of the sentimental favorites of our time and a staple of the Christmas television season. The movie was considered something of a failure at the time, since it failed to earn a profit when stacked up against the expenses of filming. However, it is now recognized as one of the most important films made to date. Part of the appeal may lie in the timing – the film's initial release came on the heels of World War II.

After years of bloodshed in Europe and Asia, the sentimentality of a hopeful Christmas story might have been what resonated with the American public. (A man, suicidal and depressed on Christmas Eve, is approached by an angel for a walk through the moments of his life – the classic “darkest before dawn” theme that has always struck a chord with audiences may have been especially poignant after the end finally came in the long war. Though the movie might have been considered a flop at the time, the small moments of beauty have helped it become an enduring classic, such as the little things that changed while George, the main character, was not living but busy walking down memory lane with Clarence the angel – the difference in the wind is appreciated not only by George, but by those in the audience.

I would recommend this movie to friends or classmates; it is an important part of iconic cinematography and serves as both a forerunner and a counterpoint to some subsequent “modern classics”, such as *American Beauty*, a much more sinister film that nevertheless impresses upon its audience the importance of appreciating all the small blessings one has been given in life, no matter how dark the outlook might be at a particularly dark

time. Because of its place in the collective consciousness, It's a Wonderful Life definitely deserves a mention in the Top 25.