



A TALE OF TERROR ‘LOST’ EDGAR ALLAN POE ADAPTATION ‘THE TELL-TALE HEART’ STARRING STANLEY BAKER REDISCOVERED AFTER 50 YEARS SPECIAL HALLOWEEN RELEASE ON BFI PLAYER

<https://player.bfi.org.uk/free/film/watch-the-tell-tale-heart-1953-online>
<https://player.bfi.org.uk/free/collection/gothic-the-dark-heart-of-film>

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For immediate release: 17 October 2018, London

A macabre treat for Halloween, **Adelphi Films** ‘lost’ *The Tell-Tale Heart* (1953) is a British adaption of **Edgar Allan Poe’s murderous psychological drama**. Missing for over 50 years, the 20 minute chilling short film has been digitally restored and is being made available to view for **free on BFI Player** for two weeks from **26 October** alongside a curated trove of horror curios including **Algernon Blackwood’s** *The Reformation of St. Jules* (1949), **Castleton Knight’s** *Prelude* (1927); a nightmarish reverie on Poe’s *The Premature Burial* and *Cross-Roads* (1955), **Christopher Lee’s** earliest supernatural screen role, as a ghost who returns from the grave to seek revenge.

Directed by **JB Williams** and made at **Carlton Kay Studios** in London, *The Tell-Tale Heart* (1953), stars the **Welsh-born actor and producer Stanley Baker** - *The Guns of Navarone* (1961), *Zulu* (1964), *Accident* (1967), as Poe’s unnamed narrator with a haunted conscience. Like his friend and compatriot **Richard Burton**, Baker was recognised for his combination of smouldering intensity, surly strong spirit and fine speaking voice. A voice he deploys perfectly here to narrate this classic short story from **Edgar Allan Poe**, the master of mystery and suspense.

Missing for over 50 years, the film was rediscovered in 2017 when Jeff Wells, a 16mm enthusiast living in Drunmore near Stranraer, Scotland found it when he was clearing out his loft. Researching the one reel 16mm print he realised it was missing from Adelphi Films catalogue and contacted them to confirm this significant find.

The **Adelphi Films Collection is held and preserved by the BFI National Archive**. The 16mm print and a digital copy of the restoration has been donated to the BFI, and the film will be accessible via BFI Player for subscribers.

Adelphi Films' Manager Kate Lees (granddaughter of founder Arthur Dent) had been actively searching for the film for the last 12 years. Kate Lees said; *"We are very excited to have found this film after searching for it for so long and had almost given up hope. It is a really excellent film and Stanley Baker is terrific. Kinematograph weekly in 1954 said 'Stanley Baker has restraint and a suggestion of violent emotion that makes this sombre and nerve chilling study of a murderer's mind most moving. A gloomy but impressive picture not for the squeamish'."*

Josephine Botting, BFI Curator adds; *"It's always exciting when a missing film comes to light and an addition to both the catalogue of British producer Adelphi and the filmography of Edgar Allan Poe is a wonderful discovery. We're delighted to be preserving the 16mm print and also to make the film available online to new audiences via BFI Player in time for Halloween."*

The **National Theatre** are premiering **Anthony Neilson's contemporary production** of *The Tell-Tale Heart* in December. As part of an accompanying talks and events programme, the National Theatre will screen the Adelphi 1953 short adaptation alongside Roger Corman's *Tales of Terror* (1962) on Monday 17 December. Further details on the screening and National Theatre production can be found here: <https://www.nationaltheatre.org.uk/shows/tales-terror-film-screening>

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BFI Press contacts:

Sarah Bemand, Press Officer, Archive & Heritage, Tel +44(0) 207 957 8940 sarah.bemand@bfi.org.uk

Elizabeth Dunk, Press Office Assistant, Tel +44 (0) 207 957 8986 elizabeth.dunk@bfi.org.uk

ABOUT THE BFI

The BFI is the lead body for film in the UK with the ambition to create a flourishing film environment in which innovation, opportunity and creativity can thrive by:

- Connecting audiences to the widest choice of British and World cinema
- Preserving and restoring the most significant film collection in the world for today and future generations
- Championing emerging and world class film makers in the UK - investing in creative, distinctive and entertaining work
- Promoting British film and talent to the world
- Growing the next generation of film makers and audiences

The BFI is a Government arm's-length body and distributor of Lottery funds for film. The BFI serves a public role which covers the cultural, creative and economic aspects of film in the UK. It delivers this role:

- As the UK-wide organisation for film, a charity core funded by Government
- By providing Lottery and Government funds for film across the UK
- By working with partners to advance the position of film in the UK.

Founded in 1933, the BFI is a registered charity governed by Royal Charter.

The BFI Board of Governors is chaired by Josh Berger CBE.

ABOUT THE BFI NATIONAL ARCHIVE

The BFI National Archive was founded in 1935 and has grown to become the one of the largest and most important collections of film and television in the world with over 180,000 films and 750,000 television programmes. For over 80

years the BFI has been an international leader in film preservation and guardian of Britain's unparalleled film and TV heritage. The BFI is an innovator in presenting films to audiences in new and dynamic ways, from cinemas to film festivals, outdoor events to online video-on-demand. At the heart of all its activities is the BFI's central aim to ensure that everyone in the UK has access to the widest possible range of film and their own film heritage.

That heritage includes all time great British directors Alfred Hitchcock, David Lean and Powell and Pressburger; and the rich vein of documentary filmmaking, in which Britain led the world, including the lyrical work of Humphrey Jennings. The archive also boasts a significant collection of filmmakers' papers as well as extensive stills, posters and production and costume designs along with original scripts, press books and related ephemera.

Expert teams undertake the time-consuming and complex task of restoring films at the BFI John Paul Getty Jr Conservation Centre in Hertfordshire. The BFI's most precious film materials are kept in optimum conditions in the world-leading Master Film Store in Warwickshire.

ABOUT ADELPHI FILMS

Adelphi Films was a major producer and distributor of British films throughout the 1940s and 1950s from noir-ish crime pictures and buoyant romance and musicals to colourful melodramas and slapstick comedies. It produced and distributed numerous feature films, more than 40 of which form The Adelphi Films Collection. Run by Arthur Dent and his sons Stanley and David Dent, Adelphi is now managed by Arthur Dent's granddaughter Kate Lees. Sid James, Diana Dors, Peter Sellers, James Mason, Dennis Price, Petula Clark, Ronnie Corbett, and Prunella Scales are just some of the many well-loved performers who appeared before Adelphi's cameras early on in their careers. The company's original film materials – for a long time stored in a suburban garage in London – are now safely held and preserved at the BFI National Archive. For further information on Adelphi please contact <http://www.adelphifilms.com/>