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Special
Amicus Films Issue



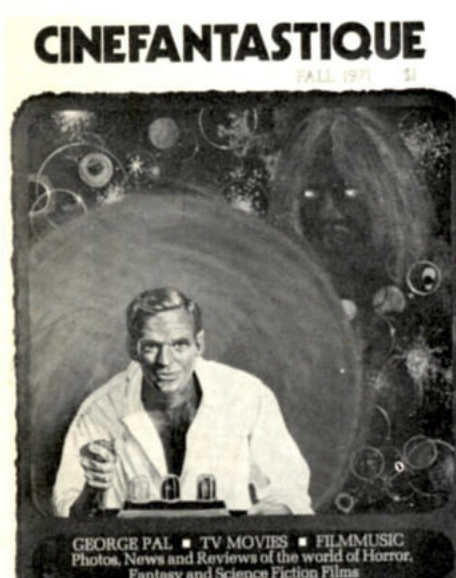
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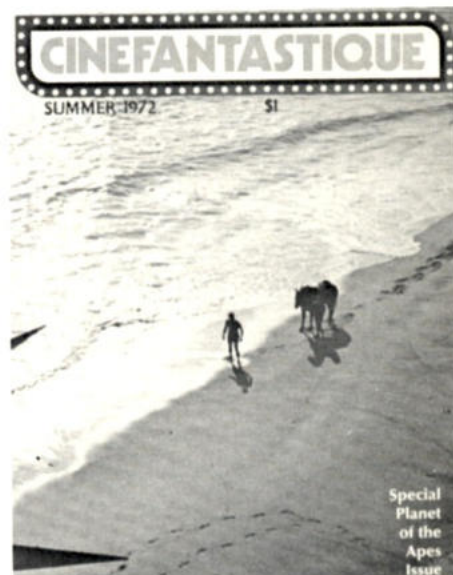
Volume 1 Number 3



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SUMMER

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THE AMICUS EMPIRE

Chris Knight interviews Milton Subotsky, screenwriter and production chief of Amicus Productions Ltd, one of the world's leading producers of quality horror films, and reports on the filming of two forthcoming features, --AND NOW THE SCREAMING STARTS! and VAULT OF HORROR. Subotsky shows an interest and enthusiasm for genre films that is exciting and refreshing.

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1957

ROCK, ROCK, ROCK

1958

JAMBOREE

1959

THE LAST MILE

HORROR HOTEL (John Moxey)

1960

RING-A-DING RHYTHM

1961

JUST FOR FUN

GIRL OF THE NIGHT

1962

LAD: A DOG

1964

DR. TERROR'S HOUSE OF HORRORS
(Freddie Francis)

1965

THE WORLD OF ABBOTT & COSTELLO

THE SKULL (Freddie Francis)

DR. WHO AND THE DALEKS
(Gordon Flemyng)

THE PSYCHOPATH (Freddie Francis)

THE DEADLY BEES (Freddie Francis)

1966

DALEKS - INVASION EARTH 2150 A. D.
(Gordon Flemyng)

THE TERRORNAUTS
(Montgomery Tully)

THEY CAME FROM BEYOND SPACE
(Freddie Francis)

TORTURE GARDEN (Freddie Francis)

1967

DANGER ROUTE

1968

THE BIRTHDAY PARTY

THANK YOU ALL VERY MUCH

1969

THE MIND OF MR. SOAMES
(Alan Cooke)

SCREAM AND SCREAM AGAIN
(Gordon Hessler)

1970

THE HOUSE THAT DRIPPED BLOOD
(Peter Duffell)

I. MONSTER (Stephen Weeks)

1971

WHAT BECAME OF JACK AND JILL?

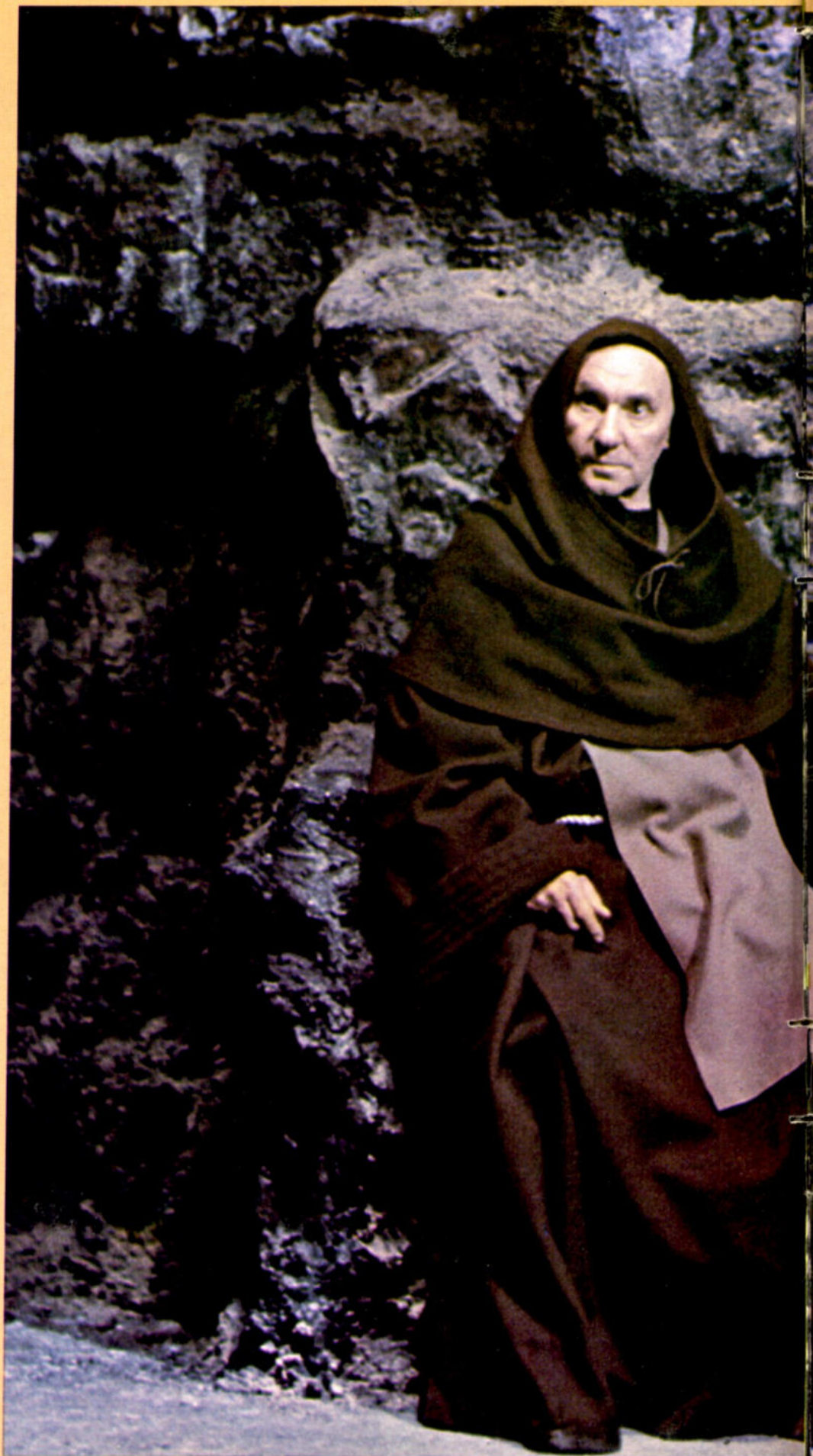
TALES FROM THE CRYPT
(Freddie Francis)


1972

ASYLUM (Roy Ward Baker)

--AND NOW THE SCREAMING STARTS!
(Roy Ward Baker)

VAULT OF HORROR (Roy Ward Baker)





THE AMICUS EMPIRE

Chris Knight interviews Milton Subotsky, screenwriter and production chief of Amicus Pictures, one of the world's leading producers of quality horror films.

Over the past several years there have appeared a series of films which captured the attention of fantasy film lovers throughout the world. These films include *DR. TERROR'S HOUSE OF HORRORS*, *TORTURE GARDEN*, *THE SKULL*, *THE HOUSE THAT DRIPPED BLOOD* and more recently *ASYLUM* and the extremely successful *TALES FROM THE CRYPT*. These excursions into the world of the macabre were brought to the screen through the courtesy of Amicus Productions, a company headed by two Americans, Max J. Rosenberg, who spends most of his time in America arranging the financing of the pictures, and Milton Subotsky, the head of production in England, who has lived here since 1959. Perhaps the most noticeable aspect of the Amicus operation is the great care that is taken on each subject. They are well mounted, have a strong cast and most of all, they have a very good script.

The company's base of operations in England is at Shepperton Studios where Milton Subotsky maintains his brown painted office. One of six chalets, all identical, it is clustered between two sound stages. His desk is littered with papers and telephones and on the surrounding shelves are neatly stacked hundreds and hundreds of books, magazines, paperbacks, and hard covers, all seemingly connected with horror, fantasy and science fiction. The Amicus story really begins in the late 1950s and it was to Milton Subotsky that I went to talk about the company, to find his views on films and to discover what goes into the making of a successful film producer.

Milton could not be mistaken for anything but an American, with slightly greying hair and an infectious smile. He greeted me with a courteous "Hi there," cleared a chair of newly written scripts and bade me sit down and make myself at home.

During our interview Milton referred to films by their English release titles, and American release titles are footnoted where different. The dates given throughout are production dates (see filmography, page facing) which are, in most cases, a year earlier than the film's American release.

CFQ: How did you become involved in filmmaking?

SUBOTSKY: I always wanted to make films ever since I was a kid. I was really movie crazy. I'd go to the movies constantly. I remember when I was in high school, I used to see six pictures on a Saturday. I would save up my lunch money—I would go without lunches—and on Saturday morning I'd go downtown, to Brooklyn, and see three double features starting early in the morning. My family thought that filmmaking was a disreputable business, so I studied engineering and went to the Cooper Union School of Engineering in New York at night. During the day I went out and got a job in a film company. I was assistant cameraman in documentaries which meant that I did everything, carry the camera, load it, walk behind it with the battery because at that time it was battery operated and from that I went to film editing and then I started writing scripts. I went into the Army and wrote scripts for technical training films all during the war and was a film editor part of the time.

CFQ: What sort of film training did you get in the Army?

SUBOTSKY: I didn't get any training at all. By that time I'd been a film editor, I'd directed documentaries and I'd written scripts. They just fed the cards through the computer and my card came out that I had a technical background. I started by writing technical training films for the Signal Corps.

CFQ: In 1949 you turned to television when you formed your own production/distribution company.

SUBOTSKY: At the time there were very few films available for television and I met someone who had a lot of features and westerns, very old ones. I thought that distribution could lead to production, because I was interested in production. I got all these old pictures and started distribut-

Left: Sir Ralph Richardson as the Cryptkeeper in the first Amicus E.C. horror comics adaptation, *TALES FROM THE CRYPT*, which has proven to be their most profitable film to date.

--AND NOW THE SCREAMING STARTS!

Chris Knight visits the Amicus unit at Shepperton Studios

--AND NOW THE SCREAMING STARTS! can not be called a horror movie in what has come to be the accepted sense of the word. It is more of a gothic ghost story than anything. Number twelve in a line of fantasy film productions made by Amicus at Shepperton studios, it reunites the highly successful production team of *ASYLUM* and is directed by Roy Ward Baker from a screenplay by Roger Marshall.

The film is the story of Charles Fengriffen (Ian Ogilvy) who brings his new bride (Stephanie Beacham) back to his ancestral home. She is confronted with a series of unaccountable happenings, which could be of her own imagining, but seem to her frighteningly real. The most terrifying is the appearance of a Woodsman (Geoffrey Whitehead) who seems to be following her. Sometimes he appears normal, except for a large, red birthmark on his face, but at other times his arm ends in a bloody stumped-up with a rag. Dr. Pope (Peter Cushing), a man of science and a realist, is sent for in desperation and it is he who discovers that some fifty years earlier Henry Fengriffen (Herbert Lom), Charles' grandfather, ravaged the wife of Silas the Woodsman, and chopped off the man's hand when he protested. That day Silas vowed: "The evil you did this day will be avenged. The next virgin bride to come to Fengriffen will be violated, but then shall come the true vengeance on the House of Fengriffen and death shall fall on anyone who tries to prevent it." Later, a son is born to Charles and his new bride and the terrible curse comes to its full realization.

--AND NOW THE SCREAMING STARTS! began shooting in late July, and it was not until mid-August that I visited the Shepperton studio set. The entire layout of Fengriffen House is condensed onto one sound stage. The sets were placed in a composite pattern so that they are all connected to one another. If a character opens the door of the library to go out into the main hall, then he actually does step from the library set onto the main hall set. This makes it much easier for filming since the camera has only to pick its way a few yards from one set to the next.

Lunch had been called and I was kindly invited to dine with art director Tony Curtis and unit publicist Joy Helman. For the next hour or more we discussed films in general and after lunch Tony invited me back to his office to see some of the preparations he had made for this film and to talk about his work.

Tony's office is on the first floor of a separate block and only a short walk from the restaurant. One can immediately see that it belongs to an art director. Scattered about the room are small models of each of the Fengriffen sets, drawings and many photographs, and set up on a central table was a photographic experiment which was used in one of the film's scenes. Perhaps the highlight of our short talk was when he showed me the brown paper-covered parcels which are shaped like legs, arms and torso, used so effectively in *ASYLUM*. I was told how these props were made to work and I think that it would spoil the effect of the film if I revealed how two men, Bill Jarrot and Ernie Sullivan, put Tony's ideas for the special effects into actual operation, a very complicated and difficult task. Lying on a desk to one side was the very lifelike severed hand which appears in --AND NOW THE SCREAMING

STARTS! and which first made its debut in *DR. TERROR'S HOUSE OF HORRORS* some years earlier. In picking up and holding it, one tends to shudder due to its likeness to a recently severed human hand, complete with oozing blood and bones projecting from the wrist.

While I was admiring the grisly mechanical hand he told something of its history.

"The mechanics of it were made prior to this film," he said. "We've used it in two or three films in different disguises, but it was made originally for *DR. TERROR'S HOUSE OF HORRORS*. It is a very complicated mechanism that is needed to simulate the opening and closing of a hand. There is a tiny motor inside that runs on battery power."

During the afternoon, shooting had been transferred to a small sound stage which stands away from the main block. Here the interior of the Woodsman's cottage was set up in which Peter Cushing finds the body of the Woodsman. Such is the quest for perfection that the unit spent a long time setting up and rehearsing this short scene. I took this opportunity to talk to Roy Ward Baker, the director, knowing he would be too busy for the rest of the day to spare any of his time.

Baker directed *ASYLUM* for Amicus and has worked on other horror films for Hammer Films, including *THE VAMPIRE LOVERS* and *SCARS OF DRACULA*, as well as one of their all too infrequent forays into science fiction, *FIVE MILLION YEARS TO EARTH*. I asked him if he liked doing fantasy films because of the challenge of making the unbelievable seem believable?

"They are interesting to do from that point of view," he admitted. "One of my favorite plays in achieving this is to make the characters interesting. I trap the audience into an emotional involvement with the characters at the very beginning and from then on you can depend on their greater acceptance of everything because they feel involved. I don't believe in cardboard characters. This is very dangerous, no matter how far-fetched or weird the story may be. The more outrageous it is, the harder you've got to work on the characters so that the audience can accept them as real people, and in so doing, accept what is happening to them."

I mentioned that in *ASYLUM* it seemed that three different types of color values were being aimed for.

"I treated the sequences in separate styles," he admitted. "In *ASYLUM* we had one sequence where we aimed for a pastel, glamorized, long focal length lens type of effect. This was the Charlotte Rampling and Britt Ekland sequence, and we thought it suited the story. In one sequence we strived for a bleached, almost black and white effect, not so much in the photography, but in the composition of the sets and costumes, and in another we aimed for cheap, gaudy colors, because the characters were rather cheap and nasty, and we kept the camera constantly on the move."

Does Roy get together with Milton Subotsky before starting a picture, I asked?

"Oh yes, for days and days and days. We practically live together," he said laughingly. "The whole operation depends on complete preparation."

"I'm left very much to my own devices during filming. Milton is hardly ever seen on the set. He comes in usually about half past

twelve to say that he's seen the rushes, and he lets me know if they're okay or if he has a query on some technical point, and then he disappears and I don't see him again. I see very little of him when we're shooting."

"He likes the writing and discussing of the script. We discussed --AND NOW THE SCREAMING STARTS! at very great length while we were shooting *ASYLUM*. As a matter of fact, we actually rewrote it from top to bottom, although he went off to do all of the actual work. After he casts the picture and puts it on the floor, he leaves the rest to me, and he really won't take a serious interest in it again until we start cutting. He enjoys that part of it."

What attracted Roy to doing a picture, I asked?

"In *ASYLUM* what attracted me was a good script," he replied. "It was not fantastically new, but it was beautifully carpentered and soundly constructed. I liked that because it appealed to my sense of pattern."

"I particularly liked the sequence in which the man kills his wife, dismembers the body --you don't see any of this but you know it's happened--wraps it all in neat brown paper parcels with white twine and puts it all in the deep freeze to go upstairs and have a stiff drink. He hears a rustling noise, only to look around and find his wife's head rolling across the kitchen floor in a football shaped parcel. Later, his girlfriend comes to call on him, the cause of all the trouble, and she drifts down in the cellar to find his dead body stuffed into the deep freeze. From all around the cellar, from behind all the bags and piles of newspapers, the paper parcels come out and start chasing her around the cellar. It really is quite frightening, and you don't see any arms or legs or any blood, it's all wrapped up in the brown paper. Now that, to me, is the right way to do it. Everyone has remarked that this is a particularly good sequence. There is certainly nothing in it you could censor and yet the censor did apparently pass a remark to Milton when he took it to him, saying that there was nothing to worry about, but that the brown parcel sequence is rather gruesome. Although there is nothing explicit in it, he is right. It's gruesome because you care about Sylvia Sims who has been chopped up, and you care about her husband, Richard Todd. That's why it works. You know it's Sylvia's head underneath the paper as it starts to breathe and you see the paper moving."

Unfortunately, the scene had been set up and Roy was required for shooting. Milton Subotsky has remarked on his excellent handling of actors, and this seems to be evident in his attitudes toward the importance of characterization, particularly with horror.

Shepperton Studios, long one of the three remaining majors still in operation around London, is in danger of closing down and Amicus, who have been based at Shepperton for many years now, may well have to move. *VAULT OF HORROR*, which is their followup to *TALES FROM THE CRYPT* has already begun shooting at the much smaller Twickenham Studios and it is here that Amicus may have to make their temporary base. Wherever they go one can feel sure that if they continue to employ the staff that has produced their last several pictures they will continue to make good horror films.

Chris Knight

Right: Scenes from --AND NOW THE SCREAMING STARTS! (1972), a gothic ghost story from Amicus Films, which went into production following ASYLUM. Top: Peter Cushing stars as Dr. Pope, a scientist and a realist who uncovers a supernatural curse. Middle: Roy Ward Baker directs Stephanie Beacham in a scene where she discovers a victim of the curse. Bottom: Geoffrey Whitehead as the phantom Woodsman.

ing them to television stations. You could sell anything at that time because they needed product so badly. I found that there were half hour time slots available. Sometimes you could sell a station a half hour film if they didn't have time for a 90 minute film. I took every one of the feature films and I edited them down to twenty-six minutes right on the print. I learned a great deal about film construction just taking picture after picture after picture and cutting them down to twenty-six minutes, and in every case the twenty-six minute version was better than the original. I found that I could take out enormous chunks and I found out so much about scripts and stories by taking completed feature films and cutting them to a shorter length. So many scripts simply mark time for reel after reel and you could take out a big chunk of it and you are in exactly the same place, although there has been a lot of events, but as far as the total story is concerned you are still back where you were. I found that I could do this in picture after picture and it's something I try to avoid being able to do in our pictures.

CFQ: You teamed up with Max J. Rosenberg in 1954 for the children's educational television series "Junior Science." How did you meet?

SUBOTSKY: There were some Harvard students who made a film called A TOUCH OF THE TIMES and they needed the money to finish the soundtrack and I gave them the money. Then I needed a distributor for it so I went to Max, who was a distributor at the time, and he was interested. He lost interest in distributing that film, but we got to talking and he asked if I had any other projects. I told him I had a science series for children called "Junior Science" and that each picture took one principle of physics, explained it in terms of experiments that children could do themselves with equipment they have at home and he told me it sounded good and asked how much I needed. I told him how much I needed for thirteen films and he just shook hands with me and said you've got the money. We never had a contract. He put up all the money to make thirteen quarter hour films and then on the basis of those thirteen he sold thirty-nine and we then had to make the other twenty-six. We made a lot of money out of that. It's interesting, because we still don't have a contract. We've never had anything signed between us.

CFQ: This period was the beginning of Amicus. What sort of pressures were you under, as a company at this time?

SUBOTSKY: Money. We didn't have any money. I came to England in 1959 and until DR. TERROR'S HOUSE OF HORRORS in 1964 we'd only made three films!

