

**KINO LORBER**  
i n c o r p o r a t e d

**A Digital Restoration**

**Monica Flaherty Presents a Sound Version  
of Robert J. Flaherty's Classic of the South Seas**

# **MOANA**

## **WITH SOUND**

**Through special arrangement with Paramount Pictures**

**Directed by  
Robert J. Flaherty and Frances Hubbard Flaherty,  
and Monica Flaherty**

USA | 1926/1980 | Restored 2014

1.33:1 Black and White

Mono sound

Running time: 98 minutes

English-language intertitles, Samoan language dialogue and songs

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**MOANA WITH SOUND**

Digital Restoration

Made in cooperation with  
Alpha-Omega Digital  
British Film Institute National Archive  
Degeto Film  
Deluxe Media-Chace Audio  
DuArt  
Film Preservation Associates  
Filmmakers Showcase  
Harbor Picture Company  
The Robert and Frances Flaherty Study Center  
The Library of Congress National Audio-Visual Conservation Center  
Meguru Film Sound  
New Zealand Archive of Film, Television and Sound  
Ngā Taonga Whitiāhua Me Ngā Taonga Kōrero  
Park Road Post Production  
Sami van Ingen

Directors: Monica Flaherty (1980),  
Robert J. Flaherty, Frances Hubbard Flaherty (1926)

Restoration Supervisors: Thomas Bakels, Bruce Posner

Screenwriter: Robert J. Flaherty, Frances Hubbard Flaherty

Director of Photography: Robert Flaherty, David Flaherty

Sound Recording: Monica Flaherty, Richard Leacock

Sound Editing: Monica Flaherty

Sound Mixer: Lee Dichter (1980, 2014)  
Sami van Ingen (2014)

Producers: Robert J. Flaherty (1926)  
Monica Flaherty (1980)  
Bruce Posner (2014)

**SYNOPSIS**

Originally touted as “The Love Life of a South Seas Siren!,” with accompanying bare bosom artwork, documentary pioneer Flaherty’s second feature after *Nanook of the North* is actually a serene look at the lives of the lovely and gentle Samoans, made entirely on location in the island paradise of Savai’i. In 1923, Flaherty journeyed with his wife Frances and their children to the South Seas island to film the exotic lifestyles of the Samoan people, resurrecting their recently vanished customs and capturing them before modernization permanently altered their way of life. Over fifty years later, Flaherty’s daughter Monica returned to the island with verité legend Ricky Leacock, recording authentic location sound, dialogue and folks songs to complement her father’s exquisite images.

## **SOUND PRODUCTION AND RESTORATION**

Film curator Bruce Posner and filmmaker Sami van Ingen, great-grandson of filmmakers Robert J. Flaherty and Frances Hubbard Flaherty (NANOOK OF THE NORTH, MAN OF ARAN, LOUISIANA STORY) collaborated with the world's most prestigious film archives and film labs to digitally restore a unique 35mm nitrate print of the classic MOANA (1926) as part of the larger preservation effort to complete Monica Flaherty's forty-year effort to realize an authentic synchronized sound version known since 1980 as MOANA WITH SOUND.

Originally released in 1926 by Paramount Pictures, the silent film was co-directed by the husband-wife team of Robert and Frances Hubbard Flaherty, on Savai'i island of Samoa in 1923-24. The feature-length documentary, the first film noted as such, offers a ritualized, and somewhat fictionalized record of island life enacted before Flaherty's camera. His cinematography resonates with a shimmering beauty only possible with 35mm nitrate film.

Fifty years later, the film continued as a family affair when Monica Flaherty, who at 3 years old accompanied her parents on their filmmaking adventure, returned to Samoa as an adult in 1975 to record a synchronous soundtrack to accompany the silent images.

Monica first convinced Paramount Pictures to permit her to use the silent film for distribution of a sound version of the film. She raised institutional support from the National Endowment for the Arts and gained personal support from Martin Scorsese, Si Newhouse and D.A. Pennebaker among numerous others. But the meticulous nature of Monica's demand for authenticity combined with her obsessive attention to detail, outran the generosity of her sponsors, and bills piled up making the completion of the project in 35mm impossible for Monica to achieve.

She had to use two very rare 16mm reduction prints, made by her father in late 1920s from the original camera negative, and film preservationist David Shepard conflated them into a single 16mm master positive, later step-printed to

match sound speed. This became the picture source for her 1980 sound version. Although complete and authentic to each scene of the 1926 silent release, the image quality is somewhat compromised by loss of overall picture area, severe build up of grain and contrast, and the noticeable stuttering-like movements produced by the step-printing duplication.

