

Blu-ray Review: Criterion HD Upgrade For Martin Scorsese's 'The Last Temptation of Christ'

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on March 21, 2012 - 1:33pm

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CHICAGO – As audiences still catch up with the five-time Oscar-winning “Hugo” from master Martin Scorsese (released on Blu-ray last month), it might provoke a few young people to explore the filmmaker’s history. They will likely start with the widely-recognized classics like “Raging Bull,” “Taxi Driver,” and “GoodFellas,” but they will eventually get to “The Last Temptation of Christ,” recently released in an upgraded Criterion edition and re-released on DVD. The MASSIVE controversy that greeted this film on its release has somewhat clouded its prominence in movie history. This is a great film, a better one than you remember and one of Scorsese’s best.

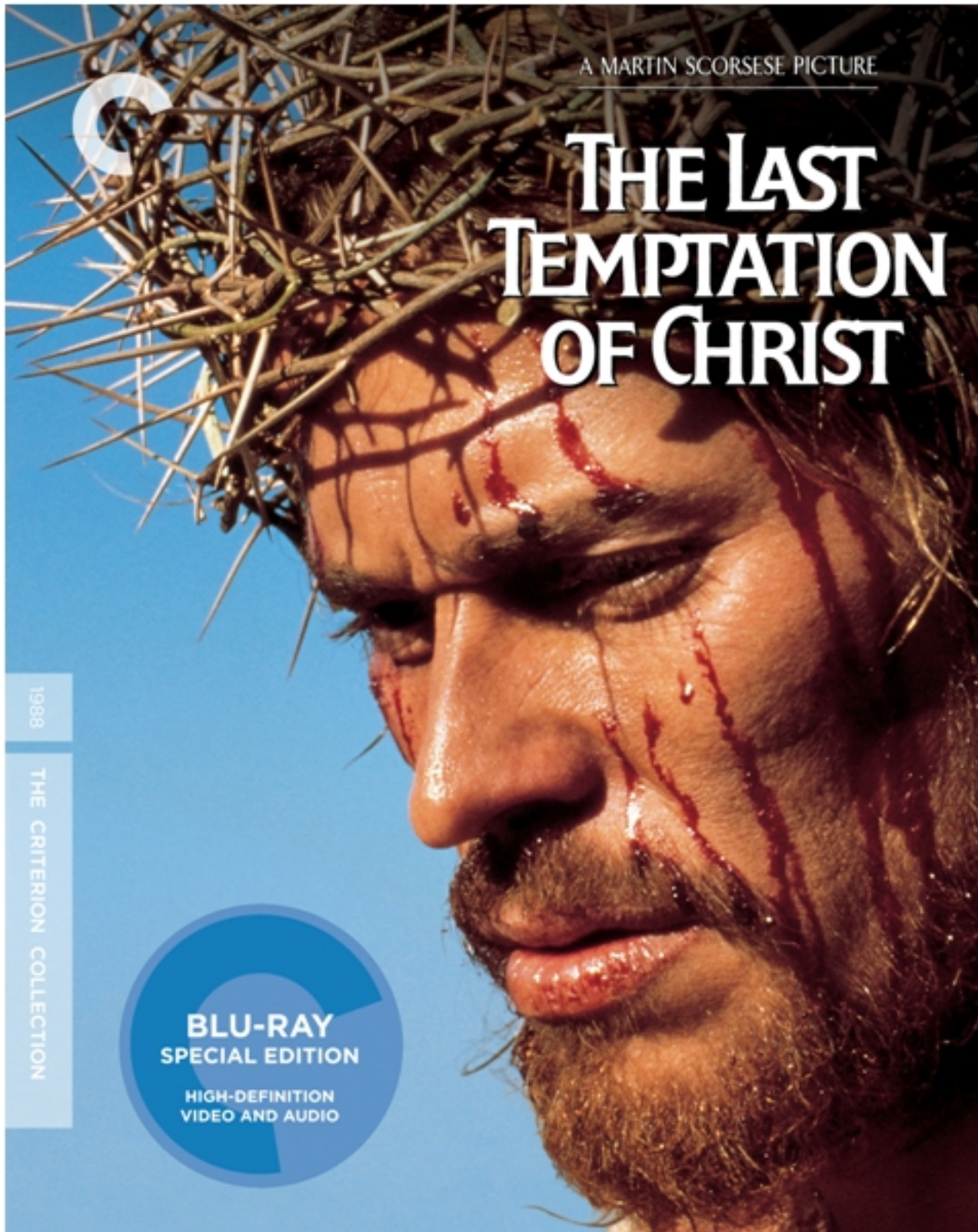


Blu-ray Rating: **5.0/5.0**

“God was a vicious headache that would not go away.” — Paul Schrader, writer of “The Last Temptation of Christ.”

This fascinating quote comes as a part of one of the most interesting commentary tracks I’ve heard in years. It was actually recorded in 1997 but is included on the new Blu-ray release and I hadn’t had the chance to hear it. Featuring Schrader, Scorsese, actor Willem Dafoe, and Jay Cocks, it’s a must-hear for fans of Marty or audio commentaries in general. Scorsese is simply one of the smartest men in filmmaking and hearing him talk about his inspirations, the controversy, and the artistic success of “Christ” is something all of his fans must do.

After the commentary, the main draw of the Criterion edition is the restored high-definition digital transfer, which was supervised and approved by cinematographer Michael Ballhaus and editor Thelma Schoonmaker. It looks incredible, better than you remember. No one does HD quite like Criterion. The special features are a bit scant after the commentary — although there is an interview with Peter Gabriel about one of the best scores of all time — but the quality of the film, its transfer, and the commentary alone make this one of the stronger Criterion Blu-rays of the season. Include it in your next Marty marathon.



The Last Temptation of Christ

*Photo credit: Courtesy of the Criterion Collection***Synopsis:**

The Last Temptation of Christ, by Martin Scorsese, is a towering achievement. Though it initially engendered enormous controversy, the film can now be viewed as the remarkable, profoundly personal work of faith that it is. This fifteen-year labor of love, an adaptation of Nikos Kazantzakis's landmark novel that imagines an alternate fate for Jesus Christ, features outstanding performances by Willem Dafoe, Barbara Hershey, Harvey Keitel, Harry Dean Stanton, and David Bowie; bold cinematography by the great Michael Ballhaus; and a transcendent score by Peter Gabriel.

Special Features:

- o Audio Commentary Featuring Director Martin Scorsese, Actor Willem Dafoe, And Writers Paul Schrader And Jay Cocks
- o Galleries Of Production Stills, Research Materials, And Costume Designs
- o Location Production Footage Shot By Scorsese
- o Interview With Composer Peter Gabriel, With A Stills Gallery Of Traditional Instruments Used In The Score
- o Essay By Film Critic David Ehrenstein

"The Last Temptation of Christ" stars Willem Dafoe, Harvey Keitel, Barbara Hershey, Harry Dean Stanton, and David Bowie. It was written by Paul Schrader and directed by Martin Scorsese. It was released on Criterion Blu-ray and re-released on Criterion DVD on March 13th, 2012.



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