CFQ: How did you decide on the name Amicus?

SUBOTSKY: We just tried to think of something nice and Amicus means friendly.

CFQ: The first horror picture you produced was CITY OF THE DEAD* although it wasn't billed as an Amicus picture.

SUBOTSKY: Amicus was formed a little later, I forget when, but it doesn't matter, because it's always been the same two people.

CFQ: I understand there was a great deal of trouble getting the script ready for CITY OF THE DEAD?

SUBOTSKY: I came over to do it in 1959, and I'd written the original story which George Baxt had turned into a script. We were supposed to co-produce it with Hannah Weinstein who did "Robin Hood" and all those television series at Walton Studios, which has since closed. When I came over I found they only had a sixty minute script and they thought of it as a second feature. That was impossible. It was a cheap film, only forty-five thousand pounds, but you couldn't recoup that on a second feature, so the first thing I did was to add twenty minutes to the script. I added a character and it turned out to blend very well with the ori-

*HORROR HOTEL, Trans-Lux, 1960.





Films are an artificial medium. They are rarely a real medium about real people and real problems. They are primarily entertainment, and the horror film is a big part of it. I think there will always be a market for a good horror film. At the moment, the business seems to be growing bigger for some reason. Perhaps it's that times are worse and people are looking more to fantasy.

ginal story because nobody could tell where the additions were made. By then, Walton was closing, so we made it at Shepperton. It was directed by John Moxey who's now in California doing a lot of terrible television films, but it was a very good film, I thought. What was interesting about the film was that it bore certain similarities to *PSYCHO* before *PSYCHO* was made. We killed off the heroine, and then had someone come in and investigate what happened to her. Nobody had done this in films as far as I know, and we did it first.

CFQ: Your only credit for *CITY OF THE DEAD* is given as original story. Why weren't you given credit for rewriting the script, and to what extent were you and Max involved in producing it?

SUBOTSKY: I wrote the original story. It was our first production in England and I actually produced it, although Donald Taylor* is given credit. Max and I got half the financing in America and the other half was put up by a British company and they put on the British producer. Now at that time I wasn't yet resident in England and I had come over with permission to stay for just three or six months. I had to renew the permit all the time and I didn't know to what extent I would be allowed to work here and could put my name on as a producer. So what happened, I think, was that there was a British producer and the fellow from the other financing company and I were put on as executive producers. I didn't take credit for the rewriting because I didn't want to. It was George Baxt's script, but it was only an hour script and I added twenty minutes to it.

CFQ: Although you added twenty minutes to the script of *CITY OF THE DEAD*, its final running time, at least in its U.S. release, is only 72 minutes. That's a very short film. Was something cut?

SUBOTSKY: The final running time of *CITY OF THE DEAD* is 72 minutes in America because they cut out eight minutes. Actually they played around with the American version. They tried to add some 3-D sequences and it didn't work.

CFQ: You have had a long and profitable association with Robert Bloch. Could you tell us how this developed and how you work together?

SUBOTSKY: Our involvement with Robert Bloch began when I read his short story "The Skull of the Marquis De Sade" and saw that we could turn it into a film. What I liked about it was that I saw we could do the last four reels without any dialogue, which is just the way we did it. We got the rights and I wrote the screenplay and from there we went on to other things with Robert Bloch. We did *THE PSYCHOPATH*, which was based on his original unpublished short story, *TORTURE GARDEN*, *ASYLUM* and *THE HOUSE THAT DRIPPED BLOOD*. What I do is select four of his stories and invent a framework, and then I send it off to him and if he likes it he does a script based on it. We work very well together. He's nice to work with and he writes fine stories. I hope to do another multi-story film with him if we can decide on the four stories to use.

CFQ: You also used well-known science fiction writer John Brunner to script *THE TERRORNAUTS*. Was this a successful association and why didn't it continue?

*Credited as producer on *HORROR HOTEL*, and not to be confused with the American director of the same name.

Left: A scene from *ASYLUM*, an Amicus Production currently in release through Cinerama Releasing Corp. In the first of four tales told by inmates of an insane asylum, called "Frozen Fear," Walter (Richard Todd) is pursued and strangled by the dismembered body of his wife whom he had murdered, chopped into pieces, and stored away in the basement freezer. Author Robert Bloch adapted four of his own short stories to form the screenplay for the film.

SUBOTSKY: Brunner is a friend of mine and so I called him in to do the script on *THE TERRORNAUTS*. He did a good script. The trouble was that the action didn't start until the last four reels. Up until that point it's just a long prologue and a lot of talk. It was a very inexpensive film, costing only 80,000 pounds with all the special effects and large science fiction sets included.

Another science fiction writer, Michael Moorcock, just did a script for us on Edgar Rice Burroughs' *The Land That Time Forgot*, which we hope to make next year. The only reason we didn't continue the association with Brunner is that we didn't have any other films for him to do in that area. We would certainly work with him again.

CFQ: You seem fond of anthology films: *TORTURE GARDEN*, *ASYLUM*, *TALES FROM THE CRYPT*, *THE HOUSE THAT DRIPPED BLOOD* and your first, *DR. TERROR'S HOUSE OF HORRORS*. Why?

SUBOTSKY: So you don't bore an audience. It's very hard to find a story that can sustain interest for ninety minutes. In the segment films you can tell four or five stories and each story only runs the length of time that it should—its natural length. You can make a very fast moving variety show of different kinds of horror stories and audiences seem to like it. I like it.

CFQ: Have you seen the acknowledged classics of this format, *DEAD OF NIGHT* and *TALES OF TERROR*, and how would you rate your own success compared to these films?

SUBOTSKY: Actually *DEAD OF NIGHT* is what we pattern our anthology films on. *DR. TERROR'S HOUSE OF HORRORS* and all the multi-story films we've done were patterned after *DEAD OF NIGHT*. Our films aren't like *TALES OF TERROR* which didn't have a framework story like *DEAD OF NIGHT*. It's just three Edgar Allan Poe stories.

DEAD OF NIGHT was not a successful film in America, financially. Artistically, I don't think any of our films are as good as it, yet. Parts of our films are better than parts of *DEAD OF NIGHT*, but I don't think any film we've made, considered as an entity, is as good. But of course they had five top directors and they had first rate original stories by big writers. We'll get there, but to me, that is the great one.

CFQ: Do you keep the American market in mind more than the British market in designing your films?

SUBOTSKY: We know that we need certain names to be a top feature. Our pictures are budgeted at around \$450,000 to \$500,000 and you can't get that back if you are a co-feature. You have to be a top feature, and to make a top feature you not only have to make a quality film you have to put a few good names in it. This is for every market. Right now we are thinking of the Continental market and we are trying to get one or two good names for this market. I tried to get some for *ASYLUM* but I couldn't.

CFQ: The film business as a whole seems to have abandoned the "star system" as any kind of guarantee of success. Why do you still practice it?

SUBOTSKY: Actually I may be wrong in this. They recently shot a film in London called *DEATHLINE** which had two names in it, Donald Pleasance and Christopher Lee who was brought in simply for his marquee value as his scene was totally unnecessary. *DEATHLINE* did tremendous business and it wasn't a very good film, but it had something. Actually the scenes that worked were the scenes without the names. The scenes in the Underground with the ghoul were great, but the scenes with the detectives and Donald Pleasance didn't work at all. But even so, they had to have the name value.

The trouble is that if you don't put names in it, you can't get the picture shown, and you don't have a thing to sell abroad. You won't have a

foreign market on a horror film without any names at all. They don't necessarily have to be horror names as was shown by *TALES FROM THE CRYPT*. Except for Peter Cushing we had no horror names in that, and it worked well at the boxoffice.

CFQ: The general opinion of the London critics was that *DEATHLINE* was far too gruesome and sickly. How do you feel about that?

SUBOTSKY: Well, it's that kind of film. It's much better than anything Hammer ever does, because there it was in the nature of the fantasy of the subject and you could accept it, whereas Hammer throws in violence and brutality and the gore for its own sake, which adds nothing to the story. In a film like *HANDS OF THE RIPPER* all that gore is gratuitous. There's no point to it. It wasn't necessary, whereas in *DEATHLINE* it was called for by the story.

CFQ: Amicus is based in England and obviously it is cheaper to make pictures here than in the States, but are there any other reasons behind your being here?

SUBOTSKY: There are two reasons for making films in England. One is that it is cheaper, but not all that cheaper, because salaries are lower but on the other hand you shoot more slowly. For example, people have shown me films made in America that weren't very good but which were filmed in about two weeks. They can possibly make them cheaper but they won't be as good. They're made for television and they're not nearly as good as the films we make. The second reason is that you can get a marvellous quality here. You have wonderful actors, good technicians and a very good pool of actors to choose from. You can get a film that looks very good and has very good people in it. The other factor is money. When our films go out on release we can collect an additional 40% in the English market and that can be a very substantial sum. Even on our small films it could be upwards of sixty-thousand pounds. There is no distributor's share taken off so that goes right back to pay off the cost of production and it's a very big advantage.

CFQ: Do you have any problems financing your films?

SUBOTSKY: We don't really have trouble in financing a film, we have trouble getting scripts. My partner is marvellous. He can get all the financing we need once we have the script in good shape, but to get a script into good shape is a very difficult job. We each read five hundred novels a year and if we find two stories out of them, it's very good. We come up with ideas and give them to writers to work on, all sorts of things.

You know, the film business is a funny business. It is totally non-competitive. Anybody can get financed. We had a fellow called Mike Redbourne who was a dubbing editor and who worked for us on a number of our films. He got a script called *THE CREEPING FLESH** and he got Christopher Lee and Peter Cushing and he went out and spent a long time and got it financed and now he's a producer. If you've got a good script you can become a producer so easily without even knowing anything because you can get people who know things to work for you if you let them do their jobs. It helps if you do know something, but the main thing a producer has to do is find the material and get it into proper shape and cast the picture right and get a good director for it, but the hardest part is the script.

CFQ: What do you think a story must have to become a good script?

SUBOTSKY: First of all it has to have a fresh idea. What I really look for when I read a book is to get underneath the dialogue, the writing, everything. Sometimes books are terribly written, poorly dialogued and once you are underneath all that and see what the idea of the book is, you see whether it's a saleable idea or an unusual idea

*Supposedly released by Columbia 10/72, the film has received no promotion and few bookings.

*See "Coming" section, page 42.



Scenes from **VAULT OF HORROR** (1972), Amicus Productions' followup to their highly successful **TALES FROM THE CRYPT** (1971), again based on stories from the E.C. comic books of the same names. Top: Director Roy Ward Baker (left) and producer Milton Subotsky (right) during some location shooting. Middle: The film's concluding scenes have the protagonists emerge from the Vault as rotting corpses with skull-like faces. Bottom: Make-up artist Roy Ashton, a Hammer Films alumnus, working on the skull makeup needed in the film's concluding scenes. Amicus is already preparing further E.C. comic adaptations including **THE HAUNT OF FEAR** and **TALES FROM THE INCREDIBLE**, the latter to be based on the E.C. science fiction comics.



and how it is utilized. Now it doesn't matter if the idea isn't used well in the book as long as you know how to change it in the script and get it to work. When people call or write and say we want to send you a script—I'll read anything from anybody—I much prefer getting it on one page. If the people who wrote it sat down and just wrote a one or two page outline it would be better. If they write a full script you find they have stacks of dialogue, all sorts of things happening, but there is no story, no plot, no idea at all, really. I look first of all for a fresh idea and then a good plot.

CFQ: You have emphasized your search for fresh ideas, yet Amicus continues to use unoriginal material. For example: the crawling hand and intelligent plant sequences in **DR. TERROR'S HOUSE OF HORRORS** are direct steals from **THE BEAST WITH FIVE FINGERS** and **DAY OF THE TRIFFIDS**, you plagiarized "The Monkey's Paw" in **TALES FROM THE CRYPT** which has been filmed many times, and you refilmed "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde" as **1. MONSTER**, a novel which hardly cried out for yet another screen adaptation.

SUBOTSKY: We didn't steal anything, really. The whole point is that there is only a limited number of ideas anyway. If you put a ghost in a film you can't say there have been five hundred ghost stories filmed in the past and therefore you're stealing the idea. You put a creeping hand in a film, it's not necessarily **THE BEAST WITH FIVE FINGERS**. There are lots of other stories that have creeping hands, or creeping something-elses. It's what you do with them that counts.

If you have a vampire in your film, you shouldn't be accused of plagiarizing *Dracula*, or the work of Sheridan Le Fanu. You are just using similar material. It's what you are doing with the material that's important. In **TALES FROM THE CRYPT** we didn't plagiarize "The Monkey's Paw." This was the original comic book story upon which the film is based. The motif of getting three wishes is something that goes all the way back to fairy tales. It's not plagiarism to use an idea unless it's such a fresh idea that nobody has ever done anything like it before.

We are simply using a common fund of mythic material which includes vampires, werewolves, creeping disembodied parts of bodies and that sort of thing.

I realize that "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde" had been done a lot of times, but I wanted to do the most definitive version of the book ever. I think we did exactly that, except that I changed the characters' names. It is the closest ever to the Robert Louis Stevenson story of any version ever made. Absolutely, exactly the Stevenson story in fact, with only one exception at the very end. Stevenson had Dr. Jekyll hole up in his laboratory at the end, destroying it, where he is found dead. I thought that was a rather tame ending, so I had him realize that Utterson was getting wise to him, and he dies in the attempt to kill his once good friend. Otherwise I didn't change anything in the Stevenson story and the trouble with the picture is that in sticking so close to the original we wound up with a film that was very respectable and rather boring, whereas the people who made versions not as close to the original story wound up with more exciting films. The story, the dialogue, the structure and the incidents we used were right out of the book. We didn't falsify anything, but that turned out to be our problem. I tried deliberately not to add anything to it or to sensationalize it, but I see that that was wrong.

Maybe with a better director it wouldn't have been the wrong approach. We had a director who



VAULT OF HORROR

Chris Knight visits the filming of the second E.C. Comics adaptation

After the phenomenal success of *TALES FROM THE CRYPT* I suppose it was only natural for Amicus Productions to base another film on the famous E.C. Comics. This new film is *VAULT OF HORROR* and was made at Twickenham Studios which lie on the western outskirts of the sprawling metropolis that is London. Amicus have not only transferred filming of this picture from Shepperton Studios, their base for many years, but they have also brought with them many of the technical people who worked on *TALES FROM THE CRYPT*, a team that has made Amicus a byword to every fantasy film fan throughout the world.

For *VAULT OF HORROR* the technical staff consists of director Roy Ward Baker, production manager Teresa Bolland, director of photography Denys Coop, art director Tony Curtis, editor Oswald Haffenrichter and make-up artist Roy Ashton, a member of the successful Hammer team during the late fifties and early sixties, all under the direction of producers Max J. Rosenberg and Milton Subotsky. Subotsky, as on many previous Amicus productions, has doubled as script-writer. Like *TALES FROM THE CRYPT*, the screenplay of *VAULT OF HORROR* is composed of a number of episodes held together by a central framework story. The cast includes Terry Thomas, Glynis Johns, Michael Craig, Edward Judd, Daniel Massey, Anna Massey, Tom Baker, Denholm Elliott, Curt Jurgens and Dawn Adams.

Due to the varied shooting schedule, the film was well under way by the time I visited the studios. I arrived just prior to the rushes from the previous day being screened in the small, private studio theatre for the technical staff, and sat in with Milton's permission. Shooting the previous day had been located in a restaurant where all the local vampires sit down to a tasty meal of roasted blood clots. The main character in this scene is Rogers (Daniel Massey) who suddenly realizes he is an outsider and tries to leave. His sister (Anna Massey, who is his sister) enters to try and stop him from leaving, which she does in a most spectacular way, which I will leave for your viewing pleasure to discover when the film is released.

The location that afternoon turned out to be just around the corner from the studios where they had transformed a local launder-

ette into a restaurant for this particular scene.

Anyone who has seen a film being made will be aware of the length of time that is taken between setting up each shot, and this film was no exception. It was during one of these periods, when nothing seems to be happening, that I found myself walking up and down alongside Roy Ashton who, like myself, was trying to keep warm in the cold afternoon wind.

I asked Roy what sort of problems he had to contend with before filming actually started?

"The producers are usually not concerned with how you achieve an effect," he said. "If their ideas are sufficiently crystalized you can usually go ahead and put them into effect, but as a rule they usually don't know what they want."

"First of all, I produce drawings. I've produced over 150 drawings on some ideas and then given up numbering them. You narrow down the field until they finally see one and say: 'Well, something like that.' The next step is to do a model from the drawing in miniature, and then a full size head on which I try to create an effect they think they want. Once they agree to something, a test makeup is done. I cast the model, and reproduce the appliances in plastic and sometimes in rubber and then attach them to the performer for a finished makeup."

I wondered if there were any particular problems on this picture?

"There weren't serious problems," he said with some relief. "I suppose the most difficult task was to make the four protagonists into skull like people with rotting faces. From behind they had to appear normal but from the front they had to resemble a skull, and that was difficult."

As we walked back toward the unit, Roy told me of his time spent in the world of opera (he is in fact a talented opera singer) and of the fires that destroyed so much of Bray studios and how, even today, many of the props used in the early Hammer pictures still stand or are tucked away in some cubby hole there for some lucky person to find.

Lily Poyser, the film's unit publicist, introduced me to actor Daniel Massey, who is the son of well known Canadian actor Raymond Massey. Daniel was picked by Noel Coward to impersonate him in the film *STAR* for which he received an Academy Award nomination. As *VAULT OF HORROR* is his first horror film, I wondered what he thought about appearing in this type of film?

"Well, I enjoy it, I must say," he enthused. "I like the atmosphere Roy and Milton have created. It's very professional and it's challenging in the sense that you have to imagine a great deal more than if you were in a straight narrative piece."

As Daniel had appeared in the rushes that I saw earlier, hanging upside down and being drained of blood, I wondered how he was prepared for that scene?

"They put a harness on me, around my back and stomach, and attached a wire down my trouser leg to a winch which pulled me up until I was level with the camera. They tied some rope around me to make it appear as if I was tied up in this position. There was no pain or discomfort involved in the scene. The blood that you see comes from a bucket

above the set transferred through a tube which runs down my other leg to my neck."

I asked why he twitched in the scene as the blood was removed?

"That was a moment of pure inspiration on my part," he replied. "I thought when you are in a coma and you've just been vampired it would be the same as when you see a bull dying in the bull ring. There is always a terrible sort of twitching as the blood pours out of him and the body seems to convulse automatically."

I mentioned that the Amicus unit seems to be very happy and easy-going and I wondered how he had found his work with Amicus and with producer Milton Subotsky?

"I hardly know Milton," he confessed, "but he must have something special going for him to create a unit which has such a lovely sense of enjoyment. He has a very engaging personality and is full of ideas. When he's around you get the feeling that someone on the unit has brought in this friend of theirs who is very interested in horror and who wants to know how to get into production. We were talking last night about how I should strangle Mike Pratt in one of the scenes and Milton came bouncing onto the set, grinning like an ape, and said: 'Well, this is the way they used to do it in the commandos,' and he took the necktie and tried to show me how the commandos would have strangled Mike. He ended up with the tie around his forehead—he couldn't even get it around the neck—so we abandoned the idea. He's very disarming and not one's idea of what a producer is like."

Filming soon got under way and Daniel was called on for the scene. The unit was to be there until 8 P.M. as some dusk scenes were required. My last view of the unit was as I turned the corner to the nearby car park. The director was setting up a new camera angle and there was Daniel Massey standing in the middle of the road contemplating whether to control the traffic or not. It recalled the phrase: "You don't have to be mad to make pictures—but it helps!" Mad or not, Amicus Productions have got their heads screwed on correctly. *VAULT OF HORROR* looks to set another box-office success for the company in recreating the entertainment values of their highly successful *TALES FROM THE CRYPT*.

Chris Knight

Daniel Massey



Glynis Johns



The goal of a producer is to become unnecessary during shooting. If you've done a good script and if you've done your shooting schedule right, then you should have nothing to do during the actual shooting. I think films are made in the script stage and the cutting stage. In between, different directors won't vary.

didn't know how to direct action scenes. Everything was fine until you get into an action scene and... nothing happens, because he* didn't know what to do with it. He didn't end up with the footage needed to cut what we had intended.

CFQ: 1. MONSTER was shot in a new form of the old 3-D process. What sort of problems did that create, and why was it finally shown "flat?"

SUBOTSKY: It didn't work because the director didn't shoot the picture in the proper style. Some of it worked and some didn't, but all of it had to work to release it as a 3-D picture. What it requires is that the director keep the camera moving constantly in a certain way in relation to the actors, and he didn't do it. He was doing it in the wrong way. He got it backwards. I even flipped over some shots to make them work right. It was his first opportunity and he wasn't very good. He's since done another film, I understand, which they are having a lot of trouble editing. Actually, this process will work best on an outdoor film, but I don't have an outdoor subject at the moment. I think part of the trouble with it was that you need more shooting time to set up these kinds of shots. You need two more weeks on the schedule. I don't think the director is all that much to blame, except that he undertook to shoot it in this style and then didn't do it. If we ever do it again we'll get more money, we'll have a longer schedule and we'll make an outdoor picture. Then it will work.

