



L.A. Con

GUIDE

The Film Program at the 30th World
Science Fiction Convention

Edited by Bill Warren

BY WAY OF INTRODUCTION

This film program represents for the most part an extremely personal selection by me, Bill Warren, with the help of Donald F. Glut. Usually convention film programs tend to show the established classics -- THINGS TO COME, METROPOLIS, WAR OF THE WORLDS, THEM -- and, of course, those are good films. But they are seen so very often -- on tv, at non-sf film programs, at regional cons, and so forth -- that we decided to try to organize a program of good and/or entertaining movies that are rarely seen.

We feel we have made a good selection, with films chosen for a variety of reasons. Some of the films on the program were, until quite recently, thought to be missing or impossible to view, like JUST IMAGINE, TRANSATLANTIC TUNNEL, or DR JEKYLL AND MR. HYDE. Others, since they are such glorious stinkers, have been relegated to 3 a.m. once-a-year tv showings, like VOODOO MAN or PLAN 9 FROM OUTER SPACE. Other fairly recent movies (and good ones, at that) were, we felt, seen by far too few people, either due to poor distribution by the releasing companies, or because they didn't make enough money to ensure a wide release, like TARGETS or THE DEVIL'S BRIDE. Still others are relatively obscure foreign films, a couple of which we took a sight-unseen gamble on, basing our selections on favorable reviews; this includes films like THE GLADIATORS and END OF AUGUST AT THE HOTEL OZONE. And finally, there are a number of films here which are personal favorites of Don's or mine which we want other people to like; this includes INTERNATIONAL HOUSE, MAD LOVE, NIGHT OF THE HUNTER, RADIO RANCH, and SPY SMASHER RETURNS.

We'd like to thank the distributors of THE ANDROMEDA STRAIN and the producer of LA 2017 for the loan of their Hugo-nominated films, and the Awards Division of ABC-TV for their loan of THE PEOPLE and THE NIGHT STALKER.

Bill Warren

Note: the print of MUNCHAUSEN is entirely in German with no subtitles; however, it is an excellent film and we have included a synopsis in these notes.

these program notes were written by the following people:

RONALD V. BORST -- author of the upcoming book, The Vampire in the Cinema, and a dedicated science fiction and horror film researcher.

DONALD F. GLUT -- author of The Dinosaur Dictionary (Citadel Press), co-author of The Great Serial Heroes (Doubleday), and author of the soon-to-be-published The Frankenstein Legend (Scarecrow); also, the creator of the comic book characters "Dagar" and "Dr. Spektor."

DON WILLIS -- author of the soon-to-be published Horror and Science Fiction Films: A Checklist, from Scarecrow Press.

JIM WNOROSKI -- Associate Editor of Photon, a magazine devoted to science fiction and horror films, available for \$1.00 from 801 Avenue "C", Brooklyn, NY 11218.

and me, BILL WARREN.

Credits and other reference material derived from The Reference Guide to Fantastic Films by Walt Lee, available in the Hucksters' Room and the Combined Book Exhibit. It is also available by mail; for more information, send a stamped, self-addressed envelope to Walt Lee, Post Office Box 66273, Los Angeles, CA 90066.

ABBOTT AND COSTELLO MEET FRANKENSTEIN

Universal 1947 92 minutes (released: 83 minutes). Producer: Robert Arthur. Director: Charles T. Barton. Screenplay: John Grant, Frederic I. Rinaldo and Robert Lees. Art Directors: Bernard Herzbrun and Hilyard Brown. Make-up: Bud Westmore. Cinematography: David S. Horsley and Jerome H. Ash. Editor: Frank Gross. Music: Frank Skinner.

Cast: Bud Abbott, Lou Costello, Bela Lugosi [Dracula], Lon Chaney Jr [Wolf Man], Glenn Strange [Frankenstein's Monster], Jane Randolph, Joe Kirk, Lenore Aubert, Frank Ferguson, Vincent Price [Invisible Man].

Perhaps there has never been a "horror" film so praised and condemned simultaneously as ABBOTT AND COSTELLO MEET FRANKENSTEIN, Universal's spoof on their own product of the 1930s and 40s. While those more technically oriented agree that this film was superior in that respect to the old classics starring Frankenstein's Monster, Count Dracula and the Wolf Man, purists bemoan the film as sheer blasphemy, with their beloved horrors reduced to mere straightmen for the famed comedy team. This reviewer happens to love the film, and for a number of good reasons besides its being a slick, well-made motion picture.

Certainly it is one of the funnier Abbott and Costello films. But it is primarily the antics of Bud and Lou that provide the laughs. The Frankenstein Monster, Wolf Man and Dracula are played reasonably straight and are given more to do than in their later serious films, such as HOUSE OF FRANKENSTEIN and HOUSE OF DRACULA. As I risk the wrath of horror film purists, Bela Lugosi's portrayal of the vampire Count in the Abbott and Costello film surpasses his performance in the original DRACULA. In A & C MEET FRANKENSTEIN, he is more restrained, more in command of the English language, and, as far as motion picture acting is concerned, more professional.

You've probably seen this one before, no doubt. But it's always worth viewing again. --Donald F. Glut.

THE ANDROMEDA STRAIN

Universal 1971 color scope 130 minutes. Producer & Director: Robert Wise. Screenplay: Nelson Gidding. Production Design: Boris Levin. Cinematography: Richard H. Kline. Special Effects: Douglas Trumbull and James Shourt. Editing: Stuart Gilmore & John W. Holmes. Music: Gil Melle. Cast: Arthur Hill, David Wayne, James Olson, Kate Reid, Paula Kelly, George Mitchell. Based on the novel by Michael Crichton.

Touted as Robert Wise's triumphant return to science fiction after his twenty-year absence since he directed THE DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL, THE ANDROMEDA STRAIN fails to reach the cinematic heights and lavish values attained by the former classic film achievement.

This is not to say, however, that THE ANDROMEDA STRAIN is not a good film -- it is in fact a fine film in many ways. It was one of the best SF "book-movie" translations done in recent years, it features fine performances by character actors Arthur ("Owen Marshall") Hill and David Wayne, as well as some astonishing futuristic sets by designer Boris Levin and a weird electronic music score by "Night Gallery" composer Gil Melle.

Always a spectacular showman, Robert Wise capped this production with an outstanding publicity campaign that included posters, photographs, and even a soundtrack record -- all made with six sides, after the hexagonal shape of the space virus that gives the film its title.

We include THE ANDROMEDA STRAIN in the program because we feel it represents a prime example of a recent science fiction film produced on a major studio budget. We also feel that it serves as an interesting contrast to director Wise's earlier effort in terms of style, composition, and content. And, of course, it is one of this year's Hugo nominees.

----- Jim Wnoroski

CHANDU, THE MAGICIAN

Fox 1932 75 minutes. Directors: Marcel Varnel and William Cameron Menzies. Screenplay: Barry Conners and Philip Klein. Cinematography: James Wong Howe. Editing: Harold Schuster.

Cast: Edmund Lowe [Chandu], Bela Lugosi, Irene Ware, Herbert Mundin, Henry B. Walthall. Based on the radio series by Harry A. Earnshaw, Vera M. Oldham, and R.R. Morgan.

CHANDU is yet another in the seemingly endless series of fascinating early-30s horror-fantasies. It's not that they were all so good; it's just that no two of them are alike: American horror movies weren't really standardized until the late 30s. Before then, undistinguished nonentities like THE VAMPIRE BAT were rare. Even something horrible like SUPERNATURAL is uniquely horrible. CHANDU may also be pretty bad in some ways, but, unlike SUPERNATURAL (for instance), it's rife with good things too. Yes, the acting is, to put it charitably, uneven, and the dialogue could use some defloridation -- acting and dialogue were never William Cameron (THINGS TO COME, THE MAZE, INVADERS FROM MARS -- the latter his "mature" masterpiece) Menzies' strong points as a director. But what's bad in CHANDU is very enjoyably bad, and what's good is really good. What's good is the look of it: the sets, camerawork, lighting (CHANDU is big on shadows), special effects, etc. Some of Howe's wild travelling shots are apparently intended to knock you out of your seat. Oddly, the most convincing effects are reserved for the comic relief, Herbert Mundin's miniature conscience, while

the hero and villain settle for simpler double exposures and rays. The plot itself and the accompanying music fall somewhere in the vast gray spaces between bad and good. There's a lot of each, and if quantity ever made up for lack of quality, it does here. If most movies can be said to have several dozen pounds or so of music, CHANDU has a ton. The most incredibly precipitate filmic turn of events ever, perhaps (outside BLACK DEVILS OF KALI) comes when Henry B. Walthall successfully tests his ray, then is promptly kidnapped before anyone even has a chance to congratulate him. The actors are generally to be found lost in the decor, though Lugosi has a Big Speech endways, and Lowe commands the movie to close on a genuinely romantic-fantastic note. ----- Don Willis

DARK INTRUDER

Universal-International 1965 59 minutes. Producer: Jack Laird. Director: Harvey Hart. Screenplay: Barre Lyndon. Make-up: Bud Westmore. Art Director: L.S. Papez. Cinematography: John F. Warren. Editing: Edward W. Wilson. Music: Stanley Wilson.
Cast: Leslie Nielsen, Gilbert Green, Charles Bolender, Mark Richman, Judi Meredith, Werner Klemperer [demon].
 Pilot film for unsold series, "Black Cloak."