For the sound track, Monica enlisted the assistance of veteran *cinema verite* filmmaker Ricky Leacock, who traveled with her to Samoa in 1975 to record actual sounds at the same locations where the silent film was shot and to post-synchronize dialogue re-created by members of the original cast and other locals enlisted to lip-synch for the new sound version. She was fortunate enough to find three principal members of the original cast – Ta'avale (Moana), Fa'angase, and Pe'a – plus several other persons who had participated in the original production.

Her 1980 release, *MOANA WITH SOUND*, is remarkably vivid yet sympathetic to the original film with its addition of authentic folk songs, ambient location sounds and actual dialogue matched to the on-screen action. This meticulous reconstruction may be the only example of a vintage silent film being re-made into a sound film while simultaneously straddling both worlds.

Today the restorers, film archivist and historian Bruce Posner (*MANHATTA, UNSEEN CINEMA*) and Finnish filmmaker Sami van Ingen worked in close collaboration with digital film expert Thomas Bakels at Alpha-Omega Digital, one of the world's premiere digital film restoration facility located in Munich, Germany that has been responsible for outstanding reconstructions of both versions of *Metropolis*, the newly released *Citizen Kane*, and all of the films of Werner Herzog.

Working with a unique 35mm 1925 nitrate "preview" print made directly from Flaherty's 1923-24 camera negative and acquired by the Library of Congress in 1969 as part of the American Film Institute/Paramount Pictures Collection, the restoration team meticulously reconstructed frame-by-frame Monica Flaherty's 1980 sound version to a standard equivalent to the luminescent state of a 1926 35mm release print. The remaining 35mm footage for the restoration was

accessed from two elements, one nitrate film and the other a safety duplicate, dating from the 1930s made available by the British Film Institute National Archive in London, and several key scenes from a 1930 35mm nitrate print located at the New Zealand Film Archive in Wellington.

The soundtrack survived in much better condition than the picture but required re-mixing from the analog 4-track 35mm magnetic film to a new digital format. Luckily renowned New York sound mixer Lee Dichter, who first mixed the film for Monica Flaherty 34 years ago, consented to re-mix the digital version at Harbor Picture Company. With Lee's 2014 mix, the full dynamic range of Monica's exquisite sound recordings can be heard for the first time.

The goal has been to complete MOANA as envisioned by the filmmakers stretching across time from 1923 to 1980 to 2014, and to make the sound film available today to movie-going audiences as an original work of motion picture art. The restoration and preservation elements are archived at the Library of Congress National Audio-Visual Conservation Center, Culpeper, Virginia and all contributing film archives.

## **BIOGRAPHIES**

### MONICA FLAHERTY FRASSETTO

The youngest daughter of Robert and Frances Flaherty, Monica Flaherty (1920-2008) began a lifetime of travel and learning when, on her third birthday, she landed in Samoa where her mother and father began work on MOANA. She was schooled in England, was a pilot during WWII, worked at Fortune Magazine and Betty Parsons Art Gallery in New York, and lived in the Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico. She spent the last 38 years of her life devoted to the Flaherty Study Center located on her parents' farm in Dummerston, Vermont.

### ROBERT J. FLAHERTY

Long considered the father of documentary film, Robert J. Flaherty (1884-1951) made five major films, NANOOK OF THE NORTH (1922), MOANA (1926), MAN OF ARAN (1934), ELEPHANT BOY (1937) and LOUISIANA STORY (1948). His films are unmatched in the entire history of cinema and remain seen and loved by peoples all over the world. More a poet than storyteller, his films evoke a quiet realism though they are dramatized fictions of the subjects photographed. He considered MOANA the most accomplished of all his films.

### FRANCES HUBBARD FLAHERTY

Co-director-producer-writer and still photographer on MOANA, Frances Flaherty (1883-1972) shared her life with husband Robert Flaherty as an equally active creative collaborator. Her photographs and writings were widely published, and she authored two books on the making of MOANA: "Samoa" (under Robert's name, 1929) and "The Odyssey of a Film-Maker" (1960). She was the mother of Monica Flaherty.

SAMI VAN INGEN

Finnish filmmaker and visual artist Sami van Ingen is the great-grandson of Robert and Frances Flaherty. He grew up knowing Monica Flaherty, mostly through frequent visits to the Flaherty farm in Vermont, where he became aware that Monica's sound version of MOANA was in need of preservation and restoration.

BRUCE POSNER

Bruce Posner's curatorial projects are repeatedly cited as provocative, insightful, and significant to the history of motion pictures. Notable are his 2K digital film restorations of Sheeler and Strand's *Manhatta* and Léger and Murphy's *Ballet mécanique* and the massive 165-film touring retrospective preservation project, *Unseen Cinema: Early American Avant-Garde Film, 1893-1941*.

THOMAS BAKELS

Thomas Bakels is founder of ALPHA-OMEGA digital GmbH, a post-production facility based in Munich, Germany specializing in film restoration. Bakels has overseen many prestigious restorations including Lang's *Metropolis* (twice), Lubitsch's *The Loves of Pharaoh*, Welles' *Citizen Kane*, and the complete film collection of Werner Herzog. MOANA is his second project with Posner.