CFQ: What difference was there in shooting in this process and shooting a normal 2-D picture?

SUBOTSKY: You shoot in the ordinary way with no attachments to the camera. There are no attachments to the projector. Everything's absolutely ordinary but you have to move the camera in a certain way. What happens is that when you look at the picture it's a normal 2-D picture but if you put on the glasses you see it in 3-D.

CFQ: Do you, or have you in the past, had any problems with regards to censorship?

SUBOTSKY: No. We never have trouble with the censor. He may ask for a tiny change, but it's so tiny it makes no difference. The censor really doesn't change anything of artistic merit. We've made many pictures and I think if he asks for something to be cut you find it is better artistically. I don't know why, but maybe you have shown something when it would have been better to have shown a reaction. In all our pictures there have been three or four things that have had to be cut, but they were so tiny, maybe only two feet long, that it wasn't even worth bothering with. He doesn't really bother us at all.

CFQ: You never show explicit violence or sex in your movies. Is this a deliberate policy of yours to keep such things out of your pictures?

SUBOTSKY: That's a matter of taste. We've never had any sex in our films because I think it's boring to show it on the screen. It turns the audience into voyeurs and it's not what they are interested in unless they want to go to sex films. Normally an audience wants to see a story, a plot, action, and they want to see what's happening. Just to stop for a sex scene—you don't need it. That's the only reason. It's not prudishness or anything like that. As far as explicit violence

Right: Milton Subotsky, surrounded in his office at Shepperton Studios by neatly stacked shelves of hundreds and hundreds of books, all seemingly connected with horror, fantasy or science fiction.

is concerned, we rarely have it and then only if it's totally necessary. When you do have it, it's usually better to show somebody reacting to it rather than being explicit. In --AND NOW THE SCREAMING STARTS! there's a scene in which somebody gets his hand chopped off. That's necessary to the story or we wouldn't use it. But we play it on the reactions of the people. When you show it, you know he's not getting his hand chopped off, you know it's fake, so the less you show and the more you let the audience imagine it's happening, the more successful it is.

CFQ: What sort of problems come to light before you start shooting a picture?

SUBOTSKY: Getting the script right. It's not so much getting the actors because if you have a good script you can get the people you want. The only problem is getting the proper script. That's the hardest part of filmmaking. You see, filmmaking is really a literary business, not a film business. You are really in the same business as a publisher. You're looking for manuscripts. You are trying to develop the manuscripts by guiding the writers. The filmmakers and actors and everything else is incidental to telling your story. I've seen badly directed films and terribly made films that were successful because the script was so good. If you've got a good script you can't ruin the film no matter what you do and if you've got a bad script you can't make a good film no matter what you do.

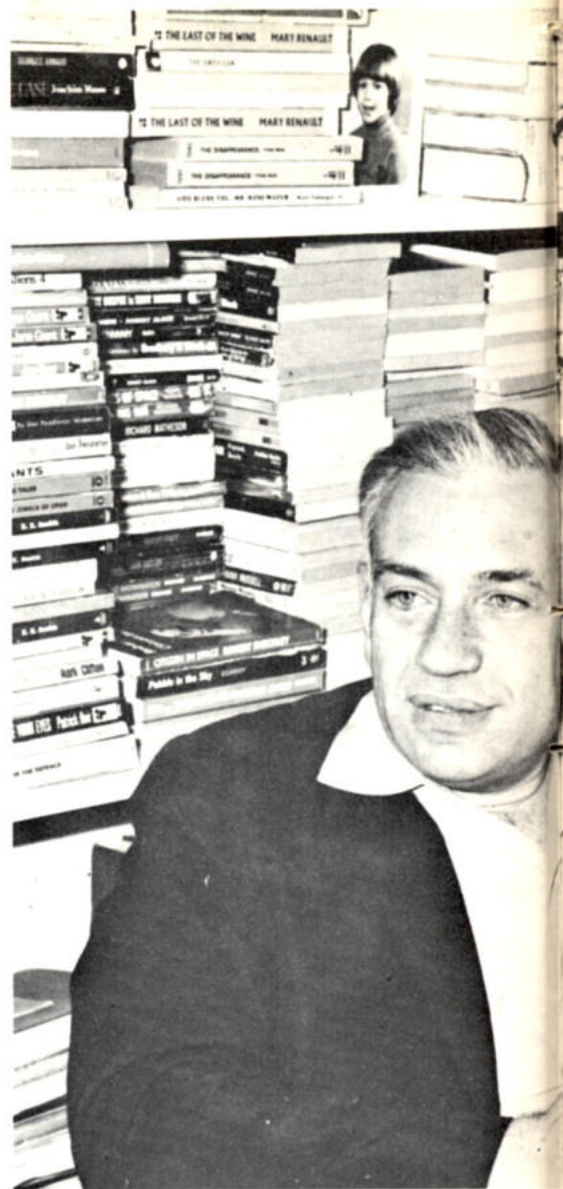
CFQ: How closely do you supervise one of your films?

SUBOTSKY: During the shooting I usually leave the director alone. I see the rushes everyday and see if he's covered everything because I'm a very good editor and I can see how it's going to edit by looking at the rushes. If something is missing he has to redo that scene in order that the film can be edited properly. He can realize the film any way he likes as long as he doesn't change the script without consulting me. I try to choose a director who is sensible enough to stay in budget and on schedule but the director can do anything he likes. If the producer does his job right he should have nothing to do with the picture whilst it's shooting unless he's a busybody and interferes with everybody's work. The goal of a producer is to become unnecessary during shooting. If you've done a good script and if you've done your shooting schedule right then you should have nothing to do during the actual shooting of the film.

I like to come back on the picture when we start editing because I think of editing as a continuation of script writing. You can now take the film and use it as your base and create all sorts of new things, things that nobody ever dreamed of before, that you didn't think of when you were working on the script, that the director didn't think of when he was directing it. You come up with all kinds of new ideas based on what you've got in the cutting room and that's the art of film editing. You have to start as if nothing exists except that film, as if there's no script, as if nobody's done anything. All you've got is this big bunch of film and you've got to do something with it. The first thing you do is make a rough assembly and you look at it on the screen. I've never known—no matter how much work has gone into a script—for a rough assembly to work the way it was scripted to work. You have to start changing the order to make the structure stronger. Once you've got the structure right you can then start the final editing. I think films are made in the script stage and the cutting stage. In between, there isn't an enormous variation in what different directors are going to do with that film.

CFQ: I think it's interesting to note that both Hammer and Amicus started in much the same way from a tightly knit little community at one particular studio.

SUBOTSKY: Actually, we started Hammer in horror films, although nobody knows this. What happened was that right after we made ROCK, ROCK, ROCK, I did a script of Frankenstein and I wanted to do it in color as I thought it would be a big success. We took it to Elliot Hyman who said that as we'd only done one film before and



*Stephen Weeks, a protege of actor Christopher Lee who was instrumental in having him assigned as director for 1. MONSTER.



that being a musical—and they always type you—how can you do horror films? He said he had a friend in England who can do it, so he took it to Jimmy Carreras and we had a piece of the first color Frankenstein film, *CURSE OF FRANKENSTEIN*. We had a payment and a percentage, and that started Hammer in the horror film business. They didn't use my script, though. Mine was very close to the book. Someday I'd like to do it.

CFQ: Although you weren't able to finance your script of Frankenstein in 1957, you were able to finance a horror film in 1964, *DR. TERROR'S HOUSE OF HORRORS*. What allowed for this breakthrough which, in a sense, allowed Amicus to take-off as a major horror film producer.

SUBOTSKY: We had done one horror film since then which was *CITY OF THE DEAD* and we also had several other films under our belt by 1964. Once you've done pictures, particularly successful pictures, it gets easier to get money to do more. When we submitted the Frankenstein script to Elliot Hyman we'd only made one picture, *ROCK, ROCK, ROCK*, and we had no experience in horror films at all.

CFQ: As you have often used Christopher Lee and Peter Cushing, and as the rights to Dracula and Frankenstein are in the public domain, have you ever considered doing a Dracula or a Frankenstein picture with them, or with anyone?

SUBOTSKY: I've got a Frankenstein script now which I want to do in 3-D, which would be the new element. But we couldn't do the film in England. Although the rights are in the public domain, Hammer has made a lot of Frankenstein and Dracula films here. There is a title registration bureau here run by the Film Producers Association, and if we tried to register a title with the word Frankenstein or Dracula in it Hammer would challenge it, and they would win. So it is possible to rope off an area of public domain for yourself—not legally, but within the rules of the FPA which we are obliged to follow. We can still do the Frankenstein film abroad if we want to, and I would love to do it in 3-D.

Actually, I once wanted to do a multi-story film based on the stories of Bram Stoker to be called *DRACULA'S GUEST*, because that is the name of one of his stories. But we couldn't do it in England because Hammer would have clamped down on that title. We could have made it under another title.

CFQ: Since you've done a great deal of work in television have you ever considered bringing fantasy subjects to the small screen?

SUBOTSKY: We were actually discussing with a television station in America about doing a three hour, two part, version of *Dracula**, because no one has really done the book. In the book Dracula hardly appears. He's there as a menace but he's hardly in the story at all. It's all sorts of other people and it would have made a fantastic three hour film, but nothing came of it. I did, however, do an outline for it.

CFQ: Some of your productions seem to reach the cinema quite soon after shooting has ended. Is this a deliberate policy of yours?

SUBOTSKY: We'd like it to be, but it comes under the distributor. For *ASYLUM* the distributor happened to have a place in his West End cinema for it so we got the date fifteen weeks from the date we started shooting till we opened in the West End. On the other hand, *TALES FROM THE CRYPT* was held onto for about a year.

CFQ: Do you prefer period or modern settings for your pictures?

SUBOTSKY: Modern is less expensive, whereas --AND NOW THE SCREAMING STARTS!, which is a period film, is very expensive. You suddenly start getting enormous bills for costumes and wigs and you have to put on one hairdresser for every girl in the film and that's very expensive. If the story is good, I don't mind. If you really want to know, I prefer films set in the future.

CFQ: Would you say you have been influenced

*Screenwriter Richard Matheson has done a three hour, two-part script of *DRACULA* to be produced by Dan Curtis for ABC-TV.

Left: On the set of *DR. TERROR'S HOUSE OF HORRORS* (1964), director Freddie Francis (left) and producer Milton Subotsky (right) go over the script with actor Christopher Lee.

I think of editing as a continuation of script writing. You can take the film as your base and create all sorts of new things, things that nobody ever dreamed of before, that you didn't think of when you were working on the script, that the director didn't think of when he was directing it. That is the art of film editing.

by anyone or anything?

SUBOTSKY: No, not really. By fairy tales as a child, perhaps, but what is a horror or a science fiction film? It's an adult fairy tale.

CFQ: Do you have any regrets about anything connected with the films you've made?

SUBOTSKY: Oh yes. There have been lots of films we'd wanted to make and never got off the ground. I'm also sorry we haven't made some very big films, but I think we will soon.

CFQ: What are your own preferences with regards to films?

SUBOTSKY: In order of preference, I'd rather make musicals, which are my favorite kind of film, children's films, and then films of imagination, science fiction and horror. As a matter of fact, I've got one now which is a science fiction musical.

CFQ: What do you like about filmmaking?

SUBOTSKY: I like to be very cinematic. We did a film called *THE SKULL* and in the last four reels there wasn't a single word of dialogue. What I like in horror films is that you can make silent movies for a long period of time. On our films I like as little dialogue as possible, building up to a long, silent sequence which carries the story. Every one of the multi-story films you'll find does that. The first story in *TALES FROM THE CRYPT*, the Joan Collins story, is ten minutes without a word of dialogue.

CFQ: With *TALES FROM THE CRYPT* you hit upon the splendid idea of adapting classic comic books to the screen. Could you tell us how this developed and who was involved?

SUBOTSKY: When I read "Tales From the Crypt" in the Ballentine paperback reprint I remembered reading it before, a long time ago. I went after Max to get the film rights to it. But it was very difficult for us to get the rights because money didn't interest Bill Gaines, who owned them. He was more interested in seeing a good film made from the material. The fun of it interested him, because he has all the money he needs. I kept coming back to Max from time to time to keep urging that he obtain the film rights to the E.C. comics, and finally he met with Bill Gaines and they were able to work out a deal.

CFQ: What are the extent of the film rights that you own in the E.C. comic books?

SUBOTSKY: Nobody owns any film rights in any E.C. comic books. We negotiate for them as we do the individual films. When we wanted to do *VAULT OF HORROR*, we went back and made another deal. We are going to do another one called *THE HAUNT OF FEAR* which I am scripting right now, and we're planning to do one called *TALES FROM THE INCREDIBLE*, based on their science fiction comic of the same name. Based on the stories I've picked for the latter one, I'd like to do it in 3-D.

Actually, Bill Gaines doesn't want his material violated, and he knows that we won't do that. We did a very faithful, almost reverential adaptation of *TALES FROM THE CRYPT*, so I don't think he'll make a deal with anyone else. Everybody has gone after the rights. He likes Max, and he knows we're not going to hurt his material, that we're going to make what's in the books, and that's the basis of our deal. There is a wealth of material in the E.C. comic books.

CFQ: *TALES FROM THE CRYPT* seems to have garnered the most critical praise and re-



TALES FROM THE CRYPT

...has not the time to adequately detail basic plot and character, let alone the nuance that is so valuable to horror fiction...

TALES FROM THE CRYPT A Cinerama Release. 3/72. 92 minutes. In Eastman Color. An Amicus Production for Metromedia Producers Corp. Executive producer, Charles W. Fries. Produced by Milton Subotsky and Max J. Rosenberg. Production executive, Paul Thompson. Directed by Freddie Francis. Edited by Teddy Darvas. Camera operator, John Harris. Art director, Tony Curtis. Set decorator, Helen Thomas.

The Crypt Keeper Sir Ralph Richardson
Joanne Clayton Joan Collins
Carl Maitland Ian Hendry
Grimsdyke Peter Cushing
Ralph Jason Richard Greene
William Rogers Nigel Patrick
George Carter Patrick Magee

Of the many obstacles confronting compilation films, perhaps the fiercest limitation is that of time. The first two stories of **TALES FROM THE CRYPT** last only approximately ten minutes each, the second two, fifteen minutes each, and the last one a bit less than thirty minutes. In each one, perhaps excepting the last one, director Freddie Francis simply has not the time to adequately detail basic plot and character, let alone the nuance that is so valuable to horror fiction. In the face of such brevity, Francis and screenwriter Milton Subotsky fall back onto the standard elements of stock characters and situations and some very unwieldy plot mechanisms (like the sudden appearance of the maniac in "All Through The House") which work to damage the film. These elements form a syndrome I have always associated with the shorter stories of Robert Bloch. Also included with them is a certain Blochian sense of our taking for granted that the very worst that can possibly happen to these characters will, if fact, occur. And that this eventual climax in each case may be surmised and completed in the imagination of the viewer before it happens on the screen, thus instilling, at the end, a disappointing sense of anticlimax.

The harm injected into **TALES** by these factors is alleviated to a certain extent by some extraordinarily effective acting and special effects and by Francis' visual styling of several of the tales. **TALES FROM THE CRYPT** is a much stronger and vivid work than Francis' and Subotsky's (plus Bloch) previous collaboration, **THE HOUSE THAT DRIPPED BLOOD** (1971), but it falls short of

perhaps the best of this seldom-produced type of film, at least in the English language, **TALES OF TERROR** (Corman and Matheson, 1962).

Critics have knocked **TALES** for its rather obnoxious use of W. W. Jacobs' classic short story "The Monkey's Paw" as the basis for the third tale "Wish You Were Here." The charge cannot be denied; the plagiarism is most foolishly "acknowledged" by Subotsky's character's incredulously mentioning every few moments the story by name, a feeble attempt at honoring through whoring. Such is not the case with the same critics' indictment of the final tale's reliance on **FREAKS** (1932). The similarity is there, of course, but Subotsky has convoluted and twisted Browning's theme quite cleverly. These two instances illustrate quite clearly the important (artistic) difference between dishonest transcription and legitimate evolution.

But one should not, however, forget the main bulk of the source material for the film. "Tales from the Crypt" and "Vault of Horror" and other E.C. Group horror comics, produced by Bill Gaines and Al Feldstein (now "Mad" men), provided the material from which the film is derived. These phenomenal magazines are, today, years after their forced demise in the middle 1950s, perfect models for much of the explicitness of horror films produced now; unbelievably blatant and garish, compellingly cynical and gory, oft-times mindless, and all the more effectively horrifying for it. The very coarseness of the paper upon which they were printed complimented their unyielding outrageous grimness and singlemindedness of purpose. While Subotsky and Francis have not always matched the books in their film for content, they have achieved quite well the style. Each of the tales of the film unravel in tidy comic strip fashion through a mixture of simple camera movements and setups, clean editing and uncluttered compositions. The most successful segment from this point of view of physical style (although all are quite neatly executed) is, oddly enough, "Wish You Were Here," the corrupted "Monkey's Paw" tale. (Its triumph runs even to the point of one's expectation of great white balloons to rise within the frame from the characters' mouths with dialogue titles emblazoned on them.) Considering the more difficult rendering of the books' content, "Poetic Justice," and to a lesser extent, "Reflections of Death," a-

chieve the unusual combination of grisly force, demonic invention, and viciously black-humored morality that reflects the spirit of the best of the printed matter.

TALES ends smoothly on a note of unsettling ambiguity. The Keeper's mission is that of Guardian and Judge of Hell. Each tale has represented the sins of a particular individual projected to his mind only, but we are left in tantalizing doubt whether the incidents in the tales actually happened. Since all five principals dies (more or less) at the end of their respective tales, were they snatched from their death throes (perhaps at the instant of the last frame of film of each story?) to be ushered here to their more lasting fate? While this theory seems to hold generally well there are some marvelously confuting elements which tend to root the stories in reality while blooming them in warning fantasy. For instance, in the catacomb, Joanne Clayton drops the Christmas brooch from her husband which she only unwrapped after his murder. After his story, Elliot haltingly cries that, no, he didn't much care for old Mr. Grimsdyke, hardly the sentiments of the man who drove him to suicide. Major Rogers protests the entire scene in the catacomb by complaining that he will be late for an appointment concerning a new job, no doubt, at the Elmridge Home for the Blind. All five mention that they were here simply because they felt a deep compulsion to stop and tour the catacomb, implying they arrived there by very natural means. As the Keeper intones that he has revealed "not how but why you are here for all eternity," perhaps we are dealing with "unrepentant" and irrevocable thoughts and not actions. And in that case, there will be many more of us answering the Keeper's "Who's next?" by following these five through the cross-shaped shower of light into the inferno.

TALES FROM THE CRYPT is, then, a fairly controlled film. Even at the very least, we should not dismiss the extremely enjoyable and capable performances of wiry veteran actors like Peter Cushing, Richard Greene, Ian Hendry, Nigel Patrick and Patrick Magee in a movie which shows for the most part the intelligence to use them skillfully. Francis' film is certainly not great, but it is highly, competently crafted and, given the rather disappointing quality of the genre today, that is sufficient and most welcome.

David Bartholomew

Scenes from **HORROR HOTEL** (1959), the first of the Amicus horror films, produced in association with Max J. Rosenberg and Milton Subotsky long before the Amicus name came into use. Top: Patricia Jessel and Christopher Lee as New England devil worshippers about to make a virgin sacrifice. Middle: A noticeably youthful Christopher Lee as the film's Professor Driscoll, a practitioner of the black arts who lures one of his lovely students (Betta St. John) to her death as a virgin sacrifice to Lucifer. This neat little horror entry, with its wonderfully atmospheric representation of rural New England, probably stands as the finest contribution Amicus has yet made to the horror genre. Its director, John (Llewellyn) Moxey has since gone on to do the superb teleplay adaptation of **THE STRANGE CASE OF DR. JEKYLL AND MR. HYDE** (1967), and last year's highly acclaimed telefilm **THE NIGHT STALKER** (1972), both for producer Dan Curtis. Bottom: John Pertwee as the vain, swaggering horror film star who comically turns into a real vampire when he buys the authentic cape of Count Dracula from a mysterious antique dealer. This satire of horror films and their makers by author Robert Bloch was the finest segment of Amicus' **THE HOUSE THAT DRIPPED BLOOD** (1970), and is a personal favorite of producer Milton Subotsky.



cognition of any Amicus film. Is that due to its connection with the old comic books?

SUBOTSKY: That's part of the reason. There's an audience for E.C. comics, and there are the people who remember it. Although **TALES FROM THE CRYPT** did make the most money of any of our films, it didn't get the best critical notices. Critically, the best received was **THE HOUSE THAT DRIPPED BLOOD**, which didn't make anywhere near the money. It's hard to say what sells a picture and what doesn't. **THE HOUSE THAT DRIPPED BLOOD** did very well, and was a profitable film, but it made nowhere near the profit of our first E.C. comics adaptation, and I think it was a better film. **TALES** had more audience appeal. There are things the audiences liked to talk about like Nigel Patrick walking through the corridor of razor blades, and Peter Cushing rising out of the grave. Cushing loved that role, by the way, and it was very close to him at the time. I think all you need for a film are these few plums, and whereas **HOUSE** was a better quality film overall, it has none of these plums which people talk about and remember.