If the term "sleeper" can be applied to any film selected for showing during this Worldcon, then DARK INTRUDER is probably the most deserving of that distinction. Originally intended as a pilot for a proposed television series (hence the short running time) centering around a playboy-detective solving bizarre crimes in turn-of-the-century San Francisco, it was released theatrically when those initial plans fell through, and emerged as the only above-average gothic entry from the Universal stable since their last Frankenstein film. On the plus side, the production is immeasurably aided by its black and white photography, eerie musical score, fog-shrouded settings, capable direction, and carefully plotted script, the latter by veteran scenario writer Barre (WAR OF THE WORLDS, HANGOVER SQUARE, etc.) Lyndon, who developed sequences often reminiscent of his excellent Jack-the-Ripper film of 1944, THE LODGER. In brief, the story follows the aforementioned detective as he seeks to discover the person or thing responsible for a series of grotesque murders. We won't divulge any other details, but if soul transmigration, seances, twist endings, and black-cloaked figures with horrible visages going bump in the night are your bag, then watch the first five minutes of DARK INTRUDER for an indication of what will follow; we're betting you'll stick with it. A final note of possible "trivia" interest is the more-than-coincidental resemblance between the

monstrous being in this film and Lionel Atwill's character in Warners' MYSTERY OF THE WAX MUSEUM, especially in the long shots. Not really surprising when one realizes that both makeups were done by members of the famed Westmore family of make-up artists. ----- Ronald V. Borst.

DEAD OF NIGHT

British, Ealing (released in U.S.A. by Universal) 1945 (1946-- U.S. release) 160 minutes. Producer: Michael Balcon. Associate Producers: Sidney Cole and John Croydon. Directors: Alberto Cavalcanti, Basil Dearden, Robert Hames, and Charles Crichton. Screenplay: John Baine, Angus MacPhail, and T.E.B. Clarke. Cinematography: Stan Pavey, Douglas Slocombe, Jack Parker, & H. Julius. Art Director: Michael Relph. Assistant Editor: Seth Holt. Music: Georges Auric.

Cast: Mervyn Johns, Michael Redgrave, Frederick Valk, Googie Withers, Sally Ann Howes, Elizabeth Welch, Naunton Wayne, Roland Culver, Basil Radford, Miles Malleon, Mary Merrall, Antony Bair, Esme Percy, Allan Jeayes, Magda Kun. Based on "Room in the Twoer" and "The Bus Conductor" by E.F. Benson, "The Inexperienced Ghost" by H.G. Wells, and stories by John Baines and Angus MacPhail.

In horror literature, there are very few excellent stories at novel length -- the only well-known one is Dracula. However, there are many fine short stories, apparently proving Poe's thesis that horror and terror are best sustained in the shorter length. It is a little surprising, therefore, that there have not been more anthology-films of horror stories. The first one in English was DEAD OF NIGHT.

One problem confronting these films consisting of several short stories is how to present them, how they are linked together. DEAD OF NIGHT seems to have rather permanently established that they shall have some sort of linking device, and that the frame story itself will have a horror ending. Amicus recently has tried valiantly to come up with an effective device, in that company's several anthology horror movies, but none has even approached the surprise and horror of the frame story in DEAD OF NIGHT.

We are showing (I hope) the full-length version, including stories usually left out of the American prints. Not all the stories are equally successful, of course -- the golf story is only mildly funny, and the story about the mirror misfires completely -- but those that are good are excellent. The sequence involving Michael Redgrave as a ventriloquist is one of the finest short movies ever made.

DEAD OF NIGHT is an unusual horror film in many respects -- being the first English-language horror story anthology film, and that it received Class A treatment from the British company that made it. Despite its flaws, it is one of the authentic horror movie classics. -----Bill Warren

THE DEMON BARBER OF FLEET STREET

(also known as SWEENEY TODD, THE DEMON BARBER OF FLEET STREET)

British, 1936, released in the U.S. in 1939. 67 minutes.

Director: George King.

Cast: Tod Slaughter [Sweeney Todd], Eve Lister, Bruce Seton, Davina Craig.

It is a matter of no little concern to some people whether they are laughing with Tod Slaughter, or at him. To such people, who always want to "know", Slaughter epics like THE DEMON BARBER and THE CRIMES OF STEPHEN HAWKE will remain nagging question marks. But, as Dana Andrews in CURSE OF THE DEMON says, perhaps it's better not to know. Tod Slaughter is funny, and he has "presence," and whether or not he knew he was a comic villain is beside the point. Perhaps he thought he was the consummate Victorian villain; at any rate, he is the consummate comic villain, with a hearty, mock-sinister laugh for any and all occasions. His reassuringly jovial presence is almost a necessity for the story of Sweeney Todd -- even for this tasteful (if that's quite the word) version -- a true tale of a barber who "polishes off" his customers and seems to have an interest in the meat pies sold at the pie shop next door. . .

For the record, Slaughter also appeared as Sweeney Todd in the 1946 British short, BOTHERED BY A BEARD. ----- Don Willis

THE DEVIL BAT

(shooting title: KILLER BATS)

PRC. 1940 (released: 1941) 69 minutes. Executive Producer: Sigmund Neufeld.

Producer: Jack Gallagher. Director: Jean Yarbrough. Screenplay: John Thomas

Neville. Art Director: Paul Palmentola. Cinematography: Arthur Martinelli.

Editing: Holbrook N. Todd. Music: David Chudnow. Story: George Bricker.

Cast: Bela Lugosi, Suzanne Kaaren, Dave O'Brien, Hal Price, Donald Kerr, Guy Usher.

WHITE ZOMBIE and CHANDU, THE MAGICIAN are generally regarded by most Lugosi aficionados as superior vehicles -for that actor's own unique melodramatic talents; THE DEVIL BAT can hardly claim anywhere near a similar distinction. On the surface, the film is a terrible chiller, lacking intelligence or quality in any area one might care to dwell upon. Nevertheless, it emerges as a gem of unintentional comedy, due, perhaps more than any other single factor, to Lugosi's flair for delivery. THE DEVIL BAT finds him in another of his countless "mad doctor" portrayals, planning the usual hideous vengeance upon those he mistakenly believes have betrayed him, in this instance his former business partners who have become millionaires through Lugosi's discoveries while he himself has remained relatively penniless. Not content with any simple means of disposing of his enemies, Lugosi creates a strain of gigantic bats which fly from his attic laboratory on cue, and strike anyone wearing a peculiar scent which he has also developed. Lugosi introduces this scent to his intended victims under the guise of an experimental after-shave lotion, allows them to liberally douse themselves with the strange-smelling substance, then sends them on their way with a sardonic leer and a knowing "goodbye!" As you can already see, it's bad screen horror, but it makes up for this in its brevity and in its own special brand of humor. The picture was later remade by PRC in 1946 as THE FLYING SERPENT with George Zucco essaying the Lugosi role, but the version we're screening is by far the more fun to laugh along with -- or at-- whichever you prefer. ----- Ronald V. Borst.

THE DEVIL'S BRIDE

(Filmed as: THE DEVIL RIDES OUT)

British, 7 Arts-Hammer (U.S.: Fox) 1968 color 95 minutes. Producer:

Anthony Nelson Keys. Director: Terence Fisher. Screenplay: Richard Matheson. Art Director: Bernard Robinson. Cinematography: Arthur Grant. Special Effects: Michael Stainer-Hutchins. Editing: Spencer Reeve. Supervising Editor: James Needs. Music: James Bernard.

Cast: Christopher Lee, Charles Gray, Nike Arrighi, Leon Greene, Patrick Mower, Gwen Ffrangcon-Davies, Sarah Lawson.

Based on novel "The Devil Rides Out" by Dennis Wheatley.

Toward the end of the '50's, two studios suddenly emerged as the world's most prolific producers of sf and horror movies -- American International Pictures in the United States, and Hammer Films in England. Hammer has always been the most stylish and traditional of the two studios, turning out endless variations on the Frankenstein and Dracula stories, with occasional peculiar offshoots all their own, always done with taste and understatement (except for gore, of course).

Their best director has always been Terence Fisher, a vastly underrated man, highly competent in this field. A typical Fisher film holds back on the horror until the final reel, then lets fly with all the resources of the special effects and makup departments. Fisher's feeling for period is exact, his use of comic relief is the best in the field since the heyday of James Whale, and he always manages to elicit good performances from his actors.

