



BO WIDERBERG'S LOST MASTERPIECE

JOE HILL

VICTORIAN TRADES HALL 54 VICTORIA ST CARLTON (CNR OF LYGON ST)



CENTENARY

THURSDAY 19 NOVEMBER AT 5.15 PM

W.I. DEMAND PROSECUTION OF ALL DIRECTORS

U.S. GOVERNMENT LIABLE FOR HILL'S DEATH

WE WANT HILL'S BONES

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CENTENARY CELEBRATION

The critically acclaimed 1971 film *Joe Hill*, by renowned Swedish director Bo Widerberg (*Elvira Madigan*), won the Cannes Jury Prize in 1971. Lost and unavailable for many decades, it has now been restored and digitally remastered by the National Library of Sweden. We are offering you a unique opportunity to see this long-lost masterpiece.

Joe Hill was a Swedish-American immigrant and itinerant labourer who fought for the rights and unity of workers. He was executed by firing squad in Utah on 19 November 1915, after being convicted of murder on circumstantial evidence. A poet, songwriter and IWW activist, he was commemorated by Joan Baez in the song 'I Dreamed I Saw Joe Hill Last Night'.

Bo Widerberg's film dramatises Joe Hill's life and impoverished, unorganised immigrant labour in the US during the early 20th century. His story is still relevant to workers today.

The Victorian Trades Hall Choir will perform 'I Dreamed I Saw Joe Hill Last Night', and Phil Cleary will speak about Joe Hill and his significance to workers today.

THE EVENT

5:15pm

Drinks and snacks
at Bella Union Bar

6:00pm

Film screening in
New Council Chamber

WHERE

Victorian Trades Hall
54 Victoria st Carlton
(corner Lygon Street)

WHEN

Thursday 19
November

Enquiries: Teresa Pitt at t.pitt@live.com.au, ph 0419 438 221
Graham Hardy at grahammelbourne1@hotmail.com, ph 0447 126 471

We are grateful for generous sponsorship from
Victorian Trades Hall Council and
The Australian Society for the Study of Labour History, Victorian Branch
Design by Atticus Silverson
Joe Hill photograph (between c. 1910 and c. 1915) courtesy Library of Congress

ABOUT JOE HILL

Joe Hill was born Joel Emmanuel Hägglund in Gävle, Sweden, on 7 October 1879. He was also known as Joseph Hillström. He emigrated to New York with his brother around 1902, aged 23. He learned English as an itinerant worker at a time of severe unemployment and poverty, travelling across the US, often on foot or riding on trains with other hobos, and working in various unskilled jobs. During this time he became a member of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW, also known as the "Wobblies") and became an activist and organiser. He also became a popular songwriter and cartoonist for the radical union. His most famous songs include "The Preacher and the Slave" (in which he created the phrase "pie in the sky"), "The Tramp", "There is Power in a Union", "The Rebel Girl", and "Casey Jones—the Union Scab". His songs express the harsh but combative life of itinerant workers, and call for workers to organise their efforts to improve working conditions.

In 1914, John G. Morrison, a Salt Lake City grocer, and his son were shot and killed by two men. The same evening, Hill arrived at a doctor's office with a gunshot wound, and briefly mentioned a fight over a woman. Hill refused to explain further, even after he was accused of the grocery store murders on the basis of his injury. He was convicted of the murders in a controversial trial. Following an unsuccessful appeal, political debates, and international calls for clemency from high-profile figures and workers' organisations, Hill was executed by firing squad on 19 November 1915.

The identity of the woman and the rival who supposedly caused Hill's injury, though frequently speculated upon, remained mostly conjecture for nearly a century. William M. Adler's 2011 biography of Hill, *The Man Who Never Died*, reveals new information about his alibi, which was never introduced at his trial. According to Adler, Hill and his friend and countryman, Otto Appelquist, were rivals for the attention of 20-year-old Hilda Erickson, a member of the family with whom the two men were lodging. In a recently discovered letter, Erickson confirmed her relationship with the two men and the rivalry between them. The letter indicates that when she first discovered Hill was injured, he explained to her that Appelquist had shot him, apparently out of jealousy.

After his death, Joe was memorialised by several folk songs, including "I Dreamed I Saw Joe Hill Last Night", famously sung by both Joan Baez and Paul Robeson. His life and death have inspired books, poetry and an award-winning 1971 film, *Joe Hill*, by Swedish director Bo Widerberg.

ABOUT BO WIDERBERG

Bo Widerberg (8 June 1930–1 May 1997) was a Swedish film director, writer, editor and actor. He was born Bo Gunnar Widerberg in Malmö, Skåne län, Sweden, and died in Ängelholm, Skåne län, Sweden, of stomach cancer. Bo Widerberg's vision for Swedish cinema departed radically from the style and ethos of the time. He was a political filmmaker who wanted to tell stories about ordinary people. Ingmar Bergman, the leading figure of Swedish cinema at the time, was not Widerberg's ideal at all: "Neither I nor my friends saw very much in him. We didn't find the issue of God's existence that damned important." He called for films with a greater political significance and more progressive storytelling. In his 1962 book *A Vision of Swedish Cinema*, Widerberg concluded that Bergman's films almost exclusively dealt with issues between people directed upwards and seldom sideways. According to Widerberg, Bergman made "vertical" films when there was a greater need for "horizontal" ones. Widerberg wanted film to be a tool of the social sciences, a kind of sociological report.

His best-known English-language films were *Elvira Madigan* (1969) and *Joe Hill* (1971), both of which won awards and were based on true stories. *Joe Hill* won the Jury Prize at the 1971 Cannes Film Festival, and was critically acclaimed at the time, but was later lost for several decades. In 2014 the National Library of Sweden began re-assembling and digitally re-mastering the film, which has now been released on DVD in a boxed set of Bo Widerberg films.