CFQ: Was **TALES FROM THE CRYPT** budgeted higher than the usual Amicus production because it was done for Metromedia?

SUBOTSKY: No. We don't make any horror films for more than \$500,000, and this was budgeted below that.

CFQ: Which of your films have made the most money?

SUBOTSKY: **TALES FROM THE CRYPT** has made the most. Somehow it hit very big, and we don't know why. It could be because of its basis in the E.C. comics. The reason is probably that people liked it and sent other people to see it. It had something special that our other films didn't have and Max and I can't put our fingers on it.

Strangely enough, **SCREAM AND SCREAM AGAIN** made a lot of money and that was different from any other film we've ever done. I don't know why, it wasn't all that good. It might have been because we used three top horror stars and it had a very good title.

CFQ: Freddie Francis seems to be the director of choice on many of your films. What do you like about working with him and why have you used him so often?

SUBOTSKY: The thing I like most about working with Freddie is that he's got a fantastic visual sense and these films need a visual style. He can give the picture a better look than any other director. There are other areas where he's not as good. For example, I don't think he can handle actors as well as, say, Roy Ward Baker. I don't think he understands script and story as well as some other directors.

CFQ: **SCREAM AND SCREAM AGAIN** was the first and only Amicus film to contain female nudity and receive an R rating. Was the nudity asked for by AIP or was it your decision to make an R film?

SUBOTSKY: The director did do a shot in



In **TALES FROM THE CRYPT** we didn't plagiarize *The Monkey's Paw*. This was the original comic book story upon which the film is based. The motif of getting three wishes is something that goes all the way back to fairy tales. It's not plagiarism to use an idea unless it's such a fresh idea that nobody has ever done anything like it before.

which you see nudity, but we gave it to AIP for a foreign version. Perhaps they included it in the American print. But you don't get an R because of nudity, you get an R because it's gruesome, violent or nasty. Maybe it was nastier than the others and that's why it got an R. Certainly if they didn't want an R they could have had a GP with only a minor cut.

There was one cut that the distributors made in "The Monkey's Paw" segment of **TALES FROM THE CRYPT** when the man was getting hacked apart by a sword chopping into his guts--we used pig's guts. It was a tiny cut of only two or three feet, and they took that out because it would have been the difference between an R and a GP.

CFQ: Are there any other producers that have influenced you or that you admire?

SUBOTSKY: There are three producers that I sort of admire. One is Val Lewton who made marvellous horror films for RKO. The producer I try to pattern our company on is Sam Katzman, who made all those tremendous little low-budget films for Columbia. Everytime a new idea came in, there was Sam with a picture about it. He was a showman, and I admire this kind of showmanship. The other producer would be William Castle, because he made some splendid horror films with great ideas. I loved all the gimmick films like *HOUSE ON HAUNTED HILL*, *THE TINGLER* and *13 GHOSTS*. I love those ideas like *Fright Breaks*.

Another producer I admire and would love to emulate is Arthur Freed who made all the musicals for MGM. I would love to make musicals. That's another fantasy world. If I had a choice I would be like Arthur Freed.

CFQ: --AND NOW THE SCREAMING STARTS! is the final release title of the film you made prior to *VAULT OF HORROR*. Why were there so many title changes on this film and who chose the final one?

SUBOTSKY: --AND NOW THE SCREAMING STARTS! is a better title. I came up with it and Max came up with the punctuation for it. *FENGRIFFEN* or *BRIDE OF FENGRIFFEN* weren't strong enough. They wouldn't get the audience. Also, this new title translates well into other languages. The original title we wanted was *I HAVE NO MOUTH AND I MUST SCREAM*, which is also the title of a well known story by Harlan Ellison. I made a deal with the girl who represents him here that we would buy the title, but when she took it up with him he didn't want to do it.

CFQ: Of all the films you've done, which have presented the most problems in script preparation and production values before going on the floor?

SUBOTSKY: None have presented problems of general production values. We have a couple of films coming up that will present these types of problems. *THE LAND THAT TIME FORGOT*, and *THE CLONE* which is nearly all special effects. Nothing before has ever presented us with difficulties because they were all straightforward films with only minimal effects work.

Most problems from the point of view of script preparation, strangely enough, do not occur on our horror pictures, but on films like *DANGER ROUTE* and *WHAT BECAME OF JACK AND JILL*. I'd say that *THE MIND OF MR. SOAMES* was

probably the hardest film to lick. It was about a 30 year old man who has been unconscious since birth, and when he gains consciousness he's a baby, but he's a man too. Now the basic idea was very good, but when he escapes from the institution where he's kept, that's where the film fell down, because we didn't know what to do with him or how to resolve the picture. We rewrote it 20 times, but we still never knew what to do with it, and that's what's wrong with the film. It could have been a great picture. *DANGER ROUTE* and *WHAT BECAME OF JACK AND JILL* were total failures. They were not horror films.

CFQ: What is *THE CLONE* about?

SUBOTSKY: It's a substance that reproduces asexually. It's the ultimate pollutant. It grows in the sewers of cities from polluting materials and then it begins to come out of the sewers and devour people.

CFQ: What are your own particular favorites in the horror and science fiction film genres?

SUBOTSKY: In the horror genre it's *DEAD OF NIGHT*, the Val Lewton films--*CAT PEOPLE* and *CURSE OF THE CAT PEOPLE*, the James Whale *FRANKENSTEIN* and *BRIDE OF FRANKENSTEIN*.

The Whale *FRANKENSTEIN*s were beautiful films that had a certain flair to them, and they were somewhat faithful to the original novel. If we do a *Frankenstein* film we'll go right back to the original book. My script is exactly the Mary Shelley book, but leaving out the North Pole sequences. I'd do it only in 3-D because that's the only thing that we could add to it. It would be the closest version to the book ever made. I think it would turn out better than our stab at Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde with *I, MONSTER* because the book is full of action, whereas the Stevenson book was not.

I like one Hammer film, *KISS OF THE VAMPIRE*, which Don Sharp made and which I thought had a very good mythic quality about it. All those bats coming in at the end was great. The story kept me interested all the way through. It was one of the few Hammer films in that period that didn't make money. They never did it again, they went back to the blood and gore.

In science fiction I enjoy *FORBIDDEN PLANET* and *THE DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL*.

My favorite fantasy film is a Swedish film I saw before the war called *THE ETERNAL MASK*. It was about a plague in this town where a doctor has discovered a serum to cure its effects. He tries it on someone and the patient dies, and he goes mad and throws his notebooks into the river. But they discover that the serum really does work and they must recover the formula. By this time the doctor is insane and so they get someone to delve into his mind to try to bring him back to sanity as quickly as possible. The film is full of fantasy sequences depicting the thoughts and feelings he expresses in his madness. I'd love to see that picture again someday, in fact, I'd like to remake it.

CFQ: It's become obvious that you find the 3-D process fascinating.

SUBOTSKY: I've always liked 3-D since I was a kid and saw Pete Smith's audioscopes in the 1930s. I've always wanted to do something in 3-D. I was delighted when there was a 3-D boom in the late forties and early fifties. It's much easier now because there is a process where you can put both images on one film anamorphically. It makes it simpler technically to put it on one strip of film for projection in cinemas.

CFQ: There have been quite a few series and sequels in the horror genre in the last few years. What are your own views about sequels?

SUBOTSKY: There's nothing wrong with it if you have a good character like Dr. Phibes and a good formula, and you can be inventive. The second Dr. Phibes film was terrible, though.

Our multi-story formats allow us to be tremendously inventive and to try all kinds of different techniques. We did a first person story segment in *TALES FROM THE CRYPT*. If you are telling five stories plus a framework story in 90 minutes you can do all sorts of things and not bore an audience for very long if one of the stories isn't good. I thought "The Monkey's Paw" segment of *TALES FROM THE CRYPT* was dreadful in every way. I thought it was badly directed. We hardly had anything to cut from. We

*1937, directed by Werner Hochbaum.

I, MONSTER

I, MONSTER A Cannon Group Release. 1972. 74 minutes. In Eastman Color. An Amicus Production. Produced by Max J. Rosenberg and Milton Subotsky. Directed by Stephen Weeks. Screenplay by Milton Subotsky based on Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde by Robert Louis Stevenson. Production manager, Teresa Bolland. Assistant director, Al Burgess. Director of photography, Moray Grant. Art director, Tony Curtis. Editor, Peter Tanner. Music by Carl Davis. Make-up by Harry and Peter Frampton. Sound, Buster Ambler.

Marlowe/Blake Christopher Lee
Uttersson Peter Cushing
Enfield Mike Raven
Lanyon Richard Hurndall
Poole George Merritt
Deane Kenneth J. Warren
Diane Susan Jameson

Made nearly three years ago, and long promised for U.S. release, the highly touted Christopher Lee/Peter Cushing starrer, *I, MONSTER* is finally getting bookings here by the Cannon Group. Still another rendering of Robert Louis Stevenson's classic Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, the film is basically a vapid attempt to give yet another psychological interpretation to the Stevenson story. Only Stevenson, by the way, is given credit on the screen, no mention being made of the work of co-producer Milton Subotsky who wrote the film's screenplay.

The only real weak point of the film is the basically dull script. The acting, photography, and the recreation of 1906 London are all very well done. Despite some rather exciting moments, however, the picture is heavily bogged down in a morass of psychological terms which Dr. Marlowe (Lee) uses to try to explain his theories to his friends, Uttersson (Cushing), a lawyer, Enfield (Mike Raven) and Lanyon (Richard Hurndall), fellow doctors.

Briefly, the film centers around the work of Dr. Marlowe, an early follower of Freud. He develops a serum which will relieve inhibitions and uses it first on his cat, turning it into a snarling mad animal, which he is forced to kill, and later on a guilt-ridden girl (Susan Jameson) who becomes, briefly, a wanton tart, and finally a ruthless businessman (Kenneth J. Warren) who becomes a cowardly infantile psychotic. In the end, the doctor uses the drug on himself, turning into a lust-ridden, sadistic criminal who he dubs Edward Blake. Slowly Blake, who has taken up residence in Soho, begins to take over Marlowe's personality without the use of the drug.

After a series of killings and the revelation to his mentor (Hurndall) about the effect of the drug, which kills the old man, Blake stalks Uttersson, the last person to suspect his secret, and in trying to kill him is himself destroyed. One of the basic assets of the film is that Amicus had the good sense not to carry the picture too far and edited it to only 75 minutes. If it had been longer, it might have been unbearable.

Christopher Lee did his usually splendid job as the Marlowe/Blake character, although he seemed to have a better time hamming it up as the evil fiend Blake than as the straight laced, and exceedingly dull, Marlowe. Peter Cushing had little to do as Uttersson except question Marlowe on his theories, and look properly perplexed, although he did both of these quite well. Mike Raven was in for a small role as another doctor.

One question really develops over *I, MONSTER*: just why did Amicus choose to re-do the Stevenson work when so many renderings of it have been done already?

Mike Pitts



couldn't do what we wanted to do with it, but so what? It lasted only twelve minutes and we went on to another story right after that which was very good, whereas if it had been a feature we'd have been stuck. I feel the exciting aspect of our films is that we try not to bore an audience. We cut them so tightly and so fast that the first version of **VAULT OF HORROR** was two hours and now we've got it down to 87 minutes. We cut it as tightly as we possibly can, and nothing stops for a second.

CFQ: Are you happy with the end result of **VAULT OF HORROR**?

SUBOTSKY: Yeah. I think it's very different from our other horror films. It's not gory or gruesome--well, only in very tiny parts. It's very inventive and it's funny. It's full of laughs and self-parody, kind of tongue-in-cheek.

We've got a horror writer reading the film version of **TALES FROM THE CRYPT**, as a gag. He's come up with a story idea about being buried alive and he wants to try it out first. He's found something that will make him appear dead and someone who's going to bury him and dig him up later. He says to his collaborator who is to do the digging up, "there's no money in horror."

The Terry Thomas Glynis Johns sequence is pure comedy right to the end, and although it gets gruesome, it's gruesome in a funny way.

CFQ: The rushes I saw on **VAULT OF HORROR** were set in the restaurant where everyone, except Dan Massey, is wearing obviously false fangs. Was this deliberate?

SUBOTSKY: Oh yes. This is the last shot in the picture--it's a gag or it's nothing. It's quite deliberate and I think it works. These films are a kind of comic strip on film which no one has done successfully. They tried it with **MODESTY BLAISE** and one or two other things.

What I'd like to do is get the rights to the entire Marvel comics group and do **THE INCREDIBLE HULK** and **THE SPIDERMAN**. They would be a lot of fun to make and I think people would like it. We may get it yet. They ask an enormous amount of money for the rights.

We went after the "Doc Savage" rights but they wanted too much money. You have to tailor everything to budget, and if it's going to cost too much you are not going to get the money to make it, and if you do, you might not make it back at the boxoffice. Just like any other business, if the costs are too high you don't make the product. Maybe one day we'll pay the amount they ask for their stories, but at the moment we can't afford them.

CFQ: Of all the films you have been associated with in the fantasy genre, which is your favorite, and why?

SUBOTSKY: In the category of fantasy, I think **DR. TERROR'S HOUSE OF HORRORS**. It had a lot of variety. It had a nice little musical story in the middle of it with four musical numbers, and the last story, the vampire story, was very funny. I also like odd items as well, like the vampire send-up in **THE HOUSE THAT DRIPPED BLOOD**. The first story in **ASYLUM** is very good, as is the last story in **ASYLUM**, about the robot.

CFQ: Away from the fantasy field which film is your favorite?

SUBOTSKY: Of all the films I've made, my very favorite is **IT'S TRAD, DAD!**, because it had fantasy, sparkle, brightness, fun, humor, music, dancing, and it was bouncy and gay and it used a

*RING-A-DING RHYTHM

Scenes from **I, MONSTER** (1970), an ill-fated and uncalled for adaptation by Amicus of Robert Louis Stevenson's "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde," which is only now beginning to receive limited release in the U.S. by the Cannon Group, a distributry that specializes in the acquisition of poor independent productions, giving them good exploitation and brief saturated bookings to recoup on a modest investment. Christopher Lee turns in a fine acting job as the Hyde character Mr. Blake (top) and is seen in encounters with Enfield (Mike Raven), wearing a mask to hide his hideous appearance (2nd), and in a knife-fight with a street ruffian (3rd). **I, MONSTER** was directed by Stephen Weeks (bottom, seen directing Christopher Lee as Dr. Marlowe in a laboratory sequence), a protégé of actor Christopher Lee, whose inexperience led, in part, to the film's failure.

I realize that Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde had been done a lot of times, but I wanted to do the most definitive version of the book ever. **I, MONSTER** is the closest ever to the Robert Louis Stevenson story of any version ever made. The trouble with the picture is that in sticking so close to the original we wound up with a film that was rather boring.

lot of interesting cinema techniques.

CFQ: What sort of budget do you work on for a typical Amicus production?

SUBOTSKY: Between \$450,000 to \$500,000. Our film **DALEKS--INVASION EARTH 2150 A.D.** (which was on television not long ago) cost one hundred and eighty thousand pounds. We couldn't do it for that today. It still looks very good and exciting. The sets were very good. I was surprised it stood up as well on television as it did. It didn't make any sense because it was very hard to follow the plot. I was so interested in visual action that what we did was have the whole plot on a chart. Dr. Who took twenty seconds to explain what they were going to do and then--bang!--you were into two reels of action showing them doing it. I think if I did it again I would make the plot a lot clearer as to what they were trying to do. I'm so afraid of boring an audience. My wife thinks I edit my pictures much too rapidly and that they all move too fast. She tells me that if you blink you miss an important point. I usually cut film too tightly and I'm trying now to slacken off a little and let them go a little more slowly. But I try and not even have a boring ten seconds. If I see ten seconds where I think the interest is beginning to wane I'll tighten it and cut it. In a way it's a good thing, because you don't want anyone to get bored, but sometimes you're confusing if you cut too tight.

CFQ: Why were the two Dalek films billed as Aaru Productions?

SUBOTSKY: The fellow who financed them had a company called Aaru and he wanted it to say an Aaru Production instead of an Amicus Production, but it was really us. We did everything.

CFQ: What running time do you aim for when you make a film?

SUBOTSKY: You try to be about eighty five minutes, minimum. The maximum can be anything, whatever the picture can sustain. The maximum we've ever gone to was, I think, one hundred or one hundred and two minutes. The distributors really want ninety minutes.

CFQ: Have you ever made two versions of a film?

SUBOTSKY: The only picture we've done two versions of was **TORTURE GARDEN** because, at the time, American television wanted 100 minute films. They've changed now. We made a hundred minute version for them and a ninety two minute version for the cinemas. Nothing vital was cut out. Actually, I only made the cuts in two of the reels and took two big chunks out. You don't miss anything.

CFQ: What sort of projects have you lined up for the future?

SUBOTSKY: You know, if we didn't come up with proper scripts we would never make another film. Nobody is going to come to us and say, make a film, here is the script. We have to find the material and we've got half a dozen scripts being written now, including comedy-horror along the Dr. Phibes line. I think comedy-horror is going to be very big and we've got two scripts like that coming up, and a very unusual werewolf script.

CFQ: An amazing aspect of horror and fantasy films is their incredible vitality as a cinema form. What do you feel is responsible for their



Scenes from **DR. TERROR'S HOUSE OF HORRORS** (1964), the first of Amicus' successful series of anthology films consisting of four episodic shorts connected by a single framework story, and only their second horror film. Top: Christopher Lee in the film's episode which borrowed heavily from Robert Florey's **THE BEAST WITH FIVE FINGERS** (1947). Middle: A scene from the film's framework story, as Dr. Schreck (Peter Cushing) fortells the future for Christopher Lee and the other passengers in the crowded train compartment. The same linking story was used, essentially unchanged, in Amicus' followup films **TORTURE GARDEN** (1966) and **TALES FROM THE CRYPT** (1971). The major defect of the Amicus anthology films is their continued use of trite and tried-and-true plots for their story material. Bottom: A scene from **THE HOUSE THAT DRIPPED BLOOD** (1970), based on stories and screenplay by Robert Bloch. In the first episode a writer of horror stories (Denholm Elliott) seeks the help of a psychiatrist because he is haunted by a character he has created (background).

continued popularity and profitability.

SUBOTSKY: It's just that people like them. They like horror films for the same reasons they like musicals or comedies: it puts them into a world of imagination which is always fun, it's always enjoyable, so I think they'll always like it. The difficulty is coming up with new themes and new ideas, or new twists for old ideas.

CFQ: The present horror film cycle has been going strong since the late fifties. What future do you see for the horror picture industry over the next decade?

SUBOTSKY: I think there will always be a market for a good horror film just as there will always be a market for a good film of any kind. It's not a cycle really. It's a genre of films and there's always room for a good addition. The bad ones won't make money and the good ones will.

At the moment, the business seems to be growing bigger for some reason. Perhaps it's that times are worse and people are looking more to fantasy. Also, it's something they can't get, for the most part, from television, although they are getting more of it in America now.

Films are an artificial medium. They are rarely a real medium about real people and real situations and real problems. They are primarily entertainment, and the horror film is a big part of it.

CFQ: What do you see the future for Amicus to be?

SUBOTSKY: What I hope for Amicus is that we can continue to make these films. I always want to continue to make these films, but at the same time go on to bigger films and, if possible, musicals. I'd also like to do a television series. I think there is an enormous amount of room on television for good, imaginative series and I'd like to prepare something. Really, 95% of my time is spent working with material, looking for stories, reading, working with writers and writing. This is where it all starts. It starts with somebody thinking of an idea, whether he writes it as a story or comes to me with one page, or I think of something and out of that one little spark of one idea thousands and thousands of people wind up making a living and thousands more enjoying the end product.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone connected with Amicus for their enthusiastic cooperation during the writing of this feature, whether they appeared in front of, or behind the cameras. My thanks are extended to unit publicists Joy Helman and Lily Poyser for arranging my visits to Shepperton and Twickenham studios. And my special thanks go to Milton Subotsky, who put up with repeated intrusions and demands upon his time while he was busy preparing several projects for filming. Milton showed a genuine interest in cinefantastique that is refreshing and deeply appreciated.

Chris Knight



ASYLUM

England's Amicus Productions have hit upon a winning formula, and one not widely used, with their horror anthology films.

ASYLUM A Cinerama Release. 10/72. 100 minutes. In Eastman Color. An Amicus Production. Produced by Max J. Rosenberg and Milton Subotsky. Executive producer, Gustave Berne. Screenplay by Robert Bloch. Directed by Roy Ward Baker. Production manager, Teresa Bolland. First assistant director, Anthony Waye. Director of photography, Denys Coop. Art director, Tony Curtis. Camera operator, Neil Binney. Sound, Norman Bolland. Edited by Peter Tanner. Make-up, Roy Ashton. Hairdresser, Joan Carpenter. Wardrobe, Bridget Sellers. Continuity, Pamela Davis.