THE DEVIL'S BRIDE is one of the few Hammer films to be set in the twentieth Century, although, typically, it is set in the 20s, apparently for no other reason than to make us of black magic more believable. The period decor is striking, especially all the lovely old cars, and the film in general seems to recreate the 20s adequately.

The story is interesting although not memorable, revolving around a devil cult and their quest for a talisman (in the book, a mummified penis, but not here). They come up against the formidable Duc de Richelieu (C. Lee) and his stalwart band of friends who, in true pulp-fiction fashion, eventually manage to defeat the baddies, though not before being confronted by Death, a giant spider, and the Devil himself.

The main virtues of the film are Terence Fisher's extremely exciting direction, never letting up for an instant, and Richard Matheson's tightly-constructed screenplay. This film is the horror-movie equivalent of Hammer's FIVE MILLION YEARS TO EARTH, and is arguably one of the three best films ever to be produced by them. ----- Bill Warren

THE DEVIL'S OWN

(British title: THE WITCHES)

British, 7-Arts Hammer (Fox: U.S.) 1966 (1967, U.S.) color 91 minutes.

Producer: Anthony Nelson Keys. Director: Cyril Frankel. Screenplay: Nigel Kneale. Production Design: Bernard Robinson. Cinematography: Arthur Grant. Makeup: George Partleton. Editing: James Needs. Music: Richard Rodney Bennett.

Cast: Joan Fontaine, Kay Walsh, Alec McCowen, Ann Bell, Ingrid Brett, John Collin, Martin Stephens, Michele Dotrice, Duncan Lamont.

Based on novel "The Witches" by Peter Curtis.

After a crude opening sequence of poor Joan Fontaine being frightened out of her wits by a prancing witch-doctor in an African hut, this very enjoyable thriller settles down more calmly to make good use of Nigel Kneale's highly literate script (although one would have liked to hear more about Kay Walsh's post-immortality plans). Bernard Robinson and Don Mingaye have provided their usual excellent sets -- notably the pseudo-clergyman's study, arranged as a private church complete with religious statuary and taped organ music -- and the atmosphere of horror is cunningly built up out of the tranquil village landscapes: the children rehearsing a home-made pageant under a tree where a headless doll lies propped among the branches; the rose-covered cottage where Granny Rigg mutters marching orders to her cat; the flock of sheep driven across

the tell-tale footprints at the edge of the lake by a pair of Alsatians. If Cyril Frankel's direction is a little flat, it is at least tasteful, and the necessary note of extravagance is provided by Kay Walsh (outstanding in a good cast), suddenly blossoming forth in a horned headdress and full black magic regalia to croon Latin imprecations over her victim.

----- British Film Institute's Monthly Film Bulletin, January 1967.

DR. JEKYLL AND MR. HYDE

Paramount 1931 (1932) 98 minutes.

Producer & Director: Rouben Mamoulian. Screenplay: Samuel Hoffenstein & Percy Heath. Art Director: Hans Dreier. Makeup: Wally Westmore. Cinematography: Karl Struss. Editor: William Shea.

Cast: Fredric March [Jekyll/Hyde], Miriam Hopkins, Rose Hobart, Holmes Herbert, Halliwell Hobbes, Edgar Norton.

Based on "The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde" by Robert Louis Stevenson.

The most-remade horror movie, Stevenson's novella has been subjected to weird variations, primarily in the last year (THE ADULT VERSION OF JEKYLL AND HIDE [sic], DR. JEKYLL AND SISTER HYDE), and doesn't seem to attract great actors, as it once did. Still, there is lots of life left in the old plot.

The early 30s were the best years of the American horror film. Inventive, interesting directors were filming them, and they were being given class A treatment by the various studios.

Rouben Mamoulian had directed only two films before he made the 1931 DR. JEKYLL AND MR. HYDE, one of the best horror movies ever made. Other Jekyll/Hyde films are usually credited to the actor who plays the dual role, and rightly so; but this film is the director's. I do not know of another horror movie which so brilliantly uses all the resources of film then available. The transformations used color stock, artificial sound, reversed sound, superimpositions, and intricated editing. Wipes are notoriously showy and essentially useless devices, but at least twice in this movie, Mamoulian uses them to advance the plot, no easy feat. The camerawork is excellent -- the streets are damp and shadowy, stylized in the Germanic manner. Sound and music comment on the action; the initial use of subjective camera is one of the few times this gaudy technique has been utilized effectively. No other American horror film that I have seen is so exciting on a technical level.

Fredric March as Jekyll is posturing and mannered, not as good as Spencer Tracy in the part later; still, the essentially sexual nature of his frustration is made extremely clear and understandable. Jekyll is what we would now call the cliched sexually-frustrated Victorian, desperately needing a release. And his release comes in the form of Hyde. March as Hyde gives the best performance in a horror movie that I can recall -- comic, oily, vicious and sinister by turns, it is a tour-de-force, and fully deserved the Oscar it got him. Compared to Barrymore's slimy hunchback and Tracy's "sniggering Libertine," March's Hyde is a magnificently evil animal. (The makeup by Wally Westmore is brilliant, each transformation leaving Hyde more hideous than the previous one; the makeup and March's performance are so good as to cause some doubt as to whether Jekyll and Hyde are the same actor).

March's performance is not the only excellent one in the film; as the little prostitute, Champagne Ivy, Miriam Hopkins is extremely fine. I make no apologies for Rose Hobart.

Mamoulian claims that, unlike other Jekyll/Hyde films, in which the conflict is traditionally between good and evil, his movie demonstrates a conflict between man's civilized nature and his animal side. Be that as

it may (and he's right), DR. JEKYLL AND MR. HYDE is one of the most exciting and entertaining horror movies ever made. -----Bill Warren.

END OF AUGUST AT THE HOTEL OZONE

(original title: KONEC SRPNA V HOTELU OZON)

Czechoslovakian 1965 (U.S. release: 1967 by New Line Cinema) 87 minutes

Director: Jan Schmidt. Screenplay: Pavel Juracek. Cinematography: Jiri Macak. Editing: Miroslav Hajek. Music: Jan Klusak.

Cast: Ondrej Jariabek, Beta Pnicanova, Magda Seidlerova, Hana Vitkova, Jana Novakova.

THE END OF AUGUST AT THE HOTEL OZONE is a shattering slice of life after the third World War. No one is left alive except eight young women and one old one (Beta Pnicanova), who wander like nomads over the sere landscape. The nubile girls have never seen a man; their leader can scarcely remember what one looks like. Equipped with some of the trappings of the defunct civilization -- tin cans, rifles, combat boots -- they live like savages, telling the years by counting the rings of a tree trunk, hunting by blasting fish out of the river water with grenades.

Quite by accident, they meet the last man on earth -- an aged Adam, too feeble to father children. His prize possession is a windup Gramophone with one record, "Roll Out the Barrel," a toy the girls covet. At his dwelling -- the abandoned Hotel Ozone -- the old lady enjoys one final, dreamlike dinner by candlelight. Then she dies, knowing that the race will die with her and with the girls she has overseen since their childhood. Her charges pack up to resume their wandering . . . Director Jan Schmidt has given OZONE the spare style of a Kafka fable, abetted by Pnicanova's tragic portrait of a woman who seems to be lifted directly from a Kollwitz engraving. Time, June 23, 1967.

THE GLADIATORS

(Original title: GLADIATORENA; also called THE PEACE GAME)

Swedish, Sandrews (release in the U.S. by New Line) 1969 (1971) color 105 minutes.

Producer: Goran Lindgren. Director: Peter Watkins. Screenplay: Nicholas Gosling & Peter Watkins. Art Director: William Brodie. Cinematography: Peter Suschitsky. Special Effects: Stig Lindberg. Editing: Lars Hagstrom. Music: Mahler, Claes af Geijerstam.

Cast: Arhtur Pentelow, Frederick Danner, Kenneth Lo, Bjorn Franzen, Jeremy Child, Erich Stering.

I concede here and now that getting this film may have been a mistake, since few of you who see it are going to like it. This movie is set in a near-future world in which the United Nations have started a new style of gladiatorial combat, designed to bleed off the hostilities of the world that would otherwise soon grow into war.

The film is preachy and pretentious, and gets off to a very slow start. But there are many good things about it that make it worth sticking out -- the basic idea is extremely good, the photography is excellent, and the ending is as bleak a piece of cynicism as any in modern films. ---Bill Warren

THE INCREDIBLE SHRINKING MAN

Universal-International 1957 81 minutes. Producer: Albert Zugsmith.

Director: Jack Arnold. Screenplay: Richard Matheson. Art Directors: Alexander Golitzen and Robert Clatworthy. Cinematography: Ellis W.

Carter. Special Effects: Clifford Stine. Editing: Al Joseph.

Music: Joseph Gershenson.

