

# Wallander

Believe it or not, it didn't all start with *The Girl With the Dragon Tattoo*. No, Nordic crime novels, movies, and TV shows had been around long before. Maj Sjöwall and Per Wahloo's terrific and much loved *Beck* mysteries, which were turned into films in Sweden (and one in the US – *The Laughing Policeman*), and then Henning Mankell showed up with his great *Wallander* mysteries. Then came Stieg Larsson's *Millennium Trilogy*, and then came the onslaught of all things Nordic and Noir.

The Mankell Wallander books were beautifully written and seemed like naturals for movies and TV and so we first got a series of Kurt Wallander movies based on the books that had been written to that point in the 1990s – those starred the wonderful actor Rolf Lassgård, who'd been in a series of *Beck* movies that starred Gosta Ekman.

Then the decision came that Wallander would start up again, this time as a TV series (with occasional movie releases), called, simply enough, *Wallander*. That was great news for Wallander fans. This time we got a new Wallander, Krister Henriksson. As good as Lassgård had been, Henriksson was even better, perfectly embodying the character. The first series consisted of thirteen ninety-minute films and was shot in 2005/2006. The stories were all based on ideas by Mankell and they were superb, featuring top actors, and a great supporting cast of regulars, which included beautiful Johanna Sällström as Wallander's daughter, Linda, and Ola Rapace as Stefan Lindman, a short-fused cop with a dark past. Although all thirteen of the first series of films were excellent, two were absolute standouts – "Master-mind," which guest-starred Michael Nyqvist (who would go on to star as Mikael Blomkvist in the Swedish *Dragon Tattoo* films), and the final film of series one, "The Secret," a brilliant, disturbing story that has with a truly shocking ending.

That film left *Wallander* fans waiting with baited breath for series two, but alas, due to a huge tragedy, the wait would be a few years. Sadly, Johanna Sällström, so beautiful and so magical as Linda Wallander, committed suicide in early 2007, after a life-long battle with depression. Mankell was so shattered by grief, that he could not write the final two books in what was to be a Linda Wallander trilogy (the first book was *Before the Frost*, the first film of series one

and the only one based on a Mankell novel).

In August 2008, series two of *Wallander* began filming and continued into 2009, with the shows airing in 2009/2010. It wasn't quite the same show, although several of the thirteen films are quite strong. But the whole feel of the show was somehow different, with at least two attempts to "hip" it up and make it look like a shaky-cam American TV cop show (those two films are the worst of the series), and Sällström and Rapace are truly missed. The composer was different, too, and that also gave the show a completely different feel. The music is very different between the two series (the second series is composed by Flakskvartetten) – but the series one composer, Adam Nordén, really captured the essence of the films and the characters with his evocative and perfect music.

Nordén was born in Stockholm in 1971. He began scoring films in 1999 and has been active in films and TV ever since, scoring several of the excellent *Beck* series starring Peter Haber, the mini-series *Ramona*, and many others, most recently a series of films based on the crime thrillers of Liza Marklund. Nordén scored all thirteen of the series one *Wallander* films, and his music is a key element in making those films unique. The scoring usually consists of recurring themes for Kurt and Linda, and the approach to orchestration is usually spare and filled with interesting textures and melodic invention, somehow capturing perfectly the loneliness, the cold, the sordidness of some of the crimes, the despair. Most of the music is contemplative in nature, but there's some wonderful action music, too, especially in the "Mastermind" film.

While some of the music has been available as downloads only and only outside the United States it has never had a proper CD release. The show now has so many fans, thanks to its being aired in the UK and elsewhere (and now on DVD) that doing a CD release seemed like a no-brainer. The selections as presented here were personally chosen and assembled by Nordén and are from his masters, which he owns.

If you're a fan of the *Wallander* films, especially of that brilliant first series, then this will be a lovely souvenir of the music that made that series so memorable. If you haven't seen the series, the music stands

perfectly well on its own and is a wonderful listening experience. But do yourself a favor – seek out series one of *Wallander* because it's the real deal and is totally addictive. In 2010, the Kenneth Branagh version of *Wallander* hit the airwaves and became quite a hit, but it's nothing like the Swedish version. Whatever one thinks of the Branagh version, once you've seen the original and Krister Henriksson as Wallander, you'll accept no substitutes.

— Bruce Kimmel

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The Scandinavian or 'silver' sound – does it exist? I don't know. I do know however that a lot of people comment on the use of space in my music. And that my music often has a slightly folksy, a little sad but still light quality. To me it comes naturally. Our Swedish crime stories are often told in a thoughtful, quite slow, dark way. And I feel strongly that the music should match our kind of storytelling.

The one thing I was very conscious not to do when I scored my first Swedish crime movie, was to overstate things. By the time I got the job to score 13 episodes of *Wallander*, that ethos had become an integral part of my way to work with film scoring.

I'm sure you'll pick up on that in more than a few of the cues on this release and I hope you'll enjoy it. Bruce – thanks for making this music available to the US audience. I'm very happy that American listeners and score aficionados will have the chance to get a glimpse of what we do over here.

Lots of love,  
Adam Nordén