

MASTERPIECE™ MYSTERY!®

Battling crime — and his own demons

WALLANDER

from the bestselling mystery series by Henning Mankell

On MASTERPIECE MYSTERY!

Sundays, May 10, May 17, and May 31, 2009 at 9pm ET on PBS

In the bucolic but brutal seaside town of Ystad, Sweden, Inspector Kurt Wallander has been solving heinous crimes for his entire middle-aged career. In his first recurring television role, Kenneth Branagh (*Valkyrie*, *Henry V*) brings the scruffy Swedish sleuth to life in *Wallander*, based on the international bestsellers by Henning Mankell, and premiering with a trio of gritty cases on MASTERPIECE MYSTERY!, Sundays, May 10, 17, and 31, 2009 at 9pm ET on PBS.

Branagh, a co-producing partner and longtime fan of the novels, describes his character as “wonderfully complex and compelling.” The award-winning production team also includes director Philip Martin (*Prime Suspect: The Final Act*) and executive producer Andy Harries (*The Queen*, *Prime Suspect*).

During its recent UK broadcast, *Wallander* was praised as “spare and suggestive, and brilliantly acted” by the *London Times*, and as “visually dazzling” by *The Independent*.

Shot in rarely seen locations in southern Sweden, the three 90-minute whodunits begin with *Sidetracked*, and continue with *Firewall* and *One Step Behind*—each adapted from one of Mankell’s highly acclaimed and compulsively readable novels.

Mankell pits his hero against the creeping malaise affecting contemporary Sweden, where permissiveness and the collapse of the welfare state are slowly undermining the spirit of law and order. Naturally, Mankell heightens the chaos a bit, but the result is a maelstrom of bizarre crimes to tax Wallander’s wits, involving axe murders, scalplings, random assassinations, and cyber terrorism.

Not to mention, Wallander has recently broken up with his wife, his blood sugar is going haywire, his daughter (Jeany Spark, *Tess of the D’Urbervilles*) is trying to run his life, and his artist father (David Warner, *Titanic*) is succumbing to Alzheimer’s and painting the same scene over, and over, and over...

But a personal life as bleak as the existential landscape is just what a Nordic cop needs to focus his mind on the following fiendishly complicated cases:

-more-

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***Sidetracked* – Sunday, May 10, 2009 at 9pm**

An unknown young woman sets herself on fire in a field, leading to a search for her identity. Could her suicide be connected to a string of grisly ax murders that are felling members of Swedish high society? And why is the killer scalping the victims? Ominously, a profiler tells Wallander that he should be looking for someone who seems completely normal.

***Firewall* – Sunday, May 17, 2009 at 9pm**

Two teenage girls murder a taxi driver in a senseless robbery. A computer systems analyst drops dead for no apparent reason. The local power grid is on the blink. And Wallander can't find time for a new love interest, discovered on the Internet. These disparate strands gradually weave together a fiendish plot with a gripping countdown to an impending disaster.

***One Step Behind* – Sunday, May 31, 2009 at 9pm**

Three young people celebrating Midsummer's Eve in a secluded meadow are ritually gunned down—and the murders have only just begun. One eventual victim is Wallander's most trusted colleague, who leaves behind a photo of a mysterious woman. As the clues add up, Wallander always seems to be one step behind the killer.

Wallander is a Left Bank Pictures/Yellow Bird/ [Branagh company] series for WGBH co-produced with The BBC, Degeto, WGBH Boston and Film i Skane. The executive producers are Francis Hopkinson, Andy Harries, Kenneth Branagh, Ole Søndberg, Anni Faurbye, Rebecca Eaton, and Hans-Wolfgang Jurgan.

Henning Mankell is published by Vintage Crime/Black Lizard, an imprint of Vintage Books, Random House, Inc. Coming to DVD on June 2nd, *Wallander: Sidetracked, Firewall, One Step Behind* features extensive bonus material including interviews with Branagh and Mankell.

MASTERPIECE has been presented on PBS by WGBH since 1971. Rebecca Eaton is executive producer. Public television viewers provide funding for MASTERPIECE.

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