The 1950s was the era of the low budget science fiction movie. Can anyone ever truly forget those countless epics involving impossible monsters from outer space? Or the world-famous scientist, his beautiful daughter, and her handsome and heroic boyfriend who saves the world?

It was refreshing, in those more innocent days of SF films, to see such outstanding motion pictures as THE DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL, the George Pal films, and THE INCREDIBLE SHRINKING MAN.

Based on Richard Matheson's novel The Shrinking Man, and utilizing Matheson's own screenplay, the movie follows a hero who, uncharacteristically for the 50s, does not win out over the fantastic forces working against him. Because of a strange affliction he begins to shrink... shrink... shrink... until a common spider becomes worse than the monster star of the film TARANTULA.

Jack Arnold directed both TARANTULA and THE INCREDIBLE SHRINKING MAN, not to mention some of Universal-International's better monster movies of the 50s, like CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON and IT CAME FROM OUTER SPACE. Arnold's work had long been ignored until John Baxter devoted a full chapter to him in his book Science Fiction in the Cinema. Although this writer prefers IT CAME FROM OUTER SPACE, most devotees of SF films consider THE INCREDIBLE SHRINKING MAN his best movie.

THE INCREDIBLE SHRINKING MAN is loaded with some beautiful special effects work, too. So if you can, take a look. You won't be disappointed.
-----Donald F. Glut

INTERNATIONAL HOUSE

Parmount 1933 70 minutes.

Director: Edward Sutherland. Story: Neil Brent and Louis E. Heifetz.

Screenplay: Francis Martin and Walter De Leon. Cinematography: Ernest Haller. Music & Lyrics: Ralph Rainger and Leo Robin.

Cast: W.C. Fields, Peggy Hopkins Joyce, Rudy Vallee, George Burns, Gracie Allen, Stuart Erwin, Sari Martiza, Bela Lugosi, Sterling Holloway, Edmund Breese, Lumsden Hare, Cab Calloway, Franklin Pangborn, Baby Rose Marie, Stoopnagle & Budd.

There are a few Paramount comedies from the early 30s that seem to have been plotted by a crew of slaphappy drunks -- MILLION DOLLAR LEGS, the Paramount Marx Brothers pictures, and INTERNATIONAL HOUSE -- being composed in equal parts of standard sappy love plots, cloying songs, and bizarre comedy, with some occasional admixture of fantasy or science fiction.

There isn't a great deal to be said about INTERNATIONAL HOUSE, one way or another -- it is funny, it is silly, and has some notoriously peculiar scenes. Like Cab Calloway singing "That Reefer Man" on a wall-sized TV screen, or the climax, which features Bela Lugosi chasing W.C. Fields through the halls of a Chinese hotel, with Fields in a tiny car which runs up and down the stairs. Watch and enjoy. --- Bill Warren

ISLAND OF TERROR

(Various early titles: NIGHT OF THE SILICATES, THE SILICATES, NIGHT THE SILICATES CAME, NIGHT THE CREATURES CAME, THE CREEPERS)

British, Planet 1966 (1967) (released in U.S. by Universal) color 89 minutes.

Executive Producer: Richard Gordon. Producer: Tom Blakeley. Director:

Terence Fisher. Screenplay: Alan Ramsen & Edward Andrew Mann. Art Direction &

Special Effects: John St. John Earl. Cinematography: Reg Wyer. Editing:

Thelma Connell. Electronic Effects: Barry Gray. Music: Malcolm Lockyer.

Cast: Peter Cushing, Edward Judd, Carole Gray, Eddie Byrne, Sam Kydd, Niall MacGinnis.

Some science fiction horror movies walk a very narrow line between the outlandishly silly and the revolting, and the line is never narrower than in ISLAND OF TERROR. This snazzy little picture is set on an island off the British coast, where science has Gotten Out of Hand once more, and unleashed a horde of ghastly crawling things called silicates (the result of a cancer cure gone wrong, I believe).

Edward Judd and Peter Cushing have been called in, as I remember, to investigate bodies which have been found with their bones missing, ugh. Things progress as is usual for this type of film, with all the silicates being wiped out before they've had a chance to suck the bones out of the island's women and children.

Yes, it is a silly story, but director Terence Fisher doesn't allow the action to slow down long enough for the foolishness of the story to make itself known. The film almost gallops. The production values are, ahem, adequate -- the sight of a silicate dividing like an amoeba has been known to make strong men swear off noodle soup forever (see the film to find out what I mean). The sounds of the silicates sucking out bones is at least as realistic as anyone could ever want.

The acting and script are both clever and witty -- there are lots of snappily cynical lines delivered by veterans. Note what Cushing says after Judd hacks off his arm with an axe. -----Bill Warren

JOURNEY TO THE BEGINNING OF TIME

(original title: CESTA DO PRAVEKU)

Czechoslovakian/American, released by New Trends. Made in 1954, rleased in the U.S. in 1966 color 93 minutes (U.S.: 87 minutes).

Director: Karel Zeman. Screenplay: Karel Zeman & J.A. Novotny. Art Directiron:

Karel Zeman, Zdenek Rozkopal, and Ivo Mrdzek. Cinematography: Vaclav

Pazdernik & Antonin Horak. Music: E.F. Burian (?? possibly error)

English language version: Produced, Directed & Written by William Clayton.

Cinematography: Anthony Huston. Dialog: Fred Ladd.

Cast: James Lucas, Victor Betral, Peter Hermann, Charles Goldsmith.

JOURNEY TO THE BEGINNING OF TIME is a film that most of you have probably never seen. A serialized version, made up of short chapters, has been playing annually on a Chicago television program called "Garfield Goose and Friends" for about 15 years. The feature itself played briefly at kiddie matinees in the late 60s. Otherwise, the film has not had any major US release.

This is only one of the film made by Czech special effects wizard Karel Zeman. Zeman is a master at deatail and it shows in his work. Unlike Willis O'Brien, who did the visual effects for KING KONG and others, he stresses fantasy above realism. Among his achievements have been the "woodcuts come to life" in THE FABULOUS WORLD OF JULES VERNE (a much underrated film), the Czech version of BARON MUNCHAUSEN, and a short subject in which he animated glass figurines by painstakingly heating them and moving them for every individual frame of film.

In JOURNEY, Zeman went beyond the usual animating of the great saurians of the Mesozoic Era. He also animated mammals. You'll see the first (and only) animated model of a mammoth since O'Brien's in the silent film MORPHEUS MIKE (1917).

JOURNEY involves a trip by some youngsters down a river of time. The farther down they go, the more of Earth's past is revealed to them. It is revealed to us also, so try to see JOURNEY TO THE BEGINNING OF TIME. --Donald F. Glut.

JUST IMAGINE

Fox 1930 113 minutes Story, Lyrics, Music & Associate Producers: Ray Henderson, B.G. DeSylva, & Lew Brown. Director: David Butler. Screenplay: Butler, Henderson, DeSylva and Brown. Art Direction: Stephen Goosson & Ralph Hammeras. Cinematography: Ernest Palmer. Editor: Irene Morra. Choreographer: Seymour Felix.

Cast: El Brendel [Double O], Frank Albertson, Maureen O'Sullivan, John Garrick, Marjorie White, Hobart Bosworth, Mischa Auer, Ivan Linow, Kenneth Thompson, Wilfred Lucas, J.W. Girard.

Probably one of the scarcest early science fiction adventures (and, in addition, a musical comedy), JUST IMAGINE could very well be the most paradoxical film being shown in this retrospective for it is truly what you could call an "astonishing disappointment."

Long thought of as the American answer to Lang's METROPOLIS by fans who had only glimpsed a rare still or press clipping, the film in reality bears no relation to the silent German epic of the previous decade. Audiences attending this showing in hopes of discovering a long-lost attempt at 2001 will come away sadly disappointed. For although the movie is truly science fiction with its futuristic cities, flights to Mars and alien beings the characters are still living the modes and mores of the nineteen thirties and seem as astonished as the viewers at the fantastic plot and sets. So in a clear sense the staging is the basic appeal to scientifically-minded film buffs.

Conversely, if you can appreciate an elaborate piece of fluffy unintentional camp, then JUST IMAGINE could be just what the doctor ordered. Loaded with a continual string of earnestly sung cornball melodies and stiffly-delivered pronouncements of love, one cannot help but fall more and more into a free-wheeling nostalgic spirit as each successive reel unwinds.

But whatever category you feel you're in -- if you've never seen the movie then JUST IMAGINE must definitely be placed on your con viewing list.
-----Jim Wnoroski

KING KONG

RKO 1933 100 minutes. Producers & Directors: Merian C. Cooper and Ernest B. Schoedsack. Screenplay: James Creelman and Ruth Rose. Story: signed by Edgar Wallace, actually by Merian C. Cooper. Art Directors: Carroll Clark and Al Herman. Cinematography: Edward Lindend. Special Effects: Willis O'Brien. Editing: Ted Cheeseman. Music: Max Steiner. Cast: Robert Armstrong, Fay Wray, Bruce Cabot, Frank Reicher, Sam Hardy, Noble Johnson, James Flavin, Victor Wong.

