What Makes a Film Great?

Some opinions from a variety of sources:

- A great film has to make a contribution to the development of the medium. And it has to have lasting importance. You can measure that in many ways, but the key one is influence. Does the film influence or even teach other directors to make films in new ways? Finally, the great film must strike a chord with viewers no matter how much time has passed since it was made.

- Most everyone disagrees on exactly which films are worthy of the "ten best" ranking, but great movies generally have a few things in common. First are the obvious reasons: Excellent performances, direction, screenplay, etc. Second, great movies are the type that can be watched over and over again and never get old. Third, great movies are often remembered because they make a statement. They are not just entertaining in the usual sense, but they make some important statement that makes them stand out in one's memory.

- Relevance: The theme of the film still applies today as it did when the film was first popular.

- Truth: The film contains significant and universal insight into human nature, relationships, and/or society.

- Unity: No element is wasted; everything is balanced and neatly tied up.

- One thing is timing... if a movie comes out at just the right time when an audience is ready for it. Another thing is fully developed characters that you feel have had complete lives before the film began.

- I think great films have great stories. The story has to be compelling and interesting. I think story and content are very important in a great film. Also interesting characters make a good film.

- I think "greatness" is in the eyes of the viewer, as it should be.

- The other more "profound" great is when a movie takes me to a level that no movie has done previously, or makes me see something in a light I never have.

- I think it's a whole package. Writing acting and directing. The director has to have a good vision and be able to create scenes that are believable and enjoyable to watch.

- I think a great movie is one that pulls you into a new world, captures your mind and does so without distraction. A great movie can make the unbelievable believable, make you feel the emotions, send chills down your spine if the moment merits it and strap you to your seat.