

DVD Review: Classic Version of ‘Lord of the Flies’ Gets Criterion Upgrade

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on July 26, 2013 - 5:24pm

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CHICAGO – Nearly every student has to read William Golding’s “Lord of the Flies” at some point and film goers of the right age might remember Harry Hook’s 1990 version of the classic tale with Balthazar Getty, but the best adaptation of the timeless allegory is Peter Brook’s 1963 version, recently upgraded to Criterion Blu-ray and re-released on Criterion DVD with a new, restored 4K digital transfer. Peter Brook’s theatre-crafted style of natural acting and improvisational character-building make for a film that’s devastatingly genuine, as if we’re on the island with these boys as their mini society collapses in flames. The Criterion version is loaded with special features and the film remains remarkably engaging.



Rating: **4.0/5.0**

Everyone knows the story of “Lord of the Flies.” If they don’t, they know one of the many narratives that ripped it off over the years. Lost boys with no structure or system form their own on a deserted island until power struggles and personality clashes take them down. Theatre director Peter Brook brought a very natural, unrehearsed style to his ensemble of young actors, often allowing them to craft the scenes on their own. The result is a rivetingly real drama, a film that feels like it’s unfolding before our eyes.

As is so often the case, Criterion provides fans great special features, including numerous interviews and clips with Brook himself (it’s not often we get this much material with the filmmakers from films that are half-a-century old). In fact, there’s a commentary with Brook, a recording of Golding himself reading the novel, a deleted scene, and much more. It’s as copious a collection of special features from a 1963 film as you’re likely to see this season.



Lord of the Flies was released on Criterion Blu-ray and re-released on Criterion Blu-ray on July 16, 2013

Photo credit: Courtesy of the Criterion Collection

Synopsis:

In the hands of the renowned experimental theater director Peter Brook, William Golding's legendary novel on the primitivism lurking beneath civilization becomes a film as raw and ragged as the lost boys at its center. Taking an innovative documentary-like approach, Brook shot Lord of the Flies with an off-the-cuff naturalism, seeming to record a spontaneous eruption of its characters' ids. The result is a rattling masterpiece, as provocative as its source material.

Special Features:

- o Audio Commentary Featuring Director Peter Brook, Producer Lewis Allen, Director Of Photography Tom Hollyman, and Feil
- o Audio Recordings Of William Golding Reading From his Novel Lord Of The Flies, Accompanied By The Corresponding Scenes From The Film
- o Deleted Scene, With Optional Commentary and Golding Reading
- o Interview With Brook From 2008
- o Collection Of Behind The Scenes Material, Including Home Movies, Screen Tests, Outtakes, and Stills
- o Excerpt From A 1980 Episode Of The South Bank Show Featuring Golding
- o New Interview With Feil
- o Excerpt From Feil's 1975 Documentary The Empty Space, Showcasing Brook's Theater Methods
- o Living Lord Of The Flies, A Piece Composed Of Never-Before-Seen Footage Shot By The Boy Actors During Production, With New Voice Over By Actor Tom Gaman
- o Trailer

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