If anyone were to ask me what the greatest monster movie of all time was, I would have to say KING KONG. I doubt few people who have seen this classic could disagree with me.

KING KONG was Merian C. Cooper's modern telling of the "Beauty and the Beast" myth. His beauty was the lovely Fay Wray, who told movie audiences of the 30s what it meant to scream. The beast was Kong, an enormous gorilla, who ruled an island populated by superstitious natives and pre-historic monsters, and who caused her to scream. Kong was brought to life by Willis O'Brien through a combination of puppet animation, giant props, and special laboratory techniques. Despite the improved special effects techniques developed in later years by Ray Harryhausen (once Obie's pupil) and Academy Award nominee Jim Danforth, the animation by Obie in KONG has never been equalled.

But KING KONG isn't just all special effects. Unlike many films that are obvious imitations, KONG has a plot. And let's face it: except for

a minority of aficionados for various specialties of motion pictures, plot and characterization are most important. The plot of KING KONG, with its build-up to the first appearance of Kong, the following action, and the eventual climax, is perfect. If we can forget the outdated dialogue and somewhat hammy acting, KONG is as good today as when it was made. Perhaps that is why RKO will allow new films to be made using the Kong character -- but will never authorize a remake of KING KONG itself. The original is still the best. -----Donald F. Glut

LURK

Amateur (from Film-Makers' Cooperative in New York) 1965 38 minutes. Filmed in Maine. Directed by Rudy Burckhardt. Music selected by Frank O'Hara. Spoken soliloquies by Edwin Denby. Cast: Red Grooms [monster], Mimi Grooms, Edwin Denby, Yvonne & Jacob Burckhardt, Neil Williver and others.

"Happy with his luscious daughter Aurora in a rustic setting, Professor Borealis has devised an improved brain and is ready to transplant it. From this point the action keeps turning corners. Really great performance by Red Grooms. Photography and direction are topnotch Burckhardt, highly personal but pokerfaced. The humor is tenderly black. Burckhardt's fusion of documentary-type photography with fairy tale story is nearer Keystone than avantgarde [and demonstrates] its visual honesty and particular virtuosity." Edwin Denby, in Catalog 5 from Film-Makers' Cooperative.

This is an underground semi-spoof of the Karloff-Whale FRANKENSTEIN.

MAD LOVE

MGM 1935 85 minutes. Producer: John W. Considine. Director: Karl Freund. Screenplay: John Balderston & P.J. Wolfson. Adaptation: Guy Endore and Karl Freund. Art Director: Cedric Gibbons. Cinematography: Chester Lyons and Gregg Toland. Editing: Hugh Wynn. Music: Dimitri Tiomkin. Cast: Peter Lorre, Colin Clive, Frances Drake, Henry Kolker, Isabel Jewell, Keye Luke, Ian Wolfe, Charles Trowbridge, Rollo Lloyd. Based on the novel "Les Mains d'Orlac" by Maurice Renard.

Peter Lorre's film career was erratic -- he began in Fritz Lang's M, and his first English-language parts were in two good Hitchcock films, THE MAN WHO KNEW TOO MUCH and THE SECRET AGENT. Later, he appeared in many lurid, poor melodramas, and, after a strange illness caused him to become enormously fat, he was reduced to a series of comic menace parts. He was brought to the US to star in MAD LOVE, a remake of THE HANDS OF ORLAC and knew so little English he memorized his part by rote.

Lorre plays a mad surgeon who falls in love with the wife of one of his patients, a pianist whose hands, destroyed in an accident, have been replaced with those of a murderer by Dr. Peter. In most versions of ORLAC, the plot deals mainly with the pianist, but adapters Endore & Freund & scribes Balderston & Wolfson wisely switched the emphasis to the surgeon, and Lorre is fascinating in the part.

MAD LOVE is not a great horror/science fiction film, but it is very good; the camerawork (some scenes were imitated in a later film photographed by Toland, CITIZEN KANE) is excellent, and the set design is MGM-glossy. The film has many brilliant scenes, like Orlac's encounter with the man with the grafted head and the steel hands; the dream-montage is also striking.

Karl Freund, the director, is noted mainly for being one of the great cameramen of film history -- he photographed METROPOLIS, DRACULA, and THE GOOD EARTH, for instance -- but he did direct a few films, notably this one and Karloff's THE MUMMY. While these few instances aren't enough to form any real conclusions as to his style, both films are handsome productions, with

a slow, deliberate pace, and deal with unlikely love affairs.

The other actors in the film, even Colin Clive, Dr. Frankenstein himself, are washed out by the presence of Lorre, bald and twitching, laughing maniacally to his cockatoo, and transfixed with love. *Bill Warren*

MÜNCHAUSEN

German, UFA 1943 color 12 reels. Director: Josef von Baky. Screenplay: Erich Kastner. Art Directors: Emil Häster, Werner Klein, and Otto Gulstorff. Cinematography: Werner Krien. Special Effects: Konstantin Irmen-Tschet. Music: G. Haentzschel.

Cast: Hans Albers, Brigitte Horney, Ferdinand Marian, Hermann Speelmans, Käthe Haack, Michael Bohnen, Hans Brausewetter, Hubert von Meyerinck. Based on stories by Rudolf Erich Raspe.

MÜNCHAUSEN begins with a gala eighteenth-century ball at the Bodenwerder castle, provided over by the jovial but somewhat sinister Baron Munchausen and his wife. There is a sudden lovers' quarrel between two of the young guests; the girl flees the party and jumps into her Mercedes. We have been viewing a costume party, and the period is very definitely the present.

The baron and his much older wife attempt to reconcile the pair. He tells them of the adventures of his "ancestor," the fabulous Baron Munchausen, and the film goes into flashback, this time to the real eighteenth century.

Munchausen (Hans Albers) and his servant Christian (Hermann Speelmans) are visiting the baron's father, who is puzzled over his son's invention of a rifle which can see and shoot a distance of 200 kilometers. After a series of surrealistic sight gags (including the blasting of some clothing which has suddenly come to life in a closet), the pair decide to go to Braunschweig on the invitation of the local prince (Michael Bohnen), whom the Empress Catherine the Great has offered the command of a Russian regiment. The prince asks for Munchausen's help in convincing his lovely mistress Louise la Tour (Hilde von Stolz) to make the trip, and when this is accomplished the group sets off for Russia.

The dealings at the Russian court are devious. The magician Cagliostro (Ferdinand Marian) tries to enlist Munchausen in a plot against the empress, but without success. At a carnival, the baron meets a young girl named Katchen, who is later revealed to be Catherine (Brigitte Horney) in disguise. Munchausen becomes Catherine's new lover, kindling the jealousy of the former favorite, Prince Orlov (Anders Engelmann), who challenges the baron to a duel, wounding him slightly. Munchausen goes to the strange house of "Doctor" Cagliostro to get patched up, and while there warns Cagliostro that he is about to be arrested. Although the magician knows this, he rewards the baron with the secret of eternal youth, and also gives him a ring that will make him invisible for one hour. As the secret police break into the house, the pair make a fast getaway, using magic.

Catherine soon tires of Munchausen and sends him to Turkey in command of a regiment. As a joke, he is shot on a cannonball to Constantinople where he becomes a prisoner of the sultan (Leo Slezak). After a period of imprisonment he is reunited with his servant and a friend who proves to be the fastest runner in the world. The baron is offered his freedom if he will convert to the Moslem religion. He explains to the sultan that this would be impossible because he would have to drink water instead of wine, but the sultan tells him he does not really have to abstain -- and gives him a sample of his private stock of Tokay. Munchausen insists that the Tokay he drank at the palace of the Empress Maria Theresa in Vienna was twice as good. This leads to a bet in which the baron promises to provide the sultan with a bottle of the wine from Vienna in an hour. If he wins the bet he will have his freedom. Thanks to the wonderful runner, the bottle

is produced, leading to a second wager. If the wine is indeed better than the sultan's, Munchausen will be rewarded with the beautiful Princess Isabella d'Este (Isle Werner), a prisoner in the harem. Munchausen wins this bet, too, but the sultan reneges on his promise, attempting to pass off another girl as Isabella. Using the magic ring, the baron invades the harem, abducts the real princess, and sets sail for Venice.

He learns that the girl's family had planned to marry her to an old man. She fled the city but was abducted by pirates who sold her to the sultan. Her sudden return is no joy to her family, and her wicked brother Francesco (Werner Scharf) has her kidnapped a second time and locked up in a convent. Isabella's last meeting with Munchausen is one of the darker moments of the film, a mood which is quickly dispelled when the baron fights a duel with Francesco that results in the latter's clothes being cut to ribbons.

