



Table of Contents

[Middletown \(NJ\) Public Library Science Fiction Discussion Group](#)

[Mark's Picks for Turner Classic Movies for December](#) (comments by Mark R. Leeper and Evelyn C. Leeper)
[Wooden Satellites and Brick Moons](#) (comments by Evelyn C. Leeper)
[Synchronicity](#) (letter of comment by Jay E. Morris)
[This Week's Reading](#) (SPECTACLE ENTERTAINMENTS OF EARLY IMPERIAL ROME) (book comments by Evelyn C. Leeper)
[Quote of the Week](#)

Co-Editor: Mark Leeper, mleeper@optonline.net
 Co-Editor: Evelyn Leeper, eleeper@optonline.net
 Sending Address: evelynchmelisleeper@gmail.com
 All material is copyrighted by author unless otherwise noted.
 All comments sent or posted will be assumed authorized for inclusion unless otherwise noted.

To subscribe or unsubscribe, send mail to eleeper@optonline.net
 The latest issue is at <http://www.leepers.us/mtvoid/latest.htm>
 An index with links to the issues of the MT VOID since 1986 is at http://leepers.us/mtvoid/back_issues.htm.

Middletown (NJ) Public Library Science Fiction Discussion Group:

Dec 5 Xmas Bonus: Dr Who: THE CHRISTMAS INVASION (2005) and TWILIGHT ZONE: "The Star" (1985) & short stories: "The Star" by Arthur C. Clarke (1955) <https://sites.uni.edu/morgans/astro/course/TheStar.pdf> "Rebuttal" by Betsy Curtis (1956) <https://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/67455>

Mark's Picks for Turner Classic Movies for December (comments by Mark R. Leeper and Evelyn C. Leeper):

TCM has, of course, a plethora of Christmas films for December. They are running the Reginald Owen version multiple times, but the Alistair Sim version not at all. Whether or not that is an issue over the rights, it's a shame, as the Sim version is the classic.

But they are also running an excellent non-Christmas film, BLACK ORPHEUS. They haven't totally abandoned the holiday concept--BLACK ORPHEUS takes place during Carnival (a.k.a., Carnival, beginning the Friday afternoon before Ash Wednesday and ending at noon on Ash Wednesday; in the U.S. the parallel holiday is Mardi Gras, which is a single day, the day before Ash Wednesday).

The film is the re-telling of the myth of Orpheus and Eurydice, set in a favela in Rio de Janeiro. Known for its soundtrack, featuring what have become classic bossa nova songs, it won the Palme d'Or at Cannes in 1959 and the Academy Award and Golden Globe Awards for Best Foreign Film in 1960. But in keeping with the trend at the time, its soundtrack was not even nominated. It should be noted that many Brazilians (and scholars) feel it reinforces negative stereotypes and "exotizates" Brazil. It should also be noted that these criticisms could be applied to many of the films of that era. [-mrl/ec]

[BLACK ORPHEUS, Tuesday, December 10, 3:00AM]

There is also a 24-hour "Andy Hardy" festival stating on December 26 for those so inclined:

THURSDAY, December 26
 8:45 AM Judge Hardy's Children (1938)
 10:15 AM Love Finds Andy Hardy (1938)
 12:00 PM Out West with the Hardys (1938)
 1:30 PM The Hardys Ride High (1939)
 3:00 PM Andy Hardy Gets Spring Fever (1939)
 4:30 PM Judge Hardy and Son (1939)
 6:15 PM Andy Hardy Meets Debutante (1940)
 8:00 PM Andy Hardy's Private Secretary (1941)
 10:00 PM Life Begins for Andy Hardy (1941)

FRIDAY, December 27
 12:00 AM The Courtship of Andy Hardy (1942)
 1:45 AM Andy Hardy's Double Life (1942)
 3:30 AM Andy Hardy's Blonde Trouble (1944)
 5:30 AM Love Laughs at Andy Hardy (1946)
 7:15 AM Andy Hardy Comes Home (1958)

And a "Thin Man" festival on December 31:

TUESDAY, December 31
 9:15 AM The Thin Man (1934)
 11:00 AM After the Thin Man (1936)
 1:00 PM Another Thin Man (1939)
 2:45 PM Shadow of the Thin Man (1941)
 4:30 PM The Thin Man Goes Home (1945)
 6:15 PM Song of the Thin Man (1947)

Other films of interest include:

THURSDAY, December 5
 8:00 PM A Midsummer Night's Dream (1935)

FRIDAY, December 6
 4:00 PM Knights of the Round Table (1953)
 10:00 PM Hamlet (1948)

SATURDAY, December 7
 10:07 AM Bomba, the Jungle Boy (1949)

SUNDAY, December 8
 11:45 AM A Christmas Carol (1938)
 1:00 PM Ben-Hur (1959)
 5:00 PM King of Kings (1961)

MONDAY, December 9
 6:00 AM Safari Drums (1953)
 8:30 AM Rhino! (1964)
 10:15 AM Mighty Joe Young (1949)
 6:00 PM Tarzan, The Ape Man (1981)

TUESDAY, December 10
 3:00 AM Black Orpheus (1959)
 5:00 AM Sylvia and the Phantom (1946)
 6:45 AM The Glass Slipper (1955)

WEDNESDAY, December 11
 10:00 AM The Crimson Pirate (1952)

THURSDAY, December 12
 3:45 AM The Colossus of Rhodes (1961)

SATURDAY, December 14
 10:09 AM Bomba on Panther Island (1949)

