

THE GREAT DETECTIVES



ON SCREEN

Week Seven

Kurt and to the Point

Welcome to *The Great Detectives*

Week Seven

You will note that I have chosen a photograph of Kenneth Branagh as Kurt Wallander on the cover of these notes. This is for two reasons:

- a) I am a contrarian and while I would ordinarily be one of those people, the more people who say ‘of course, the original Swedish *Wallander* is far superior’ in a smug tone of voice, the more I like the English language adaptation. This is not a comment on the original Swedish film or television series, which are, of course, excellent, but on the number of smug people who seem drawn to me.
- b) Branagh was bumped from the Poirot notes by David Suchet, so I felt he was owed.

But, yes, we’re into the wildly popular and often bleak realm of Scandinavian crime drama with our next detective, the Eeyore of his trade, Kurt Wallander.

For a relatively modern detective (his published adventures began in 1991 in author Henning Mankell’s native Sweden and ended with *The Troubled Man* in 2009) Kurt has seen his fair share of adaptation – made, for the most part, contemporaneously with the novels.

And a healthy share of interpreters too, with Rolf Lassgård, Krister Henriksson, Kenneth Branagh, Gustaf Skarsgård, Lennart Jähkel and Adam Pålsson all taking their turn in the morose police officer’s skin.

Wallander, in all its forms, is a fascinating series which manages to draw on several detective tropes – Kurt is burdened by demons, disillusioned and prone to ignore authority – while also painting a rich tapestry of Swedish life, scenery and politics.

To a Swedish audience, he is a detective that lives in *their* world. To others, he is a potent mixture of the familiar and unfamiliar and the often slow-burning style and lingering darkness of Scandinavian crime drama a window into another world.

FILMS WEEK SEVEN

The Dogs of Riga (1994)
Dir. Per Berglund

Pyramiden (2007)
Dir. Daniel Lind Lagerlöf

Fotografen (2006)
Dir. Jonas Grimås

Sidetracked (2008)
Dir. Philip Martin

The Troubled Man (2016)
Dir. Benjamin Carron

Young Wallander (2020)
Dir. Ole Endresen

Talismanen (2003)
Dir. Erik Leijonborg & Christjan Wegner