PRODUCTION CREDITS

**MOANA (1926) Original release**

Premiered at the Rialto Theatre, New York on 7 February 1926 as "Moana: The Love Life of a South Sea Siren."

Adolph Zukor and Jesse L. Lasky present

"MOANA. A Romance of the Golden Age"

Directed by Robert J. Flaherty and Frances Hubbard Flaherty

Produced by Robert J. and Frances Hubbard Flaherty

Written by Robert J. and Frances Hubbard Flaherty

Technical Assistant: Lance H. Clark

Photographed by Robert J. Flaherty, David Flaherty

Edited and Titled by Julian Johnson

A Paramount Picture

Passed by the National Board of Review

CAST

Ta'avale Uni playing **Moana**, older son of Lupenga and Tu'ungaita

Fa'agase Súa-Filo playing herself **Fa'angase**, maiden and love of Moana

Pe'a Taulealea playing himself **Pe'a**, younger son of Lupenga and Tu'ungaita

Tu'ungaita playing herself **Tu'ungaita**, mother of Moana

Lupenga Tau'ili'ili playing himself **Lupenga**, father of Moana

Unidentified person playing himself **Tufuga**, a tattoo artist

Usumai Taulealea playing a bit part in Kava sequence

Fialelei, granddaughter of the famous chief Seumanutafa hero of the Apia hurricane of 1889 an intimate friend and counselor of Robert Louis Stevenson, acting as interpreter for the filmmakers.

PRODUCTION CREDITS

**MOANA WITH SOUND (1980) Sound version**

Premiered at the Cinémathèque française, Paris on 17 June 1981 as "Monica Flaherty presents a sound version of Robert J. Flaherty's Classic of the South Seas MOANA."

Sound Production and Editing by Monica Flaherty

Sound Recordings by  
(Sāmoa)

Monica Flaherty, Richard Leacock, Sarah Hudson, Jacob Wainwright Love, Vern Williams

Moso'oi Recordings

(Honolulu)

Monica Flaherty with thanks to CINE-OIC, Hawai'i

Sound Mix by Lee Dichter

Technical assistance and advice: Allan and Sally Seymour, Vermont Studio

To the Samoan chiefs and orators of Safune and Kuhio, Honolulu

Special thanks to Chief Vaiao Ala'ilima and Jacob Wainwright Love for advice on Samoan language, music and customs.

Fa'afetai lava 'iā/Special thanks

Lei'ātaualesā Amituana'i Vaiao Ala'ilima ma le 'āiga

Taule'ale'ausumai Taulauniu 'Umi ma le 'āiga

Taule'ale'ausumai Pe'a Peni ma le 'āiga

'Uni Ta'avale

Pesefeamanaia Fa'agase

Tau'ili'ili Le'upega

Fa'afetai lava 'iā/Many thanks

Afioga To'oa Salamāasina and her Papauta School singers

David A. Crichton, mat beater and bass drum

Ioapo Misi'aita, tenor pate

Dixie Crichton Samasoni, tenor pate

Moana Sound Project made possible through the generosity of

The National Endowment for the Arts

Lucy Lemann

The Jerome Foundation

The Rock Foundation

PRODUCTION CREDITS

**MOANA WITH SOUND (2014) Digital restoration**

Premiered at the 36<sup>th</sup> Moscow International Film Festival, Moscow on 26 June 2014.

Produced by Bruce Posner

2K Digital Restoration at Alpha-Omega Digital, Munich  
Supervised by Thomas Bakels  
in collaboration with Bret Hampton, Bruce Posner and David Shepard

Digital Soundtrack Re-Mix at Harbor Picture Company, New York  
Supervised by Lee Dichter  
in collaboration with Joshua Berger, Bruce Posner and Sami van Ingen  
Video editing by Bret Hampton, Valencia  
Sound editing by Sami van Ingen at Meguru Film Sound, Helsinki with Peter Nordström

Film and Audio Preservation:

British Film Institute National Archive  
Filmmakers Showcase  
Monica Flaherty  
Robert and Frances Flaherty Study Center  
Library of Congress National Audio-Visual Conservation Center  
New Zealand Archive of Film, Television and Sound Ngā Taonga Whitiāhua Me Ngā  
Taonga Kōrero  
Sami van Ingen

Additional Contributors and Assistance:

Academy Film Archive  
Cinémathèque française  
Cineric, Inc.  
Dartmouth College Department of Film and Media Studies, Jones Media Center,  
Baker Barry Library  
Degeto Film GmbH  
Deluxe Media-Chace Audio  
DuArt  
Filmoteka Narodowa  
Film Preservation Associates  
Flaherty International Film Seminars  
Jinx Productions  
Jugoslovenska Kinoteka  
Living Archives  
National Gallery of Art  
NT Audio Video Film Labs  
Park Road Post Productions  
Svenska Filminstitutet

