KINONIK

THE THIRD MAN (1949)

Directed by Carol Reed

WEDNESDAY December 17th 7PM

SATURDAY December 20th 7PM



"Of all the movies that I have seen, [The Third Man] most completely embodies the romance of going to the movies." -Roger Ebert

Post World War II Vienna existed at a crossroads, controlled not by an independent Austria, but by a tense and shifting alliance of Four Powers: the US, UK, France, and the Soviet Union. At times cooperative, but more often combative, the uneasy power divide and local resistance to occupation created the perfect environment for a thriving black market–and the perfect setting for The **Third Man** (1949), Carol Reed and Graham Greene's sharp noir. The film itself was an odd international collaboration; both Britain and the US claim it as one of their greatest films, as its crew, production, casting, and creation were all a result of fruitful but fraught international wheeling and dealing.

Joseph Cotten stars as Holly Martins (cast reluctantly by Reed to secure US distribution rights from David Selznick), a pulp writer who visits Vienna after receiving a job offer from his friend, Harry Lime (Orson Welles; Reed's insistence in exchange for Selznick's casting demands). Upon arriving, he discovers his friend is dead, and after meeting Lime's girlfriend Anna Schmitt (the incredible Alida Valli) becomes convinced that Lime was murdered. His ensuing pursuit of the truth reveals much darker realities about postwar Vienna and the man he thought he knew. At times sharply comedic, the film never loses its edge or its grip on the social and emotional destruction of the era.

Navigating the unceasing demands of producers, script reviewers, censors, and an at-times difficult cast, Reed managed to hold to his vision through the final scene, resulting in a noir that evolved beyond inspiration into archetype. As Reed said, "A picture should end as it has to. I don't think anything in life ends 'right'."

Despite plenty of tension on and off set, there were also happy collaborations and surprise discoveries. Reed had planned a traditional orchestral backing until he heard a then-unknown local zither player, Anton Karas, playing at a production party. He was so intrigued by the sound he had Karas move in with him for the entirety of the editing process, and despite having no language in common, they worked together to score the entire film scene by scene. The film's theme was such an international dancehall sensation that when the film released in the United States in 1950, the fact that it featured Karas' music was used as a major selling point.

Just like moviegoers of its day, you too can let Karas put you in "a dither with his zither" and experience the film so impactful it earned Reed his Knighthood. Screening at Kinonik in 16mm Dec 17th and 20th at 7 PM.