Bonnie	Barbara Parkins
Smith	Peter Cushing
Lucy	Britt Ekland
Byron	Herbert Lom
Walter	Richard Todd
Bruno	Barry Morse
Barbara	Charlotte Rampling
Dr. Rutherford	Patrick Magee
Ruth	Sylvia Sims
Anna	Ann Firbank
George	James Villiers
Dr. Martin	Robert Powell
Stebbins	John Franklyn-Robbins
Miss Higgins	Megs Jenkins
Max	Geoffrey Bayldon

England's Amicus Pictures, having hit upon a winning formula, and one not widely used, with their horror anthology films, intend to keep the trend going. The latest from producers Max J. Rosenberg and Milton Subotsky is *ASYLUM*. The film comes into release less than eight months after *TALES FROM THE CRYPT* and will be followed by *VAULT OF HORROR*, now in production. The film had its London premiere only sixteen weeks after the first day of shooting.

The short production time doesn't detract from the film's professionalism. As usual Amicus has brought together first class talent to bring the quartet of suspense tales to the screen.

Director Roy Ward Baker, no stranger to the genre (*FIVE MILLION YEARS TO EARTH* and *THE VAMPIRE LOVERS*), keeps the performances of the cast on a solid and serious base. The cast includes such performers as Barbara Parkins, Richard Todd, Herbert Lom and Peter Cushing. Cushing has appeared in all of Amicus' films of this type to date. No complaints here for whether hero, villain

or victim his presence always adds to a scene. As the kindly junk man in *TALES FROM THE CRYPT* or the mysterious customer in *ASYLUM* he brings to life the character and in some cases saves an otherwise dull story.

This multi-tale screenplay by Robert Bloch is unevenly paced. Beginning with "Frozen Fear," a gripping, grisly horror tale worthy of a place in any old E.C. comic book, the film moves to a slower paced story of "The Weird Tailor;" next is "Lucy Comes To Stay," which is only another psychological tale and the weakest of the four; last is "Mannikins of Horror," which leads into the denouement and a satisfying ending.

At least one of the tales, "Mannikins of Horror" is based on one of Bloch's own short stories. The author has previously scripted *THE HOUSE THAT DRIPPED BLOOD* for Amicus. Distributors of any film Bloch works on feel compelled to refer to the now twelve-year-old *PSYCHO* in their advertisements. They should be more careful. Someone may ask if he's done anything memorable since.

As in the other films of this type, the un-

Patrick Magee.

related tales are held together by an interconnected plot. In *ASYLUM* it's a young doctor who is trying to guess which of the inmates is the former head of the institute, who has taken on a completely different personality.

The first "cell" contains Bonnie (Barbara Parkins) who claims to have conspired with Walter (Richard Todd) to do away with his wife. Hers is the most chilling tale. The best part of the film comes as she is pursued by the dismembered body of Walter's wife.

Bruno, another inmate (Barry Morse), believes he was a tailor who had been commissioned by a stranger, Mr. Smith (Peter Cushing) to fashion a suit for the man's son. Smith provides the weird material from which the suit is to be made as well as measurements and instructions that the suit is to be worked on only from midnight until dawn. To Bruno's horror he discovers the reason for the unusual instructions.

The third tale is that of Barbara (Charlotte Rampling) a schizoid with homicidal tendencies. This is the weakest of the quartet and the only one in which you can be sure the patient is imagining things.

Finally the young man is shown into Byron's quarters (Herbert Lom) who believes himself to have been a doctor. He claims that the miniature figures he has created are real and have functioning organs. He has finished a model of himself which he claims will enable him to have revenge on those who put him there. He's not that mad and is able, by concentration, to give life, his own, to the figure. The animated figure kills Dr. Rutherford (Patrick Magee), the new head of the institution, but with appalling consequences for Byron.

The end is yet to come for the young doctor who thought he had discovered the identity of the previous head of the asylum. He was wrong.

Special effects create the most suspenseful moments in the films. The disembodied arms, legs and head reaching out for Barbara Parkins as she tries in vain to flee them are hideously real, enhanced by the fact that they are all wrapped in plain brown paper parcels and tied with string. Sound effects add to the atmosphere.

Although *ASYLUM* is uneven, horror film fans won't be disappointed by it and will be looking forward to *VAULT OF HORROR*.

Dan R. Scapperotti



THE PARALLEL WORLDS OF JACQUES TOURNEUR

by John McCarty

John McCarty is a 1966 graduate of Boston University with a degree in film, and a former Peace Corps volunteer stationed in Bogota, Columbia, where he worked as a producer and director, in Spanish, of educational TV programs and Peace Corps training films. After an unsuccessful attempt at breaking into scriptwriting for Hollywood teleseries, he turned to film criticism and independent production. He has published articles in *Take One*, *Screen Education* and *Film Heritage* among others. His 35-minute short based on Franz Kafka's *THE METAMORPHOSIS*, filmed in 1972, was recently aired on WHMT, an upstate New York affiliate of the Public Broadcasting Service. McCarty is currently Creative Director for WRGB-TV, an NBC affiliate in Schenectady, New York, and is preparing another short film based on a story by Jack London.

A wave of fascination with the occult is noticeable throughout the country. And nowhere is this fascination more noticeably reflected than in the cinema. *ROSEMARY'S BABY*, *THE MEPHISTO WALTZ*, *THE OTHER*, *THE POSSESSION OF JOEL DELANEY*--and soon, *THE EXORCIST*. Witches, satanists, demons, ghosts--they seem to be taking over the movie screens. And yet for all this activity, the man who has done so much of his best work exploring the world of the occult on the screen remains inactive--Jacques Tourneur.

Though born in France (in 1904), Jacques Tourneur grew up and received his schooling in California, where his famous father, Maurice Tourneur, a one-time illustrator, was directing films for Paramount and M-G-M. In 1926, Tourneur pere left M-G-M following a dispute with executives over creative control of a film he was to make from Jules Verne's *The Mysterious Island* and sailed for France, where he remained making films until 1948. He died in 1961.

It was in France that Jacques Tourneur really began his own film career, starting out first as an editor for his father. In 1932, he secured a \$50 a week contract from Pathe-Natan to direct his first film, *TOUT CA NE BAUT PAS L'AMOUR* (with Jean Gabin). He directed three more films for Pathe, then decided to return to the United States and tackle the Hollywood power structure--

A scene from Tourneur's 1958 film of the occult, *CURSE OF THE DEMON*. Actors Niall McGinnis as demonologist Karswell (in clown makeup), and Dana Andrews as Dr. Holden, a scientist and realist, are the embodiments of Tourneur's parallel worlds.







At Left: Scenes from Tourneur's second film for producer Val Lewton, *I WALKED WITH A ZOMBIE*, released by RKO in 1943. Christine Gordon and Frances Dee walk amid the swamps and bayou of the Magical Isle, Haiti, to encounter a talisman of voodoo and Carrefour (Darby Jones), a zombie.



where the producer now reigned supreme—on his own.

Arriving in 1934, he was unable to get any assignments, despite his experience. M-G-M subsequently hired him—at \$100 a week—to do second unit work, an experience which turned him against the idea of second units for life. But it was in that capacity that he met Val Lewton.

Lewton had come to M-G-M as a writer and publicist, but he also served as a unit producer. When that studio launched its production of *A TALE OF TWO CITIES* (1935), he was assigned to produce the storming of the bastille sequence. Jacques Tourneur was appointed his director. They became close friends.

In the next few years, Tourneur rose from second units to directing short subjects. Then in 1939 he made his first American feature, *THEY ALL COME OUT*, a melodrama about convicts that had developed from one of his earlier shorts called *CRIME DOES NOT PAY*. Simultaneously, Lewton was contracted by RKO to produce a series of low budget films, and he immediately called upon Tourneur to direct the first one, *CAT PEOPLE*.

The now famous style of *CAT PEOPLE* with its emphasis on atmosphere and understatement was a far more personal, less generic approach to the "horrorfilm" and an abrupt departure from the graphic traditions established in the thirties. Its innovation has largely been attributed to Lewton, and I think this is true. But its execution is something else again. Comparisons to those Lewton films directed by Tourneur and to films made in later years by Tourneur indicate that the style and essential preoccupations of *CAT PEOPLE* belong very much to Jacques Tourneur.

Because Jacques Tourneur has made so many suspense and outdoor adventure films it would be easy to call his style a mixture of Hitchcock and Renoir. The attempted murder of Paul Lukas as reflected in the windows of a passing train in *BERLIN EXPRESS* (1948) and the gentle, pastoral atmosphere of *STARS IN MY CROWN* (1956) do offer a resemblance to elements in the work of both these directors, but this has more to do with genre than influence. Hitchcock and Renoir were Tourneur's contemporaries, not his mentors. Tourneur's real mentor was his father.

The bulk of Maurice Tourneur's silent films have either been destroyed or misplaced and appraisals of his early work by critics who would have had an opportunity to see it are pathetically small. Those films which remain—some like *THE WISHING RING* (1914) having been only recently discovered by the American Film Institute—are markedly stylized, drawing their impact not from great flourishes of movement but from exquisitely composed almost hypnotic lighting effects, a technique which grew perhaps from Tourneur's background in fine and commercial art as well as the theatre.

To obtain these effects, Tourneur relied almost completely on his imagination and the talents of his photographer and set designer rather than the realities of on location shooting. His was the art of composition, just as Griffith's was the art of montage. And those critiques of Maurice Tourneur's work which do exist unanimously insist that no one else quite matched the visual splendor which he and his long-time cameraman, John Van Der Broeck, consistently achieved in their films.

This technique of utilizing light and design, in contrast to montage, for cinematic effect is largely considered to have been the post-war contribution of the German "studio-oriented" directors, but Tourneur's employment of it as early as 1914 would suggest, if not confirm, that it really began with him.

Such an approach has its limitations, of course. Large scale action in the Maurice Tourneur films which I have seen—*LORNA DOONE* (1922), for example—is not convincing, the portrayal of violence being almost lethargic. *THE LAST OF THE MOHICANS* (1922) with its tremen-

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dously exciting scenes of the massacre of Fort William Henry and the breathtaking scenes of capture and escape is no exception. Mistakenly considered Tourneur's film, the majority of it was actually directed by Clarence Brown, who took over when Tourneur fell ill.

But the ambivalence which Maurice Tourneur shows toward action should not be interpreted as a flaw, for the action-adventure genre in which he found himself occasionally involved was obviously not a personal choice. As the art of film became further intertwined with the trends of industry, directors were inevitably forced to accept unlikely projects simply to continue working. As Tourneur himself explained: "Unfortunately, in this complex and fascinating business, there are so many elements to be considered that you don't always do what you want, but most of the time what you can."*

Having much less creative control than his father enjoyed during his career, Jacques Tourneur has been compelled to work in a far greater number of inept projects, and his films significantly reflect the same limitations--and virtues! His westerns--like WICHITA (1955) and STRANGER ON HORSEBACK (1955)--offer little excitement. In them, he displays no understanding of or feeling for the fistfights and gunplay so traditional to the genre.

From what little we know of them, we can still safely say that the films of Maurice Tourneur speak to our imagination, not our nerve ends. The Scotland of PRIDE OF THE CLAN (1917) and the Devonshire moors of LORNA DOONE, for example, are the Scotland and moor country of the mind, not of National Geographic Magazine. Born of dreams and N. C. Wyeth storybook illustrations, his films insist that imagination is equal to reality; if one imagines something to be real, it is. Which brings us to CAT PEOPLE.

Tautly written by DeWitt Bodeen (from an idea by Val Lewton and Jacques Tourneur), CAT PEOPLE is the story of a lonely, sensitive girl, Irena Dubrovnik (Simone Simon), who has emigrated from her home in the superstitious Balkans to the massive urban sprawl of New York City, where she works as a dress designer. When a young draftsman, Oliver Reed (Kent Smith) falls in love with her and they wed, she is afraid to consummate the marriage, convinced that a medieval curse condemning some of the women in her village to turn into huge, deadly cats whenever their passions were aroused has been passed on to her through some forgotten ancestral link. Her husband seeks the help of a psychiatrist (Tom Conway) but to no avail. Eventually he turns to an old friend (Jane Randolph) for solace, and they fall in love thus arousing Irena's jealousy--and the curse.

Bodeen's script carefully (and appropriately) provides us with a variety of interpretations for

*The Movies In the Age of Innocence by Edward Wagenknecht, University of Oklahoma Press, 1962. Page 213.

At Right: Scenes from the three films directed by Jacques Tourneur for Val Lewton and RKO during the early forties. Top: Simone Simon and Kent Smith from CAT PEOPLE (1942), the story of a lonely and sensitive girl obsessed by the power of her imagination. Middle: A voodoo ritual from I WALKED WITH A ZOMBIE, for which Lewton and Tourneur were said to have hired practicing voodooists. Bottom: Jean Brooks as Kiki, an imaginative and frightened girl who falls prey to a leopard on the prowl in THE LEOPARD MAN (1943).



TOURNEUR REMEN

The following interview with Jacques Tourneur took place in June 1969 as part of research for my book *Val Lewton: The Reality of Terror*, published by Viking Press. Ruth Lewton, the producer's widow, got in touch with Tourneur and arranged a dinner party at her Malibu beach house so that Tourneur and I could meet. Listening to the tape I made, now, more than three years later, the evening comes back with astonishing clarity—the waves washing up to the pilings of the house, Tourneur's kind patience with me, a tyro interviewer if ever there was one, the interruptions of phone calls and proffered sweets. Tourneur's dress was quiet California casual; his mood subdued, almost placid. In our long conversation, he never raised his voice or revealed much emotion, even when recalling turbulent events and times. He spoke little of the content of his films, preferring to comment, whenever possible, about matters of style and production difficulties.

As my reason for seeing Tourneur was essentially to talk about Lewton, I did not question him as fully as I might have about the rest of his career. Still, as an admirer of such fine movies as *OUT OF THE PAST* and *CURSE OF THE DEMON*, I wanted to find out as much as I could about him. The interview was never intended for publication and so I hope that Tourneur will not be angry with me for using it here. I simply felt that John McCarty's perceptive look at Tourneur's films might be further enhanced by the addition of the director's recollections.

Although my particular interest in this research has been Val Lewton, I attempted to approach his work without any preconceptions and hope that my evaluations of the respective contributions of the Lewton team are unbiased and accurately judged. From all that I have learned, I don't think that a very strong case can be made for Tourneur as the prime mover of the Lewton-Tourneur pictures. (Robin Wood's tortured attempt to do so in the Spring 1972 *Film Comment* reinforces this conclusion.) As I have shown in my book, the originating energy behind *CAT PEOPLE*, *I WALKED WITH A ZOMBIE* and *THE LEOPARD MAN* was Lewton's but, that being said, I don't think that Tourneur's importance has in any way been diminished.

Jacques Tourneur is a superb film stylist and interpreter; his films for Lewton are formally far superior to those of the other Lewton directors. Later Lewton films had screenplays as sensitive and carefully crafted, but none had the visual grace and artistic delicacy which Tourneur used to make screenplays blossom as films. Later on, without Lewton's intelligent authority behind his work, Tourneur was often able to do little more than dispose of bad scripts with as much taste and tact as possible. On those few occasions when he was given a first-rate project, like *CURSE OF THE DEMON*, Tourneur rose again to the top of his form. However I think it would be a mistake to take this late, Lewtonesque classic as evidence that Tourneur was the actual guiding force behind the earlier movies. Rather, as it appears to me, Tourneur was simply returning to the kind of filmmaking which he and Lewton evolved together during their early days at RKO.

Joel E. Siegel

Joel E. Siegel is a professor of English at Georgetown University. His book *Val Lewton: The Reality of Terror* is published by Viking Press, for which this unpublished interview with Jacques Tourneur was done as source material.

I made my first four films in France before coming to the United States in 1935. I brought with me one of my French pictures and showed it at MGM. It was in French, of course, a musical. I guess it didn't impress them very much. They gave me a contract, all right, but to do shorts. It was a step backwards: I lost two years there. I did all the shorts, with Pete Smith and John Nesbitt and everybody else who was doing shorts there. Then, after about two years, they gave me my first feature. It was called *THEY ALL COME OUT* and was made for the Federal Government. It's a semi-documentary story about federal penitentiaries. We went to all of the federal pens—spent four days on Alcatraz. The Department of Justice supplied us with the background material and we had a story built around it. When I finished that picture, I was assigned to work on the second unit of David Selznick's *A TALE OF TWO CITIES*. That's when I met Val Lewton. Selznick had decided to make Val, who was his story edi-



Maurice Tourneur, 1876-1961.

tor, producer of the second unit, which was considerable because we shot for over four weeks on the action sequences.

Val and I liked each other immediately. We were interested in the same things—we both liked boats. Shortly after *A TALE OF TWO CITIES*, Val went to RKO. One day he called and asked me to come over to his office. He told me that Charlie Koerner, the head of the studio, had been at a party the night before and somebody had suggested that he make a picture called *CAT PEOPLE*. The next morning, Charlie asked Val to come up with a script to suit that title. Val said: "I don't know what to do." It was a stupid title and Val, with his good taste, said that the only way to do it was not to make the blood-and-thunder cheap horror movie that the studio expected but something intelligent and in good taste.

The first person to join us on that one was writer Dewitt Bodeen. We started reading and talking and then invented this story, out of whole

cloth you know. As a script, as a story progression, *CAT PEOPLE* is very poor. It was made out of details, little situations, so we had very little structure to work from. In the evenings, I'd go downtown with my wife to the theatre or something, and then we'd drive home about midnight. I'd always drive past Val's house and the light was always on in the room where he worked. All alone, he'd be rewriting what we had been doing all day. He was the most conscientious guy. Meticulous.

At first, Bodeen wrote *CAT PEOPLE* as a period thing but I argued against that. I said that if you're going to have horror, the audience must be able to identify with the characters in order to be frightened. Now you can identify with an average guy like me, but how can we identify with a Lower Slobovian or a fellow with a big cape? You laugh at that. So we changed to modern period which I think is a good thing.

I went to RKO and they put me under contract. I did three pictures with Val. *CAT PEOPLE*, the first one, was very childish but audiences in those days were much more naive than they are today. If you made *CAT PEOPLE* today exactly as we did, they'd laugh you out of the theatre because it was naive—a kind of joke. But there were some very good things in it.

The front office made me put a cat in the drafting room scene: I had only intended to suggest the cat's presence by shadows. Despite orders to re-shoot the scene, I shot it so that you couldn't really be sure what you were seeing. That's the only way to do it. In the swimming pool sequence, the cat was my fist. We had a diffused spotlight and I used my fist to make shadows against the wall. But to this day, people swear that there was a cat by that swimming pool. That's the way to make pictures—have fun.

We only shot on *CAT PEOPLE* for a couple weeks. The third day, they were going to fire me. It was very embarrassing. Mr. Koerner was in New York when we started shooting. Lew Ostrow was the executive producer and after he saw three days of rushes, he called in Val and said: "We're going to fire this director. I'm going to put somebody else in." Val called Koerner but he was still in New York. The next day, he got back, looked at the rushes and said: "Leave Jacques alone. He's doing fine."

CAT PEOPLE made a lot of money. The total cost for everything, including the negative, was \$130,000 which is very cheap. The day they ran it at the studio, nobody would talk to us. Val and I walked out on the sidewalk and they all filed past and nobody spoke. They hated it. Then they put it into the Hawaii Theatre for a one-week booking and it ran for thirteen weeks, one week longer than *CITIZEN KANE*. Suddenly we were the fair-haired boys. They gave me a bonus of \$1000 just out of nowhere. RKO made nothing but money on *CAT PEOPLE*.

Our next picture, *I WALKED WITH A ZOMBIE*, has a horrible title but my wife says it's the best picture I've ever done. Very poetic. The sets, particularly the house, were wonderful. We had a harp with a very soft tulle drape and as the camera went by, the wind blew the drape and it made music. The sets were beautifully dressed. Val was very fussy about furnishings and it paid off. You don't know why you like a thing in a film. Every time you see a film that you like, somebody stayed up at night, somebody didn't sleep, somebody worried, somebody was fussy, somebody made enemies. Good pictures don't just happen. If a picture's well-written, the guy worked hard. He didn't just write it off the cuff or get drunk—he worked. If it's the direction, it didn't

MEMBERS

recollections as told to Joel E. Siegel

just happen; somebody worried about it. Val and I were both craftsmen. We were proud of our work. After CAT PEOPLE, we could have asked for the moon. And that's when you can do good work—when you have the economics on your side.

I'm a great believer in collaboration. Val was the dreamer and I was the materialist. I always had both feet on the ground. We complemented each other. By himself, Val might go off the deep end and I, by myself, might lose a certain poetry. We should have gone right on making bigger pictures with bigger budgets, and not necessarily horror pictures. Why put things in boxes?

I WALKED WITH A ZOMBIE was a group effort. Any discussion of the script always involved the writer and Mark Robson, the cutter, and Val and I. We used to have tea at four in the afternoon and everybody had a say, everybody spoke up. The actors we used, like Tom Conway, had done B movies before but, from the day they came on the set, I think they were impressed because they knew we were trying for quality. They noticed the attention we paid to details and they went along with us. The average horror picture before that time just used the actors' bodies. With us, there was a great feeling of rapport.