MONDAY, December 16
 5:00 AM The Funeral (1984)
 8:00 AM The Terminal Man (1974)
 10:00 AM The Omega Man (1971)
 11:45 AM Westworld (1973)
 1:30 PM Soylent Green (1973)
 3:30 PM Logan's Run (1975)
 5:30 PM Close Encounters of the Third Kind (1977)

THURSDAY, December 19
 4:30 PM The Extraordinary Seaman (1969)

SATURDAY, December 21
 7:30 AM The Curse of the Cat People (1944)
 10:30 AM A Christmas Carol (1938)

TUESDAY, December 24
 5:15 AM A Carol for Another Christmas (1964)
 8:45 AM A Carol for Another Christmas (1964)

WEDNESDAY, December 25
 12:00 AM A Christmas Carol (1938)
 1:30 AM Beyond Tomorrow (1940)
 6:00 AM Star in the Night (1945)
 10:15 AM The Great Rupert (1950)
 10:00 PM Topper (1937)

THURSDAY, December 26
 12:00 AM Cabin in the Sky (1943)
 2:00 AM Blithe Spirit (1945)
 6:00 AM A Family Affair (1936)
 7:15 AM You're Only Young Once (1938)

SATURDAY, December 28
 12:15 AM Blood Simple (1984)
 10:08 AM The Hidden City (1950)
 12:00 PM Xanadu (1980)

MONDAY, December 30
 12:45 PM The Manchurian Candidate (1962)

TUESDAY, December 31
 4:00 AM House on Haunted Hill (1958)
 5:30 AM The Exterminating Angel (1962)
 7:15 AM Judex (1963)

Wooden Satellites and Brick Moons (comments by Evelyn C. Leeper):

The Japanese have launched a wooden satellite (unlocked links):

https://www.nytimes.com/2024/11/05/science/japan-wooden-satellite.html?unlocked_article_code=1.cU4.kl.hZ.FZPfaXazG57S&smid=url-share

or
<https://inyurl.com/wooden-moon>>

This reminded me of Edward Everett Hale's story "The Brick Moon", published in 1869, and considered the first science fiction story with an artificial satellite. This novella was the subject of the book discussion of the Mt. Holz Science Fiction Society on 01/03/96; here is what Mark wrote at the time:

"Our next book discussion goes back to the origins of American science fiction. In fact it is a remarkable short novel written just four years after Jules Verne's FROM THE EARTH TO THE MOON and turns out to be a surprisingly inventive piece of science fiction. In one fell swoop it invents the concept of not just the earth satellite, but the synchronous satellite and the space station. All this written in 1869. The author is Edward Everett Hale. Now many of us know that name because in seventh grade we were forced to read his story "The Man Without a Country." What we were not told is that the same man wrote science fiction. The short novel is "The Brick Moon." The story deals with a plan to put into orbit an artificial moon that could be used for navigation. To resist the heat of being hurled into space it is to be made of brick and covered with rock dust that will melt and make it airtight. The story goes into detail on the building of satellite and an unforeseen accident that sends it into space before its time with passengers who find they must learn to live on this new artificial world. Much of the science in this story is well thought out. (Of course, much is also completely wrong as well.) [-mrl, MT VOID, 12/29/95]

Not surprisingly, it is available in Project Gutenberg (<https://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/1633>). [-ec]

Synchronicity (letter of comment by Jay E. Morris):

In response to [Evelyn's comments on EVIL UNDER THE SUN \(1982\)](#) in the 11/22/24 issue of the MT VOID, Jay E. Morris writes:

I think this is the third time you've posted a review within two or three days of me watching the movie. [-jem]

This Week's Reading (book comments by Evelyn C. Leeper):

SPECTACLE ENTERTAINMENTS OF EARLY IMPERIAL ROME by Richard C. Beacham (Yale University Press, ISBN 978-0-300-07382-9) is admittedly a highly specialized book. One way you can tell is that the references to original sources use some arcane set of abbreviations that scholars of ancient Rome will probably immediately understand, but the average person will not. E.g., Tac. Ann. 12:42.3-4; Dio 60.33.2. (Actually, I could probably take a stab at it, though I wonder if what I think it means depends on the edition. Or are editions of the Annals of Tacitus all numbered exactly the same, like the Bible? But some of the references are not as obvious as "Tacitus".)

But if I don't write about specialized books, I will have weeks when I can't fill this column. And we can't let that happen, can we? Can we?

Anyway, Beacham goes into great detail, not just about the obvious spectacles (gladiatorial battles, chariots race, wild beast hunts), but also the various dramatic and artistic presentations. Indeed, he spends almost all his time on those entertainments, and on funerals, triumphs, and other "spectacles" than on the ones people think of first.

Some of his claims are a bit unorthodox. For example, he seems to think that Nero was genuinely talented and won all his awards on the basis of his skill.

He also looks at the position of the emperor in all this. Rather than being in total control, the emperor had to perform for the crowd as much as the actual performers. Beacham says, for example, that much of Tiberius's unpopularity was due to his scorn of the games, and emperors needed to support the games with enthusiastic attendance.

As for the details about the various specialized forms of drama, poetry, music, and so on, I doubt most people who are not already familiar with them, will be able to follow everything, but one can certainly get the gist of it.

(By the way, the book actually starts with the late Republic; "early Imperial Rome" itself seems to be Julius Caesar through Nero, that is the Julio-Claudian dynasty.)

[-ec]

Mark Leeper
mleeper@optonline.net

Quote of the Week:

No experiment should be believed until it has been confirmed by theory.

--Sir Arthur Eddington

Go to [our home page](#) THE MT VOID