Munchausen and Christian, with the d'Este family in hot pursuit, escape in a giant balloon conveniently anchored in the Grand Canal. Their vehicle takes them to the moon. There, in a surrealist landscape, Christian ages and dies, because one day is equal to a year on earth -- but Munchausen is of course immortal. His gloom is dispelled by the presence of the daughter of the Man in the Moon (Marianne Simpson). She can be in two places at the same time by separating her head from her body. But even her charms soon pale, and the baron returns to Germany.

The scene now shifts back to the present, where Munchausen tells the startled young couple that he and his distinguished "ancestor" are one and the same. Thoroughly frightened, they flee the castle. The baroness, having observed that her husband is attracted to the girl, tells him to follow his new love. But instead, he renounces the gift of eternal youth to grow old with her.

After almost two years' work, the film was completed early in 1943. The finished print ran two and one-half hours, which everyone felt was too long. . . Small cuts were made here and there, and the original German release copy ran about 130 minutes. However, three different versions were prepared, two for export, which differ slightly from each other. The version in current release also seems to be missing a delightful sequence with a living musical clock. . . I have seen five different prints, no two alike. -- David Stewart Hull, in his book Films in the Third Reich, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1969.

MUNCHAUSEN was indeed made by Nazi Germany, but there are no traces of anything political in the film at all -- it could just as easily have been made, with language appropriately changed, in the United States at the same time. In fact, the minister of propaganda of Nazi Germany ordered this made in imitation of his favorite movie, the Korda THIEF OF BAGDAD. Director von Baky later said "The second greatest liar ordered a film about the first greatest liar, so we made it" (or words to that effect).

We are sorry if anyone is upset by our showing a film made in Nazi Germany, but, as we said, there is nothing at all of the Nazi about the movie -- and it is one of the greatest fantasies ever made. Wendayne Ackerman, who fled the Nazis, adores the film. -----Bill Warren

THE NIGHT OF THE HUNTER

United Artists 1955 93 minutes. Producer: Paul Gregory. Director: Charles Laughton. Screenplay: James Agee. Art Director: Hilyard Brown. Cinematography: Stanley Cortez. Editor: Robert Golden. Music: Walter Schumann.

NIGHT OF THE HUNTER

Cast: Robert Mitchum, Shelley Winters, Peter Graves, Lillian Gish, James Gleason, Evelyn Varden, Don Beddoe, Gloria Castillo, Billy Chapin, Sally Jane Bruce.

Based on the novel by Davis Grubb.

Stars in Hollywood are useful things: they come to have recognizable screen personalities (which may bear no relationship to their own personalities), and are used/cast in films in which these known personalities fit the main character, enabling the scripter to bypass a lot of characterization, and get on with the action.

Occasionally, an established star will step outside of his usual persona, presumably in an effort to prove to himself and others that he or she can really Act. Sometimes this is disastrous (John Wayne in THE BARBARIAN AND THE GEISHA), but occasionally it can be exciting and exactly right. And this is the case with Robert Mitchum in THE NIGHT OF THE HUNTER.

Mitchum plays the Preacher, a psychotic who talks with God and murders lonely women for their money. To his sloe-eyed, easy grace, which Mitchum always has, he adds for this part an underlying cruelty and insanity which is quite terrifying. Mitchum is an excellent actor when he wants to be, and I suspect he never wanted to be as much as he did in this part.

There are other excellences in THE NIGHT OF THE HUNTER. One is the screenplay, one of the very few written by James Agee, the finest film critic I know of. Agee died before this film was completed, and it is not quite the same picture he envisioned, to judge by his original draft which has been published. Still, most of his work remains, and it is so good that his early death is again proved a great loss.

Another tragedy is that THE NIGHT OF THE HUNTER is the only film ever to be directed by Charles Laughton. In almost every way, this film is exactly what one would expect from him, as it is the same sort of movie as he was an actor: broad, hammy, florid, old-fashioned, and brilliant.

By the way, while the first half is a horror film with terrifying scenes (the car in the lake, the sequence in the cellar, Mitchum singing "Leaning on the Everlasting Arms"), the second is like a John Ford/D.W. Griffith pastorella (with Griffith's favorite actress, Lillian Gish). — Bill Warren
The halves don't quite fit together, but both are very much worth seeing.

THE NIGHT STALKER

(Shooting title: THE KOLCHACK TAPES)

ABC-TV, made in 1971, shown in 1972 color about 75 minutes. Producer: Dan Curtis. Director: John Llewellyn Moxey. Story: Jeff Rice. Screenplay: Richard Matheson. Makeup: Jerry Dash. Art Director: Trevor Williams. Cinematography: Michel Hugo. Editor: Desmond Marquette. Music: Robert Cobert. Cast: Darren McGavin, Carol Lynley, Simon Oakland, Ralph Meeker, Claude Akins, Charles McGraw, Barry Atwater [vampire], Kent Smith, Larry Linville, Elisha Cook Jr., Stanley Adams.

A traditionally hard thing to bring off in horror movies is to set a standard supernatural menace in a modern context-- vampires, werewolves and witches are essentially unbelievable things, and to put them into a realistic, contemporary setting usually invites laughter. A few films have managed to succeed at this-- ROSEMARY'S BABY, on a much lower level, COUNT YORGA --VAMPIRE, and, most recently, THE NIGHT STALKER, an 1972 tv movie (making it eligible for next year's Hugo).

The director of the film, J. Llewellyn Moxey, doesn't amount to much -- he does a lot of these tv movies with about the same level of competence.

But THE NIGHT STALKER is much better than other tv movies, even much better than most theatrical horror films, and this is due almost entirely to Richard Matheson's excellent script.

Matheson, being (apparently) a horror movie buff himself, is aware of the difficulties presented in putting a vampire in Las Vegas, 1971. So he allows the on-screen characters to behave largely as people really would if a vampire was on the loose -- until the ultimate confrontation, they don't believe it for a minute. They encounter some pretty convincing evidence beforehand in the person of the vampire himself, but it isn't until our hero the reporter confronts the vampire in his own lair that He Is Convinced.

THE NIGHT STALKER is a violent, exciting film, with excellent use of real locations. Darren McGavin makes a satisfactory hero, and Barry Atwater, though on-screen only briefly, is a most convincing vampire. The movie was watched by more people than have ever watched a made-for-tv movie before, and apparently satisfied ABC-TV enough that they have ordered a sequel, currently being shot (THE TIME KILLER).

The film was produced by Dan Curtis, who was also in charge of ABC's soap opera gothic, "Dark Shadows." -----Bill Warren

THE PEOPLE

American Zoetrope (for ABC-TV) 1971 (shown 1972) color about 75 minutes.
Producer: Francis Ford Coppola. Director: John Korty. Screenplay: James M. Miller.

Cast: Kim Darby, William Shatner, Dan O'Herlihy, Diane Varsi, Chris Valentine, Laurie Walter, Johanna Baer.

Based on stories from "Pilgrimage: The Book of the People" by Zenna Henderson.

A science fiction pastorate is almost a contradiction in terms, yet it has been tried many times (most recently in a movie, SILENT RUNNING), never more successfully than in this made-for-tv movie.

Zenna Henderson's stories are beloved by many, and they became distressed when a movie was announced, fearing Hollywood would Screw It Up. But it isn't, strictly speaking, a Hollywood film, being made on location by American Zoetrope, a San Francisco-based film company. (The producer, Francis Ford Coppola, is normally a director, making movies in Hollywood like FINIAN'S RAINBOW and THE GODFATHER.) The result is a gentle, slow-paced film, and one of the two best science fiction movies of 1971.

The treatment of the story is honest and sincere -- the writer and the director really seem to care about what they were doing. The sf elements are not sloughed off or glossed over, but introduced as they were in the original stories, gradually and not pretentiously.

The production is beautiful -- the locations are in Northern California, and as far as I know, haven't been used in films before. The paintings telling of the People's leaving of Home are quite impressive; I wish we had been able to get them as a display for the Art Show.

In the lead, Kim Darby is good as the new teacher in the valley, and Dan O'Herlihy and Diane Varsi are also fine as the elder and younger spokesmen of The People.

I personally feel that this film belongs on next year's Hugo ballot, which is why it is being shown now. -----Bill Warren

PLAN 9 FROM OUTER SPACE

J. Edward Reynolds (Distributing Corporation of America) 1956 (released in 1958) 79 minutes. Producer, Director, Screenwriter and Editor: Edward D. Wood Jr. Cinematography: William C. Thompson. Music: Gordon Zahler.

PLAN 9

Cast: Gregory Walcott, Mona McKinnon, Duke Moore, Tom Keene, Lyle Talbot, Tor Johnson, Vampira (Maila Nurmi), Bela Lugosi.