While I would be working on one film, Val would be preparing the script of the next one with the writers. I WALKED WITH A ZOMBIE was the best one. Personally, I don't like THE LEOPARD MAN. It's episodic, a series of vignettes. It got very confusing. After three pictures, RKO felt that, since Val and I worked so well together, we would work twice as well separately. They loaned me to Universal to do CANYON PASSAGE and Val continued his series of films—CURSE OF THE CAT PEOPLE, BEDLAM and THE BODY SNATCHER—all fine pictures.

Many years later, I did a horror picture in England called NIGHT OF THE DEMON. After I left, the producer put in a monster scene at the beginning. The only monster I did—and this is how I wanted to do the whole thing—was the scene in the woods where Dana Andrews is chased by a cloud. That's how I wanted to do the entire film. Then I wanted, at the very end, when the train goes by, to include only four frames of the monster coming up with the guy and throwing him down. Boom, boom—did I see it or didn't I? People would have to sit through it a second time to be sure of what they saw. But after I had finished and returned to the United States, the English producer made this horrible thing, cheapened it. It was like a different film. But everything after that opening was as I had intended.

The wind storm was good, when the warlock demonstrates his power. We had four airplanes without wings from World War II. We tied them down and revved up the motors. Then we got trucks and filled them with dead leaves. For each take, we'd put a truck in front of one of those planes and the leaves would take off and the wind would blow the rattan garden furniture across the lawn. I loved it. But I had to fight. The producer only wanted to give me two electric fans because it was expensive to dig up those old airplanes out of the hangars, take the wings off, tie them down and rev them up. But, I told them, if we are going to have a warlock making a storm, it can't just be a wind—it's got to be a gale. So this nice kids' birthday party is destroyed. I had all of the wicker furniture painted white so that you'd see it and, when the nurses start taking the kids inside, all this furniture rolls across the screen. I'm very happy with that scene.

I've done lots of television—Barbara Stanwyck shows (she's a friend of mine) and the Jane Wyman series, GENERAL ELECTRIC THEATRE,

BONANZA and all of those things. I hate doing television. Talk about interference, they never leave you alone. I won't do any more television.

I haven't worked for five years. I was going to do a Ray Bradbury thing, PICASSO SUMMER, but that fell through over the price of the film rights. I did a jock-strap and sandals thing in Italy with Steve Reeves called THE GIANT OF MARATHON. It was terrible. It was extremely slow work. I've never worked so slowly in my life but the Italian producers didn't seem to care. You see, I had made a picture with Burt Lancaster called FLAME AND THE ARROW. It was filled with action and very exciting. Well, Reeves had done two Hercules pictures in Italy that were making all kinds of money. They wanted him to do another picture but he insisted upon an English-speaking director. He said: "I can't speak Italian and they can't speak English, so I end up looking stupid." Then he remembered seeing FLAME AND THE ARROW and said: "I want that director. I don't



Jacques Tourneur, circa 1936.

know who he is, but I want him." I was in Europe anyway, so I took the job. The shooting went on and on—forever. I got a lot of money but little satisfaction. We shot each scene four ways—in Italian, English, French and German—and no two actors spoke the same language. One actor would have to scratch his ear to let the other one know he was finished with his lines. I had to shoot it all in code. It's unbelievable to make pictures like this. The result was horrible. We went to Yugoslavia where we had 1,200 men on horseback fighting the battle of Marathon. Some of it was fun, but it was too slow. When a picture's slow, you lose enthusiasm, you lose élan.

The horror picture, the real one, hasn't been made yet. I've written a 26 page film treatment which I modestly said would be "the horror picture." I'm working with the idea of parallel worlds. We're used to the idea of living in three dimensions but I'm working with that other world going on in which you and I might be doing right

now what we did last week.

I want to make a horror film about parallel worlds. With all of its implications, it's frightening. It's the most wonderful subject you ever heard of. We, the living of this earth, are the greatest minority. Why? Because there are countless millions of what I call "the army of the dead." Now this is the story of a battle. Howard Hughes, who is the world's third richest man, has a few drinks with his pal, a Welsh poet, in a London pub. They talk about the occult. The Welshman talks of ghosties and beasties and Howard Hughes scoffs. He says that if he can't touch it or taste it or smell it, then it just doesn't exist. Five minutes later, they make a bet and Hughes is on the phone to M.I.T., Duke, Cal Tech and other places. He tells the poet: "Now, you, Richard Burton, you go up north to Scotland, find an authentic haunted castle and I'll prove to you that there's no such thing as ghosts."

So Burton finds a haunted castle and Hughes arrives with all of this machinery. It's a sunny, beautiful day. Four helicopters land and out of these guppies come 400 men in white smocks—all of this to settle a ten pound bet. They've got everything—infra-red gadgets, sound microscopes, which can pick up a pin-drop at ten miles, all kinds of intricate tape recorders, portable toilets, Kansas City cooks, refrigerator cars. The townspeople are divided over the pros and cons of the bet, as to whether it is good for the village. I don't want to go into all of the details but it is very exciting.

The first night they have 220 volt generators going but the damned generators make so much noise that they have to be laid back on a one mile cable. Well, they finally do contact ghosts and find out that the ghosts want to help us. If only we can find a way to let them help us, to get on their wave-length. Hughes uses ultra-high speed tape recorders but gets only a drone on low speed. But when they adjust the speed, they get voices with British accents, offering their help. It's very modern, I think, and ends with a war between the living with all of their modern paraphernalia and the billions and billions of the army of the dead.

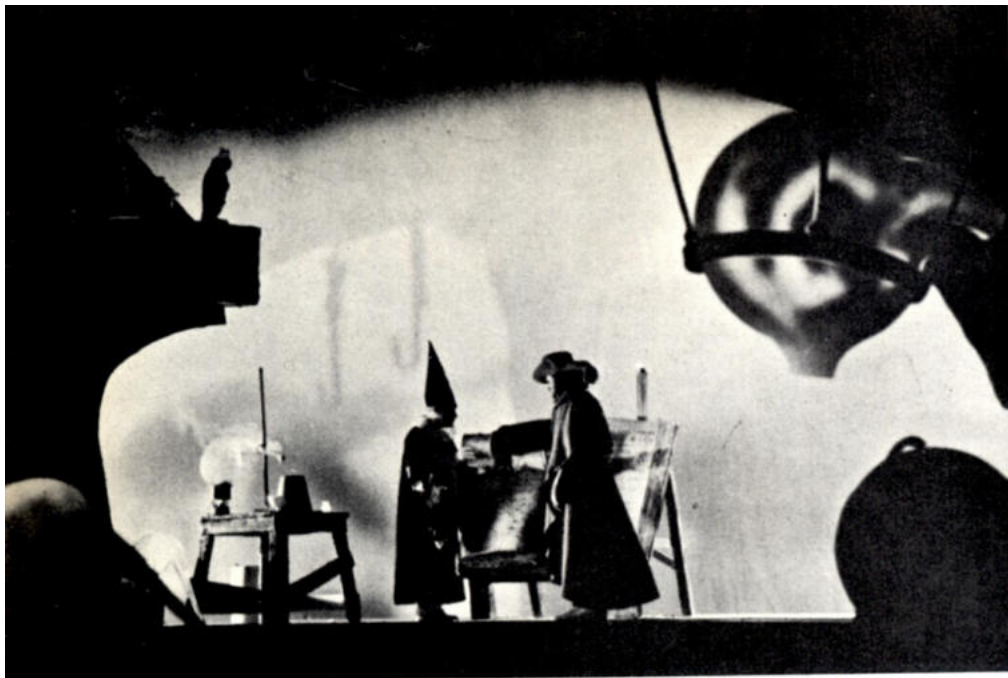
It should be done in England under the Eady plan to save money. CURSE OF THE DEMON worked so well because I was able to use English settings. However, I could adjust it to New England if they wanted to do it here. I'm so excited about it, and I have a nice title: WHISPERING IN DISTANT CHAMBERS.

The best producers I have worked for have been, like Lewton, writers. They talk sense. When they talk story, they know what they are doing; they know about structure, construction, progression of high points, low points. Some of the producers don't know anything at all, about anything.

The basic purpose of any film is to stir the emotions of an audience—to make them laugh, make them cry, make them feel sorry for the heroine or hero. That's our job—to stir the emotions of people. But today's pictures are too cold. Slick technique is much easier than it looks but creating feeling is difficult. Ninety per cent of what we retain from a film is visual, so you must be very careful. People in movies today are forgetting about composition and beauty; there's too much dialogue. There's a shot of a horse floating on a raft in NIGHTS OF CABIRIA that I'll never forget...it's imprinted in my memory.

My only fun in life is making films. Today is the day of the promoter. You have to find your own script and stars. I liked it better when the studio arranged these things.

Jacques Tourneur



Above: A delightfully atmospheric scene from Maurice Tourneur's 1942 French production *LA MAIN DU DIABLE* (The Hand of the Devil), which illustrates the essential qualities of Tourneur pere's approach to genre filmmaking which heavily influenced the work of his son, Jacques. Maurice Tourneur quit filmmaking in Hollywood in 1926 over a dispute with M-G-M concerning creative control on *THE MYSTERIOUS ISLAND*.

Irena's behavior--Freud being the source of most of them. But Tourneur's direction, full of omnipotent shadows and sourceless sounds, is up to more than just masking Bodeen's clues.

At the wedding reception in a local cafe, Irena is confronted by a woman in a black, silk dress who greets her in a soft, purring voice. "My sister," she says, framing her words first as a statement, then as a question. Then as mysteriously as she appeared, she departs, and one of the guests remarks how much she looked like a cat, leaving Irena terrified and convinced the woman is, like her, a cursed native of her Balkan village.

Now awakened by the unexpected greeting to the possible terrors of her wedding night, Irena later refuses to consummate the marriage, but when asked by her husband for an explanation, she hides nothing and divulges all details of her past and her fears of the curse. At the end of the film, the curse having its toll, her husband can only remark: "She never lied to us," a line which perfectly sums up the characters obsessed by the supernatural in all of Tourneur's films and distinctly separates them from similar characters in other films of the genre.

Repressed lesbianism is one very blatant (for a film of the forties) explanation for Irena's behavior. Irena's explanation, the legitimacy of the curse, is another. Either way, it is significant that the behavior itself is a fact which Irena never once tries to conceal. Actually she spends most of her time trying to convince people she's telling the truth about herself, and what brings about the murder of the psychiatrist and the nocturnal attacks on Oliver's girlfriend is not any standard horror movie malevolence on Irena's part, but the failure of others to deal with her behavior on her terms.

The opening scene of *THE LEOPARD MAN* (1943), Tourneur's third but least fully satisfying film for Lewton, expresses this even more succinctly: A nightclub entertainer's leopard (she uses it in her act) has escaped. At the home of a poor Mexican-American family, the mother tells her young daughter to go across town and purchase some cooking ingredients for her. The child protests, afraid to go out after dark—a fear which has nothing to do with the leopard as news of its escape hasn't yet spread. But her mother tells her to stop imagining things, hurries her outside, and to teach her a lesson locks the

door.

At the store, the child learns of the escaped leopard, and her trip home becomes a nightmare of imagined terrors. A first "hissing" sound suddenly turns out to be a train roaring by (there is a similar scene in *CAT PEOPLE* involving a bus), but a second such sound actually comes from the leopard. Terrified, the girl breaks into a run, arrives home, finds the door locked and begins pounding for admittance. From inside, the mother tells her the door shall remain locked until she stops imagining things. Simultaneously there is a crash followed by snarls and a choked off cry—and blood oozes in under the door jam. The child's fears, whether real or imaginary, had nevertheless been justified, and the mother's failure to deal with them on the child's terms had led to the little girl's death.

The opening scene of *THE LEOPARD MAN* and the majority of *CAT PEOPLE*—excluding the tacked on inserts of an actual leopard which Tourneur rightfully objected to and which succeed in destroying the film's carefully worked out ambiguity—both deal with the legitimacy of fear, a theme which runs throughout all of Tourneur's "horror" films. And the way in which imagination and reality join to produce a common tragic end is characteristic of him. *I WALKED WITH A ZOMBIE* (1943), his second film for Lewton, goes a step farther by explicitly offering the supernatural as a synonym for imagination and the rational as a synonym for reality, implying two parallel worlds which are in conflict with each other, constantly crossing each other's boundaries. It is this concept combined with Tourneur's significantly documentary approach to his material which makes *I WALKED WITH A ZOMBIE* not just another "horror" movie but a truly occult film.

I WALKED WITH A ZOMBIE is the story of a young Canadian nurse, Betsy (Frances Dee), who journeys to Haiti to care for the invalid wife, Catherine (Christine Gordon), of a wealthy plantation owner (Tom Conway). The wife turns out to be suffering from anemia. She is incapable of speech, to all intents and purposes dead, except that she can walk. And there is no medical reason for her condition! The Haitians call her a Zombie, Betsy, of course, refuses to accept a supernatural explanation, but as time goes by, she decides to bring her zombie charge to the "Mama-Loa," or witchdoctor, in the mountains.

After a disquieting journey (a superbly atmos-

At Right: Scenes from the three Lewton-Tourneur collaborations at RKO during the forties. Top: Irena (Simone Simon) is fascinated by the feeding of the great cats at the zoo in *CAT PEOPLE* (1942). Middle: Tom Conway and Frances Dee on board ship in *I WALKED WITH A ZOMBIE* (1943). It was Val Lewton's conception to do the film as "Jane Eyre of the West Indies" after





pherie sequence which has them wandering through the Haitian jungle watched all the time by Carrefour, the zombie guardian of the crossroads between the rational and the world of Voodoo, they arrive at the Voodoo camp. Betsy enters the Mama-Loa's hut and to her astonishment finds not a Haitian but her employer's mother, a doctor, giving medical attention to the Voodooists. She explains to Betsy that after years of failing to gain the native's trust, she struck upon the idea of appearing to be their Mama-Loa and succeeded in gaining their confidence, seemingly on their own terms. To her Voodoo is still a lot of "hocus-pocus" but at least the ruse worked and the Haitians are now allowing her to give them medical attention. Meanwhile outside the hut, the zombie woman's presence has begun to create an atmosphere of unease among the natives, one of whom takes Catherine's snow white arm and drives a long needle into it. There is no blood!

Ultimately the only way of saving Catherine from her zombie state turns out to be Voodoo itself. She is shot in the heart with an arrow taken from the natives' statue of T-Misery, the symbol of their slave heritage.

I WALKED WITH A ZOMBIE implies a belief in the supernatural which most such films do not. Its documentary approach to Voodoo (actual Voodooists were brought in to supervise the Voodoo rituals) and very poetic portrait of superstitious Haiti reach right into the spirit of the Magic Island itself and achieve a supernatural aura no other zombie film has matched—certainly not the atrocious Halperin Brothers epic, WHITE ZOMBIE (1932) which some critics are still trying to pawn off as a neglected classic. That Tourneur has wanted to make a thoroughly documented film on parapsychology but hasn't as yet received the opportunity would suggest that for him the supernatural is more than just a laughing matter.

Although I WALKED WITH A ZOMBIE went untampered with by the front office and therefore remains Tourneur's only fully realized horror film achievement, I prefer his later CURSE OF THE DEMON (1958), three quarters of which show Tourneur at the peak of his skill. And another nice aspect of CURSE OF THE DEMON is that one doesn't have to get involved with the irrelevant guessing game of who did what, Lewton or Tourneur? CURSE OF THE DEMON offers a definitive catalogue of what can already be seen in his Lewton films as the "Tourneur touch."

Written by Hitchcock's old collaborator,

being given the film's title by RKO executives. Bottom: Black ritual in THE LEOPARD MAN (1943). Tourneur's last, and least satisfying film, for Lewton. The opening scene of THE LEOPARD MAN and the majority of CAT PEOPLE deal with the legitimacy of fear, a theme which runs throughout all of Tourneur's "horror films" to some extent.

Above: Karswell (Niall McGinnis) attempts to warn the skeptical Dr. Holden (Dana Andrews) that he is tampering with powerful forces he cannot begin to comprehend. Tourneur takes every opportunity to humanize Karswell, to turn him into a three-dimensional, non-horror movie type villain, giving CURSE OF THE DEMON (1958) an added dimension of characterization not usually found in films of the occult and supernatural.

Charles Bennett, and based on the classic short story "Casting the Runes" by M. R. James, CURSE OF THE DEMON (or NIGHT OF THE DEMON in England) is built entirely upon Tourneur's conception of two parallel worlds in conflict with each other, and even the film's character's reflect this concept. Dr. Karswell (Niall McGinnis), a character patterned very obviously after Aleister Crowley, is the roly-poly professor of the Black Arts, who has dedicated his life to confirming the existence of supernatural forces. His opponent, Dr. Holden (Dana Andrews), a stubborn, pragmatic professor of occult sciences who has perversely dedicated his own life to discrediting the very subject of which he is an expert, is really Karswell's mirror image. Their contest of wills is fascinating not just in terms of plot, but in terms of character as well. Like Irena and the Haitians, Karswell lays all his cards on the table and not until Holden starts dealing with Karswell on the black magician's own terms is he able to stem the supernatural tide. If Holden is the hero of CURSE OF THE DEMON, he is, like Oliver, Irena's husband in CAT PEOPLE, an essentially destructive* one who precipitates rather than wards off the film's tragedies. But while Oliver was destructive through his passivity, Holden is destructive because of his almost pathological skepticism. His determination to prove that he isn't "...a superstitious sucker like the rest of humanity..." is built upon a profound negativism,

*It's also interesting to note that the idea of a destructive hero also turns up in a couple of Tourneur's non-horror films, OUT OF THE PAST (1947) and particularly CIRCLE OF DANGER (1951). In the latter film Ray Milland plays a Canadian who journeys to Scotland following the war to find out the details of his hero-brother's wartime death. The end of the film finds him on the verge of killing the former commanding officer of his brother's army unit on suspicion of having murdered his brother. It turns out that the brother had actually been a thief whose almost pathological looting of the enemy had at one point so endangered the safety of the unit that the commander had been forced to shoot him. Milland's persistent inquiries serve only to threaten the careers of the men who have maintained a conspiracy of silence about their commander's act, almost wind up in murder, and finally succeed in destroying the illusion of his brother's heroism.

French Period

- TOUT CA NE VAUT PAS L'AMOUR 1931
Pathe-Natan, b&w.
- TOTO, POUR ETRE AIME 1933
Pathe-Natan, b&w.
- LES FILLES DE LA CONCIERGE 1934
Pathe-Natan, b&w.

American Period

- THEY ALL COME OUT 1939
M-G-M, b&w, 70 minutes.
- NICK CARTER - MASTER DETECTIVE 1939
M-G-M, b&w, 60 minutes.
- PHANTOM RAIDERS 1940
M-G-M, b&w, 70 minutes.
- DOCTORS DON'T TELL 1941
Republic, b&w, 65 minutes.
- CAT PEOPLE 1942
RKO, b&w, 73 minutes.
- I WALKED WITH A ZOMBIE 1943
RKO, b&w, 69 minutes.
- LEOPARD MAN, THE 1943
RKO, b&w, 66 minutes.
- DAYS OF GLORY 1944
RKO, b&w, 86 minutes.

Tourneur's first "A" budget film, a war propaganda piece celebrating the courage of our Russian allies in general and the Russian guerilla fighter in particular. Though hopelessly banal and propagandistic to begin with, it is interesting that what really destroys the film is Tourneur's attempt to sustain with mood what is essentially an action piece. The same thing happens later in his Fox spectacles and most of his westerns and shows clearly the real nature of his style.

TOURNEUR FILMOGRAPHY

- EXPERIMENT PERILOUS 1944
RKO, b&w, 91 minutes.

A mystery set primarily in an old mansion and a definite example of forties Film Noir, a genre in which Tourneur obviously felt comfortable. The sombre mood and high contrast photography demanded by Film Noir definitely suited him. But Tourneur's constant dissolves to the gargoyles which adorn the old house throw the film very subtly in the realm of the supernatural as well.

- CANYON PASSAGE 1946
Universal, color, 90 minutes.

- OUT OF THE PAST 1947
RKO, b&w, 97 minutes.
An ex-hoodlum trying to escape his past finds it not only catching up with him but duplicating itself. Parallel worlds? (See footnote, page)

- BERLIN EXPRESS 1948
RKO, b&w, 86 minutes.

- EASY LIVING 1949
M-G-M, b&w, 77 minutes.

- STARS IN MY CROWN 1950
M-G-M, b&w, 89 minutes.

The purest non-horror film example of the influence of Maurice Tourneur. The evocation of a small post-Civil War western town is filled with nostalgia and details that are as precise as they are born of the imagination.

- FLAME AND THE ARROW 1950
Warner Bros, color, 88 minutes.

- CIRCLE OF DANGER 1951
Eagle Lion, b&w, 104 minutes.
(See footnote, page 27)

- ANNE OF THE INDIES 1951
20th Century Fox, color, 81 minutes.

