

Wings

1927 | 144mins

Directors: Harry d'Abbadie d'Arrast, William A. Wellman

Starring: Richard Arlen, Clara Bow, Charles Rogers

Wings is a black-and-white silent film set during World War I following David Armstrong (Richard Arlen) and Jack Powell (Charles 'Buddy' Rogers), two men who go from romantic rivals in a small town to best friends while fighting for the US army as pilots. Mary Preston (Clara Bow) also appears as 'the girl next door' whose love for one of the men goes unnoticed until the end of the film.

For Bow, this was just one of her six Paramount releases that year, including *It* (1927), where she played a poor shop-girl who, by possessing that unknown factor of character 'it', eventually finds love. Thus, Bow was bestowed with the nickname 'the "It" girl', a title whose use has resurged in recent years.

Wings was initially rewritten to accommodate her, an original Hollywood star whose presence in a film guaranteed an audience. However, it could be argued that in this film, she is not given all the screen-time that she deserves. A contemporary review by Sid Silverman noted that 'there not being so much of Clara Bow in the picture, she gives an all around corking performance'. Bow herself stated that '[*Wings* is]...a man's picture and I'm just the whipped cream on top of the pie'.

The film is also incredibly respected for its technical achievements, particularly with regards to aviation. It exhibits realistic air-combat sequences aided by real US Army planes and pilots, leading to the award of 'Best Engineering Effects' as well as 'Outstanding Picture' at the very first Academy Awards in 1929.

The film almost shared the fate of Bow's four pictures of 1928 which are considered lost, as it took decades for a copy of *Wings* to be unearthed. The first restored version was released in 1985, and in 2012, a 'meticulously restored' version was released for DVD.

'When the action [from a story by John Monk Saunders] settles on terra firma there is nothing present that other war supers haven't had, some to a greater degree. But nothing has possessed the graphic descriptive powers of aerial flying and combat that have been poured into this effort'

- Variety, 1927.

Excellent

Fair

Poor



What did you think of the film? Please mark or tear the number.

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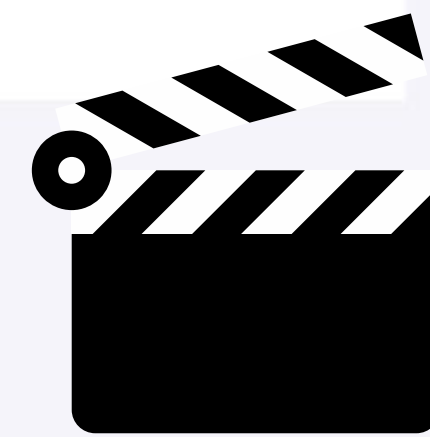
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Did You Know?

- Almost all the female characters have bobbed hair, which was common in 1927 when the film was made, but not at all in 1917-18 when the film was set
- Around 300 pilots were involved in the filming, including those of the United States Army Air Corps
- The first Annual Academy Awards, where *Wings* won Best Picture, only lasted for 15 minutes

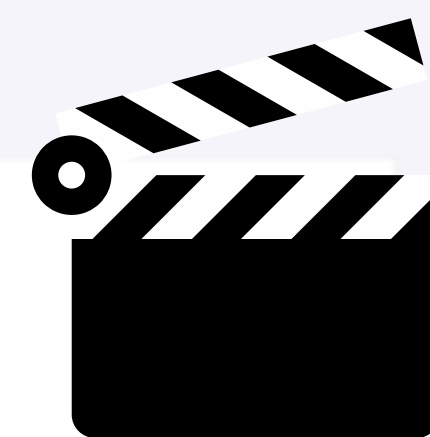
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What did you think of the film? Please mark or tear the number.

Please add any further comments here



Excellent

Fair

Poor