An almost legendary movie, PLAN 9 is one of the most famous low-budget films of all time. Not because of what it accomplishes with its low budget -- it's just famous for its low budget. Other films, of course, have spent hardly more than a dime or two and have done their best to cover up the fact. PLAN 9 has no such pretensions: Everything that was saved on production shows in the finished product. It's a tour-de-force of movie-making shortcuts. It was the model until Jerry Warren (ATTACK OF THE MAYAN MUMMY, CURSE OF THE STONE HAND) revolutionized the field with his cost-cutting techniques. If I remember rightly, it has "neat scenes" of rays turning bodies into skeletons and corpses rising out of the ground. And as I recall there are also some beings in a spaceship making large pronouncements and deciding the fate of the world below them. [This takes place in a room -- an ordinary room with square corners and a door. bw] And I think PLAN 9 includes the classic "drunk" scene in which a drunk sees something fantastical and throws his bottle away, perhaps a reformed man. It is also sobering to note that this is the only movie in which Bela Lugosi, Vampira, and Lyle Talbot appeared together and that such a casting coup can never occur again. But for a brief time it was possible, and Edward D. Wood Jr. seized upon his chance. -----Don Willis

THE POINT

Nilsson House Music Inc. with Murakami-Wolf Productions, Incorporated (ABC-TV) made in 1970, shown in 1971 color animated about 75 minutes.

Producer: Harry Nilsson, with Jerry Good, Fred Wolf, and Larry Gordon.

Director & Animator: Fred Wolf. Story & Songs (written & sung): Harry Nilsson.

Screenplay: Norman Lenzer. Production Design: Gary Lund.

Graphic Production: Kunimi Terada, Fumiko Roche, Elizabeth Wright, Wilma Guenot, and Ann Oliphant. Production Manager: Sherman Thompson.

Additional Animation: Vincent Davis and Charles Swenson. Music: George Tipton. Narrator: Dustin Hoffman. Voices: Michael Lookinland.

To date, this film has been the only feature-length cartoon made just for television, although there have been several theatrical cartoon features that were spinoffs from tv, like the Peanuts features. THE POINT is superior to most of these tv-movie hybrids, both in plot and execution.

It tells the tale of a land where everyone's head comes to a point -- that is, everyone's but that of our little hero and his dog, Arrow. These two round-heads are exiled from their city, and have many adventures as they eventually win acceptance.

The animation is in the stylized, limited fashion that is an outgrowth of the work of UPA studios in the early 50s. You won't find any elaborate special animation effects, like in the typical Disney features, in THE POINT. Instead, the main creativity of the animation lies in its design and story.

The plot is simple-minded and moralizing, something like THE PHANTOM TOLLBOOTH, but the songs are good, and the film overall is sweet and pleasant.--BW

RADIO RANCH

(feature version of serial THE PHANTOM EMPIRE)

Mascot 1935 7 reels. Presented by: Nat Levine. Producer: Armand Schaefer.

Director: Otto Brower and B. Reeves Eason. Story: Wallace MacDonald, Gerald Geraghty, and H. Freedman. Screenplay: John Rathmell and Armand Schaefer.

Editors: Earl Turner and Walter Thompson. Cinematography: Ernest Miller & William Nobles.

Cast: Gene Autry, Frankie Darro, "Smiley" Burnett, Betsy King Ross, Wheeler

Oakman, Peter Potter (Bill Moore), Hal Taliaferro (Wally Wales).

What could be worse? Gene Autry about to be destroyed by the super-scientific gadgetry of Murania, the underground kingdom ... or his failure to ride up to the microphone of his radio station in time to sing "That Silver-Haired Daddy of Mine"?

Gene Autry seemed to think the latter was the more dire peril in RADIO RANCH, the feature-length film made from the Mascot serial of 1935, PHANTOM EMPIRE. It wasn't too surprising that Autry considered his radio job more important than saving the world from that subterranean civilization. This was his first starring film (although he appeared briefly as a singing attraction in the serial MYSTERY MOUNTAIN and the feature IN OLD SANTA FE, both starring Ken Maynard) and he got his jobs in the movies only after proving himself as a singer of cowboy songs on the radio. Maybe Autry was worried about losing his old job in the event that PHANTOM EMPIRE bombed at the box office. It didn't. And Gene Autry would go on to learn how to act, be one of the movies' most popular Western stars, and to own most of Los Angeles.

RADIO RANCH is a bizarre combination of Western and science fiction elements and must be seen to be believed. Cowboys vs. robots, six-shooters against rayguns. Since it was made by Mascot, don't expect to see anything of "the art of the cinema." But if you can project yourself back to a movie theater in 1935 and be a kid munching on popcorn to the rhythm of the Thunder Riders' hoofbeats, when your imagination supplied what producer Nat Levine's budgets lacked, then you'll really enjoy RADIO RANCH. --Donald F. Glut.

SPY SMASHER RETURNS

(feature version of serial, SPY SMASHER)

Republic 1942 (recut in 1966) 100 minutes. Associate Producer: W.J. O'Sullivan. Director: William Witney. Screenplay: Ronald Davidson, Norman S. Hall, William Lively, Joseph O'Donnell, and Joseph Poland. Cinematography: Reggie Lanning. Special Effects: Howard Lydecker. Editors: Tony Martinelli and Edward Todd. Music: Mort Glickman, Arnold Schwarzwald, Paul Sawtell, and Beethoven.

Cast: Kane Richmond, Sam Flint, Marguerite Chapman, Hans Schumm, Tristram Coffin.

Based on the character from Fawcett Publication's "Whiz Comics."

To many aficionados of sound serials, SPY SMASHER was the greatest cliffhanger ever made. It is a fantastic wartime propaganda chapterplay, with a costumed hero called Spy Smasher (played by heroic Kane Richmond) battling the Nazis. He has the help of his identical twin brother and some government men. But when you see this one, you'll believe that Spy Smasher could have done it all by himself.

Unlike most serials that have been cut into features, SPY SMASHER RETURNS holds up as a full-length movie. The serial had five writers who managed to keep a real "plot" progressing throughout the dozen episodes. It can be viewed by adults in 1972 and stand up as a well-made adventure film.

SPY SMASHER was made by Republic, the greatest factory for serials and action features, during the years when the highest budgets and greatest care went into their purportedly juvenile product. William Witney directed it as though he knew that some people in the audience were old enough to appreciate good work. Kane Richmond played his dual (or should we say triple?) role with subtle differences in personality and with all the qualities of a hero. Dave Sharpe doubled Richmond in some of the greatest stunt fights ever recorded on film. And the special effects of Howard Lydecker will have you gasping -- and wondering if all those wonderful explosions are really done in miniature. -----Donald F. Glut

SVENGALI

Warner Brothers 1931 79 minutes. Director: ARchie Mayo. Screenplay: J. Grubb Alexander. Cinematography: Barney McGill. Editor: William Holmes.

Cast: John Barrymore [Svengali], Marian Marsh, Donald Crisp, Luis Alberni, Lumsden Hare, Carmel Myers, Bramwell Fletcher.

SVENGALI is another of the early 30s non-Universal attempts to cash in on the financial success reaped by that studio's DRACULA. Like DRACULA, the film is primitive in its filmic techniques (though there is one notable shot in which the camera pulls away from the title character to pan over the rooftops of Paris coming to rest in the room of the hypnotised Trilby) and little more than a stage play set to film. Its chief asset is the magnetic presence of the incomparable John Barrymore, who gives the title role of musician-hypnotist Svengali all the melodramatic graces of Bela Lugosi, Ernest Thesiger, and Leslie Banks rolled into one. Really, it's not so much of a horror film as it is a vehicle for Barrymore. Set in 19th Century Paris, it is a simple tale of a boy and girl separated by an evil hypnotist who has the power to change the girl into a singer of tremendous appeal, although he is unable to destroy her romantic tie with her true love. The film prompted Warner Brothers to film a semi-remake called THE MAD GENIUS, featuring Boris Karloff in a minor role.

TARGETS

(Shooting title: BEFORE I DIE)

Saticoy Productions (Paramount release) 1967 (1968 release) color
98 minutes.

Executive Producer: Roger Corman. Produced, Directed, Screenplay & Edited by Peter Bogdanovich. Story: Polly Platt and Peter Bogdanovich. Production Design: Polly Platt. Cinematography: Laszlo Kovacs.

Cast: Boris Karloff, Peter Bogdanovich, Tim O'Kelly, Nancy Hsueh, James Brown, Sandy Baron, Tanya Morgan.

Between 1945 and 1967, Boris Karloff appeared in more garbage and bad films than any actor as good as he was should have. But he always said that he wanted to die acting, that he would take good parts if they were offered and bad ones if no good were available. Very few he made in his career are better than TARGETS.

The director, Peter Bogdanovich (THE LAST PICTURE SHOW; WHAT'S UP, DOC?) was given Karloff for a few days by producer Roger Corman, and in those few days produced this excellent, thrilling story of a sniper. The film is essentially a Hitchcockian melodrama about a young man who goes bananas, shoots his family, climbs on top of an oil tank and shoots cars on the freeway, then goes to a drive-in theater, climbs behind the screen, and shoots some more.