- WAY OF A GAUCHO 1952
20th Century Fox, color, 91 minutes.

- APPOINTMENT IN HONDURAS 1953
RKO, color, 79 minutes.

- STRANGER ON HORSEBACK 1955
Allied Artists, color, 66 minutes.

- WICHITA 1955
Allied Artists, color, 81 minutes.

- GREAT DAY IN THE MORNING 1956
RKO, color, 92 minutes.

- NIGHTFALL 1956
Columbia, b&w, 78 minutes.

- CURSE OF THE DEMON 1958
Columbia, b&w, 78 minutes.

- THE FEARMAKERS 1958
United Artists, b&w, 83 minutes.

- TIMBUKTU 1959
United Artists, b&w, 91 minutes.

- GIANT OF MARATHON 1960
M-G-M, color & scope, 90 minutes.

- COMEDY OF TERRORS 1963
AIP, color, 85 minutes.

A hilarious parody of the kind of horror film Tourneur hated. To see what he is poking fun at is to see clearly what his own horror films were not.

- WAR-GODS OF THE DEEP 1965
AIP, color, 85 minutes.

The first third of the film in which an island is thrown into panic when beings from a nether world start appearing to the citizenry is undeniably a return to the parallel world theme, and Tourneur's shadowy "now you think you see it, now you don't" technique is fully on view. But once the "gill men" show themselves, the film turns into typical AIP clap-trap.



and the result: two deaths, a kidnapping, a medium's near mental collapse, and Holden's own near death as well.

Likewise if Karswell is the villain, he is, like Irena, an ambiguous one. When his first attempt to convince someone (Professor Harrington) of his occult powers fails, he conjures up an irrefutable example, but is more than willing to call off the demon when the professor finally believes him except that by that time it is too late. Every effort is made to humanize Karswell, to turn him into a three dimensional, non-horror movie type villain, and his personality is very carefully sketched in.

Karswell's prime motivation is obviously a thirst for power as evidenced not only by his immediate goal of celebrating the powers of darkness, but by the manner in which he treats other people—particularly his mother, whom he forces to give in to his every wish. At one point she rebels. On the sly, she takes Holden to a medium, Mr. Meek (Reginald Beckwith), who, in a trance, speaks in Harrington's voice, relating the horrific events leading up to his own death. But Holden storms out of the seance, convinced the whole affair was arranged by Mrs. Karswell to make him stop his professional attacks on her son. Mrs. Karswell pursues him into the street, but Holden drives off, and she is greeted by her son's stern voice, coming as if from nowhere (a superb touch used more than once to suggest in the film Karswell's magical powers). The camera then cuts to him sitting in his car, and she is once again a slave to his will. He is the demonic child who today enslaves his parents and tomorrow the world!

While Karswell is taking Holden on a tour of his estate, during a Halloween party for some neighborhood children (another humanizing touch), the two pause near a table where two little girls are playing a game of "Snakes and Ladders." Karswell confesses that as a boy he always preferred sliding down the snakes to climbing up the ladders. Perhaps this means Karswell's a good loser. Holden suggests. "I'm not, you know. Not a bit," is Karswell's answer.

As *CURSE OF THE DEMON* begins, a narrator tells us that "...evil, supernatural creatures do exist in a world of darkness." Moments later, we see the demon itself rising out of the trees to murder Karswell's first antagonist, Dr. Harrington. Tourneur has said that showing the demon at the beginning of the film was an error, and he's right. It should have been saved for the fiery climax in which Karswell is torn apart by his own creation. And the same criticism applies to the scene where Holden breaks into Karswell's home and is attacked by a housecat which suddenly transforms into a leopard. A similar scene in *CAT PEOPLE* where the psychiatrist kisses Irena, arouses her passion, and does battle with whatever she has become, all in shadow, is immeasurably superior. But the overall impact of *CURSE OF THE DEMON* seems to me more satisfactory, the fullest expression of his parallel world theme. *CURSE OF THE DEMON* is flawed to be sure—mostly due to producer interference; nevertheless its theme is clear. Its salient image is that of darkness constantly probed but never totally illuminated, either by the headlights of a car or the scope of man's knowledge. And typical of Tourneur's documentary approach, the demon—probably the most fearsome beast ever created for a film, was designed from 400 year old woodcuts.

The horror films of Jacques Tourneur are not only born of the imagination but are about it as well, and it is this which separates him from other horror filmmakers. His domain is the land between light and dark, where the supernatural and the rational collide, where illusion and reality blend. And if his films are to be reduced to one central theme, it is this: to see in the dark, one must first turn out the lights.

Scenes from *CURSE OF THE DEMON*. Right: The Demon of the film, designed from 400 year old woodcuts, and over-used by the producers of the film over the protestations of Tourneur. Bottom: Dr. Holden (Dana Andrews) narrowly escapes when the Demon has been called for him. Left: Karswell (Niall McGinnis) and Dr. Holden (Dana Andrews); their contest of wills is fascinating not just in terms of plot, but in terms of character as well.



FILM REVIEWS

YOU'LL LIKE MY MOTHER

...refreshingly low-key, eschewing all the obvious horror trappings...

YOU'LL LIKE MY MOTHER Universal. 11/72. 92 minutes. In Technicolor. A BCP Production. Executive producer, Charles A. Pratt. Produced by Mort Briskin. Directed by Lamont Johnson. Director of photography, Jack A. Marta A.S.C. Screenplay by Jo Heims from the novel by Naomi A. Hintze. Art director, William D. De Cines. Film edited by Edward M. Abroms. Music by Gil Melle.

Francesca Patty Duke
Mrs. Kinsolving Rosemary Murphy
Kenny Richard Thomas
Kathleen Sian Barbara Allen

Not since Janet Leigh made the wrong turn at the creepy Bates Motel in *PSYCHO* has an attractive screen heroine made such an unfortunate—and threatening—choice of temporary accommodations as Patty Duke in the suspense thriller *YOU'LL LIKE MY MOTHER*.

Beneath the cheery, deceptive title is an unusually unnerving item which begins in a slow, methodical style and gradually builds to one of those nail-biting lady-in-peril finishes which, despite its familiarity, is a strong staple of the Old Dark House genre.

Miss Duke is introduced as a young widow, with child, who journeys to wintry Minnesota to meet her mother-in-law for the first time. Without family or friends, she hopes to find a measure of the warmth she once shared with her late husband who, as a soldier on leave from Vietnam, used to reassure her by saying, "You'll like my mother."

Mama, as portrayed by Rosemary Murphy with brutal bluntness, makes Mrs. Denvers of *REBECCA* fame look, by comparison, like a Welcome Wagon Hostess. With a blizzard raging outside the lonesome mansion, Mama sends the temperature to zero indoors, as well, as she casually and cruelly turns on Miss Duke, casting aspersions on the legitimacy of the soon-due baby. The adverse weather conditions, however, prevent the horrid hostess from turning her unwelcome visitor out into the night.

Mama also introduces her unexpected guest to a young mentally-retarded girl (Sian Barbara Allen), who is mourning the loss of some kittens.

The animals, as Mama quickly points out, did not deserve to live because the family cat mated with a socially inferior alley cat, a notion which suggests to seasoned horror buffs that Miss Duke is in for a very rough layover. Add to the gloom of the house and the feeling of isolation the news (via a crumpled newspaper clipping) that an unusually sadistic rapist (Richard Thomas) is on the loose in the vicinity, and every shadow promises something unpleasant for the trapped heroine.

The script by Jo Heims is refreshingly low-key, eschewing all the obvious terror trappings and gratuitous gore usually associated with such projects. In fact, when Miss Duke emits her most blood-curdling scream it is because she is giving birth to her baby in an unhappy setting. Lamont Johnson's direction is very much attuned to the special relationships which dramatically bind the heroine to the almost mute girl, and Miss Murphy to the deranged killer in the house. Johnson, a former actor, is notably good at extracting winning performances from his people, and his films (with one possible exception) have proven to be the "sleeper" surprises of their season: *MY SWEET CHARLIE*, which earned Miss Duke an Emmy award; *THE MCKENZIE BREAK*, with Brian Keith and Helmut Griem in a marvelous cat-and-mouse game, and *A GUNFIGHT*, with Kirk Douglas and Johnny Cash as friendly enemies marked by their violent pasts. Even *THE GROUNDSTAR CONSPIRACY*, despite its shortcomings, appeared to be a case where the material failed Johnson rather than vice versa.

In this film, Miss Duke attains a new maturity as the young woman at odds with her kinky relatives, and Miss Murphy, a veteran Broadway actress, is all steel-rimmed authority as the vindictive woman dedicated to protecting a boy she considers "something of a problem." Newcomer Sian Barbara Allen shows promise in a difficult role, and Richard Thomas, an actor who usually trades on his All-American good looks, is surprisingly effective here, artfully suggesting the grimness beneath the boyish grin.

Mark down *YOU'LL LIKE MY MOTHER* as a scare show which knows how to say "Boo!" with finesse.

Robert L. Jerome

Scenes from *YOU'LL LIKE MY MOTHER*, directed by Lamont Johnson, and currently in release from Universal. Left: Rosemary Murphy as the mother of the title and Richard Thomas as her psychopathic son. Right: Poor, pregnant, Patty Duke gets a cold welcome from her strange mother-in-law.



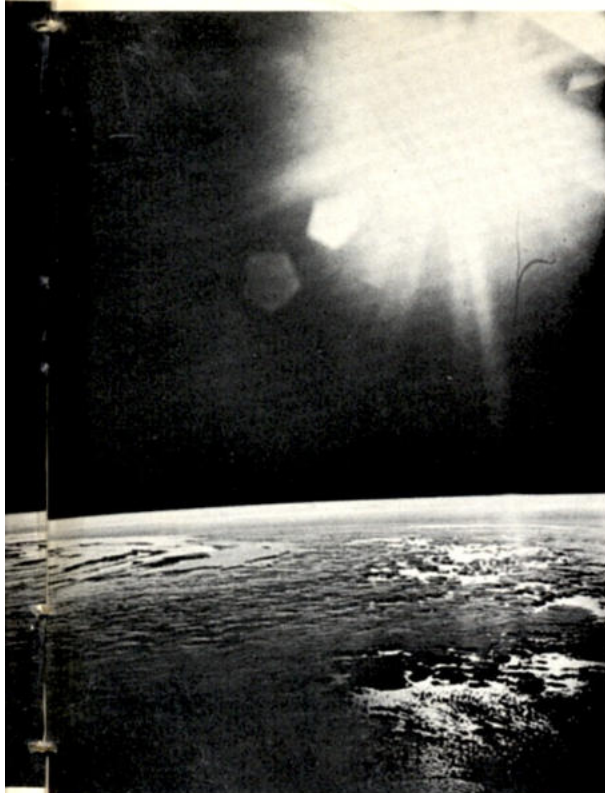
MOONWALK ONE

...emerges a sense of the mystery that remains unsolved in the universe...

MOONWALK ONE A N.A.S.A. Release. 1972. 96 minutes. In Color. A Francis Thompson Inc. Production. Produced by Peretz W. Johnnes. Directed by Theo Kamecke. Narration written by E. G. Valens. Narrated by Laurence Luckinbill. Camerawork by James Allen, Theo Kamecke, Alexander Mammid, James Signorelli, Urs Furrer, Adam Holander, Hideaki Kobayashi, Jeri Sopanen, Robert Ipcar, Victor Johannes, Edwin Lynch, Siemowit-Maria Kozbiol. Music, lyrics and sound collage by Charlie Morrow. Story by Peretz W. Johnnes and Theo Kamecke.

One of the small joys of life in New York City is the constant serendipity (synchronicity, if you will) of the daily juxtapositions one is subjected to. Especially movie goers. For instance, as Theo Kamecke's documentary *MOONWALK ONE* opened at the Whitney Museum, George Pal's *DESTINATION MOON* was enjoying a brief revival at a theater across town.

Seen today, Pal's landmark film is only quaint, and almost embarrassing in its naivety. Kamecke's own film recalls for us the fragile innocence of those *FLASH GORDON* rocketships in one brief, nostalgic, appearance, dangling from strings and sputtering like some 4th of July sparkler. *MOONWALK ONE* is primarily compiled of footage gathered by an extensive camera crew and supplemented by official N.A.S.A. records. Kamecke's film is nothing less than the definitive version of all those doomed-from-the-start prophetic visions of "things to come," and well it should be, for that which has been grasped by the imaginations of filmmakers from the very beginning has finally become reality. We have here no emergencies caused by clumsiness; no takeoff in the dead of night to beat a court order forbidding the flight. There are 500 white-shirted technicians riveted to the blue screens of television monitors supervising every minute detail. There are no irate citizens out to stop the launch: the local citizenry of the Cape are all out selling hot dogs and merchandising souvenirs to



Above: A sun flare in the camera lens heightens the darkened sky as the Apollo 11 spacecraft orbits the earth prior to Lunar insertion. A scene from the documentary *MOONWALK ONE*.

the countless celebrities and tourists who have flocked to witness the event, an event, as Kamecke remarks in his program notes, "of such popularity that its meaning was all but smothered in the banalities of the media."

If you've only seen the Apollo flight on television, you've missed the experience and its meaning. In fact, the weakest part of the film is the televised sequence from the moon's surface. At this particular point in history, "one of those rare times," according to Kamecke, "when myth and history are one," the only meaning possible for us to derive lies in the experience itself. The film's script offers no facile comments or prognostications, no apologia for the controversial expenditure of talent, money and materials. It appeals to the American sense of practicality not at all. Instead, the film attempts to bring out the "epic quality" hidden below the superficialities presented to the public. Juxtaposed against the ironies and ambiguities of the high school marching bands, the tourists in mobile homes, the urban ticker trash parades, there emerges a sense of the mystery that remains unsolved in the universe, a sense of ultimate secrets that we are so close to discovering and yet so totally unprepared for. At the risk of losing credibility, let me say that finally the film shows us that, no matter how absurd the form life takes, there is always something sacred about it.

MOONWALK ONE deftly sketches the historical drive toward space travel as almost an unconscious force. It presents a vital record of the first major step for man (certain well known quotes notwithstanding). The discoveries of the next few decades cannot but alter man's way of life, even man himself. Irrevocably, 2001: *A SPACE ODYSSEY* achieved some sense of the depth and immensity of that change. *MOONWALK ONE* makes that sense more immediate; it is, after all, not allegory but fact, even (now) history. I called this film a documentary. It is, but its success lies in its transcendence of the facts it presents to suggest the poetry of events most of us remain unaware of. The time has come to bring this film out of the museums and into the theatres.

Gary Alan Aspenberg

VAMPIRE CIRCUS

...divertingly entertaining, stylistically fresh if not wholly original and imaginatively produced...

VAMPIRE CIRCUS A 20th Century Fox Release. 10/72. 88 minutes. In Color by DeLuxe. A Hammer Film Production. Produced by Wilbur Stark. Directed by Robert Young. Screenplay by Judson Kinberg. Music composed by David Whitaker. Director of photography, Moray Grant. Special effects, Les Bowie. Art director, Scott MacGregor. Makeup, Jill Carpenter. Edited by Peter Musgrave.

Gypsy Woman Adrienne Corri
Burgermeister Thorley Walters
Emil Anthony Corlan
Anton John Moulder-Brown
Mueller Laurence Payne
Dr. Kersh Richard Owens
Dora Lynne Frederick

If the term still holds any validity, **VAMPIRE CIRCUS**, Hammer Films' latest feature in its non-Dracula vampire series, is one of the year's true "sleepers": a film that is divertingly entertaining, stylistically fresh if not wholly original, and imaginatively produced through every one of its surprisingly few 88 minutes. Surprisingly few, because the film comes and goes almost before we become aware of its alluring weightless presence.

In one of the longest pre-credit sequences in memory, we follow a bucolic family scene in the familiar Hammer fern-floored forest dissolve into terror as a man's wife and child enter the forbidding castle of Count Rittenhouse, a local vampire who has held the area in something of a blood siege while devouring its youth. We normally might expect the credits to fade in at this point with the entrapping doomed clang of the castle doors closing, but suddenly the film cuts to an evening scene where a torch-bearing horde of villagers plan to descend on the count's lair. In the remarkably bloody welter of a battle that follows, Rittenhouse is staked out (literally, of course) but not before he curses the town of Stetl for "all eternity" and disposes of quite a number of stalwart citizens, including, in a reeling shock simply because we do not expect it this early in the film, the young child of the opening scene. And before we can absorb all this mayhem, those delightfully revolting green-against-a-color-background credits come up, almost a Hammer trademark, their appearance now quite unexpected since we'd almost assumed there'd only be a large end title.

And it is exactly this rapid-fire force, a never lagging, cleverly balanced series of surprises in every aspect of the production, from screenplay to photography and special effects, that make **VAMPIRE CIRCUS** as consistently good as it is, even to genre-hardened addicts who have been somewhat tortured lately by the predictableness of the product confronting us this past year.

As evident in the first sequence as described above, director Robert Young, a new Hammer talent, keeps his film moving at such a frenzied pace that we have no time to consider, or even notice, his film's shortcomings. For one item, this swift flight, something akin to a headfast dive down a steep stone staircase, does not allow Young to do more than merely identify his various characters, a disability which results toward the end of the film, when everyone is dying, in a dire need for a scorecard.

And after the credits creep away, director Young plunges us right back into his story. It is now fifteen years later, and Stetl lies under the curse of a plague. (Young effectively links the wide-spread disease with vampirism and equates them as two epidemics of a similarly devastating nature; also hinted at, especially in Rittenhouse's destruction of youths, is the metaphoric life-taking link of vampirism to war.) The town has been successfully quarantined, sealed off physically by a roadblock and roving patrols so that no one can get in or out. Yet one day a travelling circus appears, with its revengeful purpose, discovered later, to revive the vampire Count to fulfill his curse. But there are vampires enough among the

circus people to begin the process, and as Young moves his film along at its feverish pace, he thematically sets the circus troupe against the constantly diminishing number of townspeople, an opposition which finally ends in a storm of horror as the Count is gaspingly brought to life, if perhaps only for a few moments. And with the disease slowly releasing its grasp upon the people due to some medicine finally provided by the Emperor, perhaps Stetl has rid itself, at no easy cost, of two terrible evils.

The travelling circus, aptly called the Circus of Nights, is the film's most substantial element; it is the set-piece upon which, in fact, Young pegs not only his film's narrative but its thematic construction as well. He does not utilize the circus for any part of its essentially modern conventions of induced sense of unease, of slight, perhaps unnoticed revulsion and curiously felt potential for danger, if not evil (as in Mulligan's *THE OTHER*). Instead, with its small wagons and animal cages and strange assortment of torches, velvet hangings, benches, and seemingly no living quarters, Young's circus could easily have wandered in from Bergman's *THE SEVENTH SEAL*, or even more reasonably, from his *THE MAGICALIAN*, such are its medieval appearance and function as a band of wandering actors performing plays, and neatly metaphysical ones. The latter more familiar traditions, including those of the three ring variety, have not yet come into existence; the Circus of Nights, like the medieval circus, deals with art, its modern counterpart with artifice.

But whatever its style, be convinced that the troupe's chief asset, and it is one that keeps **VAMPIRE CIRCUS** constantly alive and kicking in unexpected ways, is that of its magical (Magickal) presence. True to its sudden appearance in Stetl, almost as an apparition, despite the escape-proof roadblocks, the Circus of Nights injects in the film a true and thoroughly realized sense of magic, a quality not governed by any physical or moral laws. Hence, the atmosphere of the film becomes, in effect, that of the circus, one in which nothing can be easily predicted or correctly explained. And with logic eroded into its opposite, and a comforting belief in either religion or tradition no longer valid, if even possible, the universe runs wild and becomes irrational and ugly, a fitly perverse world indeed for vampires, and evil magicians and sorcerers to rule. The form of **VAMPIRE CIRCUS** reflects this splendidly cynical evolution, taking us for its length, as in Poe's tale, on a night-time ride to the very swirling heart of the maelstrom.

The circus troupe itself shamelessly superceded—as it should, considering the dominance of evil in these moral bouts of late—the townspeople in their competition for our interest. The troupe consists of a strong man (an ill-used role and Young's only concession to the modern circus) and a midget performer out of Fellini, a clown-imp given to grotesque facial expressions and quirky movements. Also a pair of vapor-eyed twins—one of each sex—who are the only vampires of the troupe along with the leopard-man, Emile. These creatures are presided over by the Gypsy Woman (Adrienne Corri), a lustfully bloodthirsty woman bent on revenge in the struggle to revive Count Rittenhouse. This troupe overpowers the film with its magic which turns Stetl gradually from merriment to horror as their true purpose is slowly unwound from the violence that begins soon after their first show.

And what a show they give **VAMPIRE CIRCUS**. Thier various acts of entertainment, always functional to a darker purpose, include Emile's change from leopard to man, anti-gravity tumbling feats, and the secretive tent containing the Mirror of Life into which several Stetlians peer to see the future and into which they are drawn, Orpheus-like, to the cavernous vault of Rittenhouse. As one character describes it, the mirror shows "not life, but a distortion" just as unreal, if less visibly so, as the image-wrinkling mirrors in the tent as well as, on another, larger



Above: A circus vampire from Hammer's *VAMPIRE CIRCUS*, one of the few outstanding horror films Hammer has produced in recent years.



