



UK PREMIERE OF 4K RESTORATION

Time of the Heathen

Time of the Heathen

Director: Peter Kass

Production Company: Emshwiller Project Company

Executive Producer: W. Ronald Lerner

Producer: Calvin Floyd

Assistant Producer: Larry Adler

Field Co-ordinators: James Clark,

Marc Mercurio, Hanna Goulding

Assistant Director: Peg Santvoord

Screenplay: Peter Kass

Photography: Ed Emshwiller

Editors: Peter Kass, Ed Emshwiller

Art Director: Ed Emshwiller

Music and Electronic Sound Sequences:

Lejaren Hiller Jr

Music Director: Robert Gray

Sound: Al Gramaglia

Technical Adviser: Albert Tompkins

Cast:

John Heffernan (*Gaunt, the stranger*)

Barry Collins (*Jesse, the black boy*)

Orville Steward (*Link, the farmer*)

Stewart Heller (*Ted, the farmer's son*)

Ethel Ayler (*Marie, the servant girl*)

Nathaniel White (*Cal, the policeman*)

USA 1961

76 mins

Digital 4K (restoration)

An Arbelos release

Restored in 4K by the UCLA Film & Television Archive and Lightbox Film Center, University of the Arts from the 35mm original picture and track negatives, and the original ¼ in. stereo master recording of Lejaren Hiller's score. Laboratory services by illuminate Hollywood, Corpus Fluxus, Audio Mechanics.

Special thanks to the British Film Institute, Swedish Film Institute, Sousa Archives and University of Illinois Library, Jesse Pires, Sam Kass. Fundings provided by Ron and Suzanne Naples.

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SIGHT AND SOUND

An erratic wanderer crosses paths with a young Black boy while walking through rural America. What begins as an American neorealist film soon evolves into a psychedelic Western, exploring the impact of war, racism and trauma, which is perfectly distilled in the film's hallucinatory climactic sequence. Set four years after the bombing of Hiroshima, this gripping cinematic debut by Peter Kass – his only feature film – was overlooked and forgotten for decades, but is now gloriously restored.

Peter Kass on 'Time of the Heathen'

I was on a vacation. It is terrible for me to take a vacation, and within 24 hours I was going stark raving mad. Within four weeks I was a maniac: I had a cold and couldn't go out. I desperately wanted to DO something. So I sat in a swivel chair in front of the window and brooded this idea. Then I couldn't stand just thinking any more – so I decided to do it. I took five days to write the script.

Then I went to New York and said to some people: 'I need \$20,000 to make a film.' Then I went back and spent another five days on the script. Meanwhile, in New York, people were saying, 'The nut wants money, let's raise it.' I started shooting before I had all the money.

We had very primitive equipment. Our tripod wouldn't stand up unless we fixed it with wooden coffee spoons. For some sequences, we even made our own lenses out of broken crystal and cardboard rollers. We carried the camera up and down hills. It was a very tired camera! If it rained, the camera stopped. Sometimes we worked with all our clothes draped over it.

My crew was two people: me and the cameraman. He must be a genius. His name is Ed Emshwiller, and he earns his living drawing covers for science-fiction magazines and makes experimental 16mm films in his spare time. He had never worked with a 35mm camera before. Sometimes we shot with so little light he had no right to get pictures.

We shot entirely on location in Long Island, in an area about a mile square. We spent 12 five-hour shooting days on the picture – that is the equivalent in terms of a normal eight-hour day to the week's shooting time. When we wanted to do tracking shots, we had to use the camera hand-held, or sometimes put it on the back of a Volkswagen: on a bumpy road, that didn't give us the smoothest ride – but it was the only way.

We had only three professional actors. John Heffernan, who plays the principal role, was working in a New York repertory theatre, playing Polonius. He was also rehearsing another play during the day. We used to collect him from the theatre after the show each night, drive him the 40 miles to Long Island, give him a drink and send him to bed at 2.30 am.

We'd wake him at 6 am, shoot with him till 11 – and then send him back to New York to rehearse, play Polonius that night and start next day with us...

The boy is Barry Collins. He was eight when I found him walking towards me in a dirty red sweater near the Long Island railroad terminal. We sat on the kerb and chatted. I asked him if he'd like to be in a movie. He took me home to meet his mother, who thought I was some kind of madman or a photograph

REGULAR PROGRAMME

Restored: UK premiere of 4K restoration:

Time of the Heathen

Tue 6 Aug 18:10; Mon 12 Aug 14:00 (seniors' matinee + intro)

Experimenta: Debt Begins at 20 + intro

Thu 15 Aug 18:20

Silent Cinema: Love 'em and Leave 'em + intro

Sun 18 Aug 15:40

Seniors' Free Matinee: The Scapegoat + intro by film historian **Marcus Powell**

Mon 19 Aug 14:00

Relaxed Screening: Koyaanisqatsi

+ intro and discussion

Mon 19 Aug 18:45

Projecting the Archive: Forbidden (aka Scarlet Heaven) + intro by film critic **Phuong Le**

Thu 22 Aug 18:15

African Odysseys Double Bill:

Who in da Mornin + **Sugar Cane Malice**

Sat 24 Aug 14:00

Woman with a Movie Camera:

D.E.B.S. 20th Anniversary + panel discussion

Sat 24 Aug 20:00

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salesman. She said, 'We don't want any pictures, thank you,' and I explained I wanted her son in a movie. Eventually she said yes, probably after she'd checked to find out I wasn't a sex maniac.

We shot our colour sequences in an attic in New York. And we edited the picture in an office barely big enough for the two of us to move around in – on a second-hand Moviola we bought for \$12.

I didn't pay any of the actors. But afterwards I had such guilt about paying no one that I gave them all a piece of my interest in the picture, so I will probably realise no money. But I wanted to do it and I didn't stop to think about money. I have no use for money, so long as I have enough to eat, to buy books and records. What more do I need?

I made the film because I wanted my kids to say one day, 'Well, he wasn't so bad...' I wanted them to look back over their shoulder and say that. I wanted them not to kick over my tombstone.

But I am not an artist. I am a good plumber: I put two pieces of pipe together so they do not leak. I want to build a house that will stay up, I want to be like the craftsman who makes a fine piece of furniture with line and beauty and stability – that you can sit on.

I'm after the emotionalism of people. I drive a movie to the moment when words can no longer express the emotion. But mine is a plaintive little cry, not a great heroic voice.

When I made the film I had no idea about the man who dropped the bomb on Hiroshima: someone showed me a story in *Time* magazine about it after I had made the film. The film was very personal for me. I remembered when I was drafted into the US forces in the last war. I thought: now I will be expected to kill a man. How do you do that? And how do you live afterwards?

Then I started to think about killing on a massive scale, and how you would live after that.

British Lion press notes