Paralleling this is the story of Byron Orlock, an aging horror movie actor who thinks that his style of horror/terror is now dead, and he wants to retire. Eventually, there is a confrontation between Karloff and the young killer, played extremely well by Tim O'Kelly.

The film is tense and exciting, extremely suspenseful from the point where the young man types "...before I die..." to the climax.

The major virtues of the film are its direction and editing (Bogdanovich himself plays the director in the film, none too well), and Karloff, giving a performance as fine as his best anywhere, in a film he truly enjoyed making. (The scene in which Karloff tells Maugham's story of "An Appointment in Smarra" was shot in one take without rehearsal.)

This may be the best film we are showing at the convention; I urge you not to miss it. ---Bill Warren

THE TRANSATLANTIC TUNNEL

(shooting title: THE TUNNEL)

British, Gaumont 1935 94 minutes.

Director: Maurice Elvey. Adaptation: Curt Siodmak. Screenplay: Clemence Dane and L. du Garde Peach. Cinematography: Gunther Krampf. Editor: Charles Frend.

Cast: Richard Dix, Leslie Banks, Madge Evans, Helen Vinson, C. Aubrey Smith, Jimmy Hanley, Basil Sidney, George Arliss, Walter Huston.

Based on the novel "Der Tunnel" by Bernhard Kellermann.

"Arresting and strikingly mounted. . . An imaginative drama in the best Jules Verne tradition. . . Definitely successful in dramatizing the tunnel as a monster which devours men and money." --Andre Sennwald, New York Times 28 October 1935.

"Smoothly produced and graphically photographed, this is a tense melodrama of a scientific tomorrow. The exciting mechanical angles of the tunnel's construction dwarf Dix's domestic drama with Madge Evans." --- Photoplay, January 1936.

"Convincing story, competent acting, intelligent dialogue, and pleasing background. . . Shows television as a perfected reality." --- Motion Picture Reviews.

"A story that would have delighted the heart of Jules Verne, and it is conceived in the manner of Verne at his best. . . a striking picture." --- Canadian Magazine, December 1935.

VOODOO MAN

Monogram 1944 62 minutes. Producers: Sam Katzman and Jack Dietz. Associate Producer: Barney Sarecky. Director: William Beaudine. Screenplay: Robert Charles. Set Design: David Milton. Cinematography: Marcel Le Picard. Editor: Carl Pierson. Music Director: Edward Kay. Cast: Bela Lugosi, John Carradine, George Zucco, Wanda McKay, Louise Currie, Michael Ames, Ellen Hall, Henry Hall.

VOODOO MAN was one of the near dozen thrillers Bela Lugosi appeared in for Monogram Pictures, one of the more infamous of the cheapie studios which ultimately became Allied Artists in the 50s. The film falls into the same category as PRC's THE DEVIL BAT, in that it is outwardly trashy in terms of seriousness, while possessing sequences, dialogue and characters which are sure to amuse you, provided you have geared yourself to the brand of warped, unintentional humor this film provides. Like WHITE ZOMBIE, Lugosi is something of a sorcerer in this one, with a wife who is suffering from a strange malady which has rendered her a living zombie. With the help of equally deranged cohorts, George Zucco and John Carradine, young ladies are steered to Lugosi's country residence where voodoo ceremonies are conducted in an effort to restore Bela's wife to normalcy. The humor comes from the dated acting and situations, and especially with John Carradine's portrayal of the moronic henchman, 'Job,' one of the more degrading characters he's ever played, but a delight to watch. An interesting note is that at the time of the film Carradine vowed never to appear in another horror movie of this quality, preferring Shakespeare instead. Since then, however, ASTRO-ZOMBIES, BIG FOOT, BILLY THE KID VS. DRACULA and numerous others indicate that he prefers eating to his alternate thespian choices, and thankfully for us, for Carradine is one of the greatest purveyors of horror satire, unintentional (as it seems here) or otherwise. ---Ronald V. Borst

WHITE ZOMBIE

United Artists 1932 73 minutes. Producer: Edward Halperin. Director: Victor Halperin. Screenplay: Garnett Weston. Art Director: Ralph Berger. Make-up: Jack Pierce. Cinematography: Arthur Martinelli. Editor: Edward W. Wilson. Music: Stanley Wilson.

Cast: Bela Lugosi, Madge Bellamy, John Harron, Robert Frazer, Brandon Hurst.

Suggested by the book "Magic Island" by William Seabrook.

As a whole WHITE ZOMBIE cannot perhaps be convincingly defended. As a vehicle for Bela Lugosi though, it could hardly be better. In most of his roles as Evil Incarnate, Lugosi was saddled with lines of such surpassing idiocy (almost any line in THE RAVEN) that even his distinctive delivery was subordinated to the camp effect of the dialogue. Again, most of his directors simply had no flair for creating the dynamic situations and scenes needed to set off Lugosi's unique talents. They were more at home directing the East Side Kids or Abbott and Costello. Lugosi was a limited actor, but I think within his range quite good (and outside it still more interesting than most actors), and in WHITE ZOMBIE (and parts of others like DRACULA and MURDERS IN THE RUE MORGUE), he got the role, the dialogue, and the director he needed to utilize his particular talent for a kind of sarcastic, haughty menace. In one memorable sequence he casually whittles a voodoo charm and tauntingly chats with a paralyzed victim, and we see briefly what his career might have been had he chosen his roles more judiciously. In fact, one might almost say that until you've seen WHITE ZOMBIE, you really haven't seen Lugosi. The rest of the movie has its atmospheric, low-budget-resourcefulness charms, but even the best of it is not on a level with Lugosi's admirable characterization. And the worst of it is pretty bad. -----Don Willis

WITCHCRAFT THROUGH THE AGES

(Original title: HAXAN)

Swedish, 1921 (released here in 1922, rereleased in 1939) Released by Biograph originally silent 7000 feet.

Director, Story & Screenplay: Benjamin Christensen. Art Director: Holst-Jørgensen. Sets: Richard Louw. Cinematography: John Ankerstjerne. Editor: Richard Louw.

Cast: Benjamin Christensen [the Devil], Elizabeth Christensen, Maren Pedersen, Clara Pontopiddan, Tora Teje, Elith Pio.

Rereleased in 1969: Music: Daniel Humair. Narrator: William Burroughs.

Again, like INTERNATIONAL HOUSE, there isn't a great deal that can be said about this film, at least in this brief space -- it deserves a lengthy essay. WITCHCRAFT THROUGH THE AGES is unique -- there never has been, probably never will be again, a film remotely like it. A beautifully designed documentary about witchcraft, the film keeps dropping unexpectedly into broad (intentional) comedy. The director himself plays the Devil, popping up from time to time with a leer and wagging tongue. Demons and witches abound, and other things creep about in corners of the screen.

The new music score is not good, the narration is fair; yet I have never met anyone who did not like this film. It is marvelous entertainment. -----Bill Warren

This is a rush job, and naturally we couldn't be expected to give you Perfection. So, out of alphabetical order:

THE DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL

20th Century-Fox 1951 92 minutes (release: 89 minutes) Producer: Julian Blaustein. Director: Robert Wise. Screenplay: Edmund H. North. Art Directors: Lyle Wheeler and Addison Hehr. Cinematography: Leo Tover. Editor: William Reynolds. Special Effects: Fred Sersen. Music: Bernard Herrmann. Cast: Michael Rennie [alien], Patricia Neal, Sam Jaffe, Hugh Marlow, Billy Gray, James Seay, Drew Pearson, Francis Bavier, Lock Martin [robot]. Based on the story "Farewell to the Master" by Harry Bates.

Revered by most science fiction film enthusiasts as a classic in the field, this Robert Wise feature has yet to be out-paced by the socio-political problems that beset us even today -- 21 years after the motion picture first hit the American screens.

Based on Harry Bates' short story "Farewell to the Master" published in Astounding in the 40s, the film version bears little resemblance to its literary counterpart.

Some interesting highlights of the film include a life-size rubber flying saucer held rigid by compressed air. First assembled in Washington D.C. (for long shots), the balloon was dismantled and later reconstructed on Fox's back lot for the medium and close shots. Careful scrutiny will reveal an obvious change in surroundings in different scenes.

Other observers should be on the lookout for the slightly grainy quality during the film's first twenty minutes which is attributed to the use of color stock -- later discarded due, perhaps, to budget limitations.

Rounding out the fine film are the excellent special effects by Fred Sersen, the first-rate dialogue by screen writer Edmund H. North, and the eerie electronic musical score by Bernard Herrmann, composer for such noted fantasy films as THE SEVENTH VOYAGE OF SINBAD, MYSTERIOUS ISLAND and JOURNEY TO THE CENTER OF THE EARTH, as well as many Alfred Hitchcock films.

-----Jim Wnoroski