## REVIEWS

"Oh, if we could only take back with us the singing. Not the songs, but the singing." --Frances Hubbard Flaherty, *Samoan Diary*, 1924

"MOANA WITH SOUND" is a miracle. It's amazing. There's quite simply nothing like it." --Laya Maheshwari, *Indiewire*, 2014

"You're under a spell when you see this film. Be careful not to break that spell." --Jean Renoir, 1975

"I was impressed with the film's beauty and ability to draw me in almost immediately. Your soundtrack (makes) the film that much richer and evocative." --Ken Burns, 1996

"Robert Flaherty is more than one of greatest filmmakers - he is one of very few saints in cinema, and MOANA is one of purest films produced in the world cinema history." --Naum Kleiman, 2013

"The human relationships in the films are remarkable in that they are so delicately indicated and convey kindness, self respect and mutual respect in work and in play. It was not until I saw MOANA in Samoa, where Monica Flaherty and I projected the film in the village in which it had been filmed some 50 years before, with Pe'a, now in his 60's commenting as the film was shown, that I realized fully, the amount of humor and light banter in this film, and how much warmth. Look carefully and you will see for yourself." --Ricky Leacock, 1990

"Her soundtrack was dense, it was full – it was like Monica was standing beside her father with a Nagra." --Allan Seymour, 2010

"Your soundtrack of MOANA is a masterpiece, all of its real both language and music, and all of it fitting so naturally. It is as if it had been recorded with the picture and belonged there. I do not know of any other film that accomplishes this so convincingly. To have it with so precious a document as MOANA gives a great picture a new life and certainly a long one." --Virgil Thomson, 1981

"I went to your show of MOANA WITH SOUND in fear and trepidation, I was convinced it would be embarrassing and ruinous to the original... But the sound track was astonishing. It is the best job of post-synchronization I have seen. I have spent months fitting dialogue to my own film...but I failed to get the astonishing spontaneity you achieved. The effect was natural – and there can be no greater compliment. It seemed dead right." --Kevin Brownlow, 1981

**SPONSOR AND FILM ARCHIVE CONTRIBUTORS**

THE ROBERT AND FRANCES FLAHERTY STUDY CENTER

MOANA WITH SOUND was restored and is being distributed by Filmmakers Showcase under the approval of The Robert and Frances Flaherty Study Center, a not for profit organization entrusted with the safekeeping and dissemination of Robert and Frances Flaherty's films, photographs, writings and other historical paraphernalia associated with their lives and work. Located at the Claremont School of Theology in Claremont, California, The Study Center was established through a bequest by Frances Hubbard Flaherty to support research, teaching and public outreach related to the new art of the moving image, both film and video, seen in the context of other art media, with its focus on the pioneering contributions of Robert and Frances Flaherty. Their work has been of continuing interest to those engaged in media studies, and the Study Center encourages many activities in support of its educational mission.

<http://www.cst.edu/library/special-collections/robert-and-frances-flaherty/>

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS NATIONAL AUDIO-VISUAL CONSERVATION CENTER

The Library of Congress [National Audio-Visual Conservation Center](#) is where the nation's library acquires, preserves and provides access to the world's largest and most comprehensive collection of motion pictures, television programs, radio broadcasts and sound recordings. It provides staff support for the Library of Congress [National Film Preservation Board](#), the [National Recording Preservation Board](#), and the national registries for film and recorded sound.

BRITISH FILM INSTITUTE NATIONAL ARCHIVE

Established in 1935, the BFI National Archive holds one of the largest film and television collections in the world. It was a founder member of the International Federation of Film Archives under its first curator Ernest Lindgren. It collects, preserves, restores and shares the films and television programmes which

have helped to shape and record British life and times since the development of cine film in the late 19th century and now contains nearly a million titles. Using the latest preservation methods, it cares for a variety of often-obsolete formats so that future generations can enjoy their film heritage.

<http://www.bfi.org.uk/archive-collections>

NEW ZEALAND ARCHIVE OF FILM, TELEVISION AND SOUND NGĀ TAONGA  
WHITIĀHUA ME NGĀ TAONGA KŌRERO

The New Zealand Archive of Film, Television and Sound Ngā Taonga Whitiāhua Me Ngā Taonga Kōrero, known as Ngā Taonga Sound and Vision, is a bicultural, non-profit organization dedicated to collecting, protecting and connecting New Zealand's audiovisual heritage with the widest possible audience. As a member of the International Federation of Film Archives (FIAF), it regularly collaborates internationally with film preservation projects. It has been the home of nitrate film material for MOANA since its inception as the New Zealand Film Archive in 1981.

<http://www.ngataonga.org.nz/>