

## Blu-ray Review: Criterion Upgrades Olivier's Take on 'Richard III'

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on May 10, 2013 - 3:50pm

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CHICAGO – Laurence Olivier's 1955 adaptation of William Shakespeare's "Richard III" came on the heels of his other beloved film versions of the Bard and wasn't as well-received. History has reassessed the film and realized that this easily one of Olivier's greatest accomplishments. As he almost always was, he's so committed to this iconic role that he makes it his own, never feeling like he's making the obvious choices that so many other actors have over the years. Olivier's "Richard III" is so completely his own and few actor/directors in history ever understood Shakespeare or this character so notably.



Rating: **4.5/5.0**

Criterion releases a few new Blu-ray editions every month alongside HD upgrades of some of their more popular titles already in the collection. "Richard III" was #213 and it comes into the Blu-ray era with all of its special features intact. Most notably, Criterion worked the new transfer from a 4K restoration done by The Film Foundation last year. Criterion's HD upgrades are more than simple imports. They take their new digital transfers very seriously and "Richard III" looks great.

"Richard III" isn't the first Laurence Olivier adaptation of Shakespeare that I think of when I hear the legendary actor's name (like most people, it's probably "Hamlet") and I hadn't seen this drama in years. Watching it in Criterion form, I felt like I had never seen it. That's the sign of a great classic Blu-ray release — making a film you've seen feel new again.



Richard III was released on Criterion Blu-ray and re-released on Criterion DVD on April 23 2013

Photo credit: Courtesy of the Criterion Collection

#### Synopsis:

In Richard III, director, producer, and star Laurence Olivier brings Shakespeare's masterpiece of Machiavellian villainy to ravishing cinematic life. Olivier is diabolically captivating as Richard, Duke of Gloucester, who, through a series of murderous machinations, steals the crown from his brother Edward. And he surrounds himself with a royal supporting cast, which includes Ralph Richardson, John Gielgud, and Claire Bloom. Filmed in VistaVision and Technicolor, Richard III is one of the most visually inspired of all big-screen Bard adaptations.

#### Special Features:

- o Audio Commentary By Playwright And Stage Director Russell Lees and John Wilders, Former Governor Of The Royal Shakespeare Company
- o Interview With Actor Laurence Olivier From a 1966 Episode Of The BBC Series Great Acting, Hosted By Theater Critic Kenneth Tynan
- o Gallery Of Behind-The-Scenes And Production Stills and Posters, Accompanied By Excerpts From Olivier's Autobiography, On Acting
- o Twelve Minute Television Trailer Featuring Footage of Olivier, Producer Alexander Korda, and Other Cast And Crew
- o Restoration Demonstration Hosted By Director Martin Scorsese
- o Original Theatrical Trailer
- o Booklet Featuring An Essay By Film Critic Amy Taubin

*"Richard III" stars Laurence Olivier, Ralph Richardson, John Gielgud, and Claire Bloom. It was directed by Olivier and released on Criterion Blu-ray and re-released on Criterion DVD on April 23, 2013.*



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