Above: Ingrid Pitt prepares to bathe in virgin's blood in *COUNTRESS DRACULA*, Hammer's version of the life of Countess Elizabeth Bathory.

COUNTRESS DRACULA

...stumbles closer to Faust than to Dracula...

scale, the *Circus of Nights* that has brought it to menace Stetl.

Les Bowie's special effects, while never flashily dominant in and of themselves, instead glide with Young's surrounding montage into the very stuff of magic: believable because seeable. The effects reflect at times—in the appearances and disappearances of characters into and out of the frame, the leaping transformation of the leopard to man, etc.—the very earliest origins of fantastic films. For they are the simple camera tricks of George Melies, which prove here again, some 70-plus years after their first usage, that their utter unembellished quality and primitiveness are still filmically viable, even in this jaded age of more technologically bold special effects.

But the real credit for *VAMPIRE CIRCUS* belongs to director Robert Young. For he has boiled this mixture over the lowest of heats into a crackling bubbly froth of a film. Although the story and most of its effects are simple to the point of naivete, like its romantic heroes (John Moulder-Brown and Lynne Frederick, incidentally, the most attractive couple Hammer has featured for quite some time) and several stylistic ploys (like the cut from flying bats to flying tumblers—Melies again), Young's actual structure of the film is another, well-camouflaged matter. *VAMPIRE CIRCUS* deftly turns back onto itself twice (once, in resumption of the slaughter of the town's youth and twice, in Count Rittenhouse's second life) to resemble very closely in form and, more appropriately, content, one of M. C. Escher's diabolically eerie Moebius strips. While the film's ending seems to be one of happiness and triumph of good over evil, it might be, as in many of the films of Nicholas Ray, subtly deceptive: while all the villains are slaughtered, one lone bat flies off into the distance while our reunited lovers watch in the foreground. Characteristic to the whole of the film, it is only a briefly-held shot, but it carries the implication of escape. And the shot's quickness keeps the film's ambivalence fully alive, unlike the last-gasp bloated "upbeat" endings vainly tacked onto many horror films.

VAMPIRE CIRCUS is that rarity of genre films, even for Hammer: it has a firm conception of what it is, where it is going, and how to get there. And it arrives, with us in tow, in fine spirited condition.

David Bartholomew

COUNTRESS DRACULA A 20th Century Fox Release. 10/72. In Color by DeLuxe. 93 minutes. A Hammer Film Production. Produced by Alexander Paal. Directed by Peter Sasdy. Screenplay by Jeremy Paul based on a story by Alexander Paal and Peter Sasdy. Based on an idea by Gabriel Ronay. Director of photography, Ken Talbot B. S. C. Edited by Henry Richardson. Music composed by Harry Robinson. Make-up, Tom Smith.

Countess Elizabeth Ingrid Pitt
Captain Dobi Nigel Green
Imre Toth Sandor Eles
Master Fabio Maurice Denham
Ilona Lesley-Anne Down

Generally speaking, when genre films are bad, they are usually worse than that, sliding all the way down their Gothic ropes into the pit, as does the perfect example at hand, *COUNTRESS DRACULA*, to mire itself in the lowest depths of solidly proven potential gone inexplicably sour. Failing on almost every layer of its threadbare construction, *COUNTRESS DRACULA* is the kind of film that in its first scene, the sardonic reading of the will, neatly identifies all the characters with brightly colorful, if invisible, placards reading "villain," "accomplice," "martyr," and "hero," an act of brash filmic stolidity that little else in the film can erase or soften. And to make matters worse, Jeremy Paul's script unconsciously stretches in every conceivable way the film's absolutely negligible plot (aging evil countess discovers bathing in the blood of virgins restores youth).

Hammer veteran Nigel Green, portraying the accomplice Captain Dobi, captures at times the anguish of dissolving love for the (old) Countess (purely platonic love; in one scene he aptly describes their possible attempt at the other kind as "two old fools bumbling at one another") as he forcedly watches her growing slowly mad; later he gleefully projects the delicious brutality required of an all-out villain. But apart from his polished performance, and a nod or two to Maurice Denham as Fabio, the resident sage and librarian, the acting in *COUNTRESS DRACULA* is as stony, gray, and cold as its castle interiors. The film bears the distinction of introducing Ham-

mer's most unattractive and untalented leading man—Sandor Eles as Imre Toth—as well as offering one of the British studio's few major casting errors in the title role. Ingrid Pitt, the gloriously abundant vampiress of Roy Ward Baker's *VAMPIRE LOVERS*, neither convinces us of the advanced age of the Countess (partly a failure of poor lighting and make-up) or, what is worse, the youth of the daughter she supposedly impersonates—"barely 19," as one character observes—instead, falling vaguely, if beautifully, somewhere in the middle of the two extremes. And Pitt hardly limns the diabolical evil of a woman of any age who would have her own daughter kidnapped so that she could make a pass-play for the hero. And Leslie-Anne Down as the real daughter Ilona typifies the weakness of even the secondary roles in *COUNTRESS DRACULA*; she spends nearly the entire film in the clutches of Dobi's ragtag henchmen, yet her every scene conveys the lackadaisical impression that she is outraged less for her being kept a prisoner than by the gruff table manners of her captors.

But probably the most confounding disappointment of the film is Peter Sasdy's performance as director. Completely lacking in *COUNTRESS DRACULA* is any of the real and sturdy sense of place, time, and character that were such engaging qualities in his previous films, particularly in *TASTE THE BLOOD OF DRACULA* (1970) where he opposed the ribald earthiness of the British lower classes with the hypocritical stuffiness of the upper—each wishing to emulate the other, either openly or secretly—a clash that produced, among other things, *Dracula*. Of course Sasdy has a lot of negative help working for his failure with *COUNTRESS DRACULA*, including unimpressive sets and costuming and lackluster color photography, all three formerly dependable Hammer strongholds. The sets especially appear limited; the castle of the Countess, looming large in moonlit process shots, inside bunches the rooms and habitats of all the occupants off one very short ground-floor corridor. But the fact remains that *COUNTRESS DRACULA* shows a resourceful director simply going through the motions as if he never involved himself to any extent in the project, even stopping at one point to filming a murder and slow dissolve with a red filter, a cheap boy-scoutish gimmick even for Hitchcock in *MARNIE*. Of all the Hammer films in recent years, *COUNTRESS DRACULA*



Above: Christopher Lee looks the part in *DRACULA A. D. 1972*, the current entry in the steadily declining Hammer Films series.

seems by far the weakest, clearly displaying not only its filmic seams but those of the horror genre as well.

But there's something else afoot here, a bit more sinister, and representative of the forces and attitudes to which *cinéfantastique* and other genres as well are particularly susceptible and to which larger prestige productions are, to a greater extent, immune. *COUNTESS DRACULA* has suffered through a disastrous if murky joust with those wonderful folks at the MPAA office who so relentlessly stand guard over American morality. Equally at fault for playing this foolish game is the film's distributor, 20th Century Fox, who have mercilessly cut several scenes for United States release so that the film could be re-rated from its initial R to a more box office-palatable PG; i.e. the film literally lost something in its trip across the Atlantic.

The result of this laundering is that the climactic scene of *COUNTESS DRACULA*, where Imre discovers the blood-youth business, is garbled beyond coherence which further throws the rest of the film into something bordering on the irrational. Of course, not even the restoration of this chopped footage could save the film; of concern here, especially to harried genre fans who suffer this kind of shoddy wheeling and dealing the most, is the principle and not the specific.

But finally, not only its handlers, but the film itself is dishonest, or at least dishonestly titled (Fox again?) since vampirism plays no part in it—even the ads lie: "The more she drinks, the prettier she gets." In truth the film stumbles closer to Faust than to Dracula, but I suppose abpud (rightfully) believed dropping the latter name would draw more people into the theatre than the rather academic-sounding former. The film is based, if loosely, on the life of one Countess Elizabeth Bathory, a legend-enshrouded figure who has served as the subject of another film, *Harry Kumel's DAUGHTERS OF DARKNESS*. Both films apparently completed production in 1970, but Kumel's film won the important race to the earlier release date (and rightfully so, it is far superior) leaving Sasdy's film stranded and gathering dust on a remote shelf at 20th Century Fox. Until now. With a little fumbling help from Fox, *COUNTESS DRACULA* is easily the least satisfying film to roll out under the Hammer imprint in many years.

David Bartholomew

DRACULA A.D. 1972

Christopher Lee never leaves his dilapidated Gothic church as if in fear of being overwhelmed by 1972.

DRACULA A. D. 1972 A Warner Bros Release. 11/72. 95 minutes. In Color. A Hammer Film Production. Produced by Josephine Douglas. Directed by Alan Gibson. Production supervisor, Roy Skeggs. Production manager, Ron Jackson. Production secretary, Cynthia Palmer. First assistant director, Robert Lynn. Continuity, Doreen Dearnaley. Director of photography, Dick Bush. Camera operator, Bernie Ford. Sound mixer, Claude Hitchcock. Art director, Don Mingaye. Wardrobe supervisor, Rosemary Burrows. Edited by James Needs. Music supervisor, Philip Martell. Unit publicist, Edna Tromans.

Count Dracula	Christopher Lee
Van Helsing	Peter Cushing
Jessica	Stephanie Beacham
Johnny Alucard	Christopher Neame
Inspector Murray	Michael Coles
Laura Bellows	Caroline Munro
Gaynor	Marsha Hunt
Anna Bryant	Janet Key
Bob Tarrant	Philip Miller
Joe Mitcham	William Ellis
Sergeant Pearson	David Andrews

On the face of it, the idea behind *DRACULA A. D. 1972* was laudable, at least in writing, for its boldness if nothing else. There have been vampires in modern times before, but the very idea of utilizing the unforgettable, indelibly identified Master of the Undeaf for this generation, actor Christopher Lee, might well be regarded as totally unexpected, and in that, nothing short of box-office genius. Further, the mere presence of Lee would doubtlessly be of immeasurable value to such a film. And to complete the inspiration, the herald-worthy, long-awaited return of the indomitable Professor Van Helsing (ostensibly in retirement since the demise of Baron Meinster in *BRIDES OF DRACULA*, 1960) in the person of the beloved Peter Cushing. Cushing and Lee, nobly symbolizing the timelessness of good and evil, together again and, praise be, as the main stars.

But what Hammer delivers betrays the concept to TV-movie values; a combination of youth, the occult, and supernatural beings. The youth are too ridiculously pseudo-hip, the story is too contrived, and the horror element is to laughably blatant. To add to this, the effect is mathematically precise: a mediocre rock-culture drama rammed head-first into a traditional, equally mediocre period horror film. The screenplay refuses to let convention yield to the contemporary element (unlike either *Count Yorga* film) and there is a resultant mutual antagonism wherein neither genre is allowed the degree of vitality possessed in even their worst respective manifestations. This is true to the extent that intentional humor, the sort that flows in and out effortlessly

in this type of horror movie, remains an uneasy component with Hammer as yet. There is an oddly weak, almost non-existent attempt at currying "sinister" laughter, but the residue falls somewhere below the creaky standard set by *HORROR OF FRANKENSTEIN*.

The film's built-in anachronism, the very gimmick, and seemingly the film's one real source of fascination, are so feebly exploited that one feels cheated. A rock group in a *Dracula* film? It hardly matters when the effect is that of two different movies having been spliced together. Christopher Lee never leaves his dilapidated Gothic church as if in fear of being overwhelmed by 1972, a view presumably shared by the writer and director. So why did they put *Dracula* in 1972 at all? In a different way, Peter Cushing seems misplaced mouthing the same dialogue we know he would have had, had this been just another straightforward *Dracula* film.

On the plus side there are some good sets (the old church, however, has worked overtime) and pleasant colors. The film's 1872 prologue, with van Helsing's death and victory over *Dracula*, is depicted in a sort of dim, off-tone color that evokes an extraordinarily unearthly sense, even if it is clumsily choreographed. This sequence is blended in nicely with the switch to 1972, symbolized aptly by a jet plane roaring through the sky, an effective and concise pronouncement of the film's point of departure. The return of Les Bowie produces some fine special effects work, although one disintegration of the Count would have been thoroughly sufficient.

Director Alan Gibson, who displayed a trace of talent in the challenging *CRESCENDO* (a challenge which, alas, defeated him in the end), is all thumbs with *Dracula*, as directors Freddie Francis and Roy Ward Baker have been, but Gibson's flamboyance here is far more annoying than the lackluster work of Francis on *DRACULA HAS RISEN FROM THE GRAVE* or the simple defeat of Baker by *SCARS OF DRACULA*. His work here displays the artfulness but also the empty-headedness of the comic book form.

Peter Cushing struggles valiantly and comes off better than anyone else in spite of his lines, but what vain effort! Christopher Lee is even less lucky. As he'd probably be the first to say, the part of *Dracula* is not a meaty one (not these days at least) but if he is given dialogue, it ought to be more than those infernal hisses and basso-profundo leers, or else he should remain mute. Either way, Lee's vampire is coming into hard times nowadays—white-faced, hairline steadily receding, looking and behaving weary of it all. His actions are stiff and uncertain to say the least. The character needs a physis and—dare I say it?—a transfusion.

Lee M. Kaplan

Scenes from *DRACULA A. D. 1972*. A Hammer Film Production currently in release through Warner Bros. Left: Stephanie Beacham and her boyfriend Philip Miller make it during a satanic ritual—Romeo and Juliet among the tombstones. Right: Christopher Neame as Johnny Alucard, teenage vampire. Is this Hammer's idea of a horror film or are they pulling our legs? *DRACULA A. D. 1972* is a mediocre rock drama rammed head first into an equally mediocre period horror film. The screenplay refuses to let convention yield to the contemporary element.





William Marshall.

BLACULA An A-I-P Release. 7 72. 92 minutes. Color by DeLuxe. Produced by Joseph T. Narr. Directed by William Crain. Screenplay by Joan Torres and Raymond Koenig. With: William Marshall, Denise Nicholas, Thelma Russell, Gordon Pinset, Emile Yancy, Vernetta McGee, Elisha Cook Jr., The Hughes Corporation Singers.

I cannot imagine why anyone—no matter his race, religion, or creed—would want to sit through as dreary a concoction as this, except possibly out of some deviate sense of historical responsibility in witnessing the screen's first Black vampire. Indeed, William Marshall in the title role impressively combines a powerful physical presence and a richly resonant voice (the latter no doubt due to the actor's Shakespearean training and experience) into what could possibly be the most potentially terrifying movie-vampire yet seen. But the vehicle in which Marshall is trapped neatly foils his chances for effectiveness in every conceivable way via some of the most shoddy technical credits to be found anywhere in commercial film: Marshall's makeup radically varies from scene to scene; assorted (and largely unnecessary) grunts and groans sound dubbed without much feeling into the soundtrack overlying several of Blacula's biting screams. While these defects may seem simply irritating, on the major side of the production, others overwhelm: John Stevens' photography seems as continuously nondescript as it is fatally underexposed; the acting appears stodgy and unconvincing; the Joan Torres Raymond Koenig script and William Crain's direction are uniformly listless to the point of tedium. In fact, Crain unspools his plot as if it were the modish height of ingeniousness; he slowly reveals the very tired elements of the genre (Blacula's victims become vampires, the tough and knowing Van Helsing character, vampires not leaving an image on either photographs or mirrors and their returning to their coffins before sunrise, ad infinitum) as if they were dewy fresh and original bits of vampire lore. Most of the shock scenes—special effects by Roger George—are urgently laughable; for example, the film begins and ends with the identical group of ridiculously bluish, fang-bearing vampires although the two groups are filmically (plot-wise) some two centuries removed from each other.

David Bartholomew

EVERYTHING YOU ALWAYS WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT SEX United Artists. 8 72. 88 minutes. In Color and Panavision. Produced by Jack Rollins, Elliott Gould, Jack Brodsky and Charles H. Joffe. Written and directed by Woody Allen. With: Woody Allen, John Carradine, Louise Lasser, Tony Randall, Lyn Redgrave, Burt Reynolds, Gene Wilder, Anthony Quayle, Heather MacRae.

With his genius for antic one-liners,

SHORT NOTICES

Woody Allen has turned his weird (to say the least) adaptation of Dr. David Reuben's best-selling sex guide into a festival of laughs for Allen fans. For others, it is a thing of bits and pieces—seven disconnected sketches which illustrate some of the book's bold subheadings—which, at its best, is wondrously amusing and, at its worst, a little tasteless in the manner of a stand up comedian who tells a bum gag and then quickly goes on to something else.

In spoofing Reuben's drugstore guide to informative sex, author Allen also spoofs movies, and in one of the film's best segments he encounters a mad scientist (John Carradine) in sex research ("Masters and Johnson threw me out because I created a 400-foot diaphragm. Imagine, birth control for an entire nation!") whose chamber of comic horrors falls apart, revealing a gigantic female breast which terrorizes the countryside until hero Allen faces it with a crucifix and X-cup bra.

A sketch on female frigidity brings forth a beautiful, sophisticated, white-on-white Antonioni parody complete with slangy English subtitles to go with the Italian dialogue, and it builds to a hilarious bit where Allen's sex aid goes goofy in his hands as his cold bride (the nifty Louise Lasser) looks on incredulously.

And there are priceless moments in "Are Transvestites Homosexuals?" with Lou Jacobi as a Jewish businessman with a fondness for strutting in drag, and in "What is Sodomy?" with Gene Wilder playing, in terrific fashion, a Jackson Heights doctor who falls in love with a sheep in a send up of Dreiser's "Sister Carrie."

Despite its accurate recreation of early TV's most atrocious style, the "What's My Perversion" show falls a little flat, and only the most die-hard Allen fan (like us) will survive the puny puns ("TB or not TB That is the question") of an Elizabethan takeoff on "Hamlet" with Allen as a runty court jester who gets his hand caught in the chastity belt of the queen (Lyn Redgrave).

But even his severest critics should be fascinated and amused by a Kubrick-style science-fiction view of the human body seen as a Mission Control Center, in "What happens during ejaculation?"

Tony Randall, as the "Operator" in charge, functions with superb efficiency as Allen, portraying Sperm No. 2, malfunctions predictably. Carry on, Woody!

Robert L. Jerome

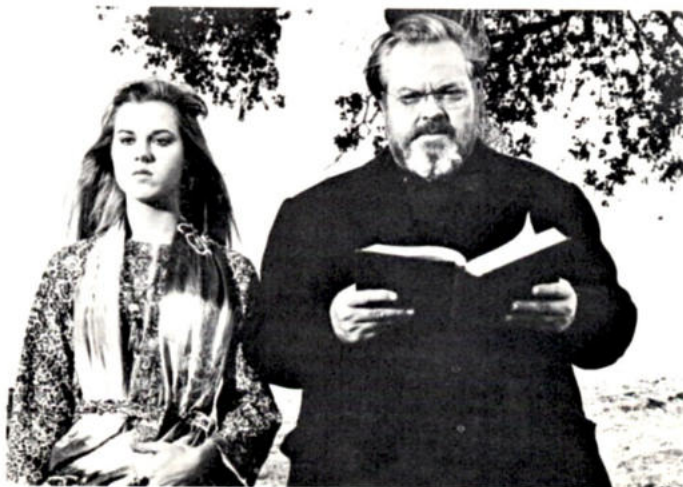
NECROMANCY Released by Cinerama. 8 72. 82 minutes. In Color. A Zenith International Picture. Produced, directed and written by Bert I. Gordon. With: Orson Welles, Pamela Franklin, Michael Ontkean, Lee Purcell, Harvey Jason, Lisa James, Terry Quinn.

One has to struggle to recall a single film in any way associated with the name Bert I. Gordon that ever fell, even accidentally, anywhere near the level of competency. As if to assure the failure of his current venture, Bert I. Gordon has not only produced but directed and written it as well. Showing some skill, at least as a producer, he has somehow coerced Orson Welles and his fake nose to appear, presumably (and hopefully) for enough cold cash to enable Welles to get **THE OTHER SIDE OF THE WIND** or even his long-awaited **Don Quixote** film a bit nearer completion. Even Claude Chabrol had to contend with Welles' false nose, although in **TEN DAYS' WONDER**, he at least managed to make it appear blue on the screen rather than its waxy white appearance here. (I mean, what's under there? Does Welles use it to enable future generations to distinguish his for-the-money-only films from those in which he was more artistically involved?) Anyway, Welles reads his part here as a disinterested parody of his role in Chabrol's film: the omnipotent God-like despot who figuratively restrains everyone around him.

Gordon's film is so unmentionably sloppy and unfeeling as to slink away from all discussion of it. Suffice it to say that the film never had a chance; Gordon's uninteresting story and pompous dialogue kill the film long before the dose of clever editing occurs. With its overabundance of zoom-photography and profusion of reaction shots, it resembles nothing so much as a TV movie playing commercially through some one's clerical error.

David Bartholomew

Orson Welles (and his fake nose) with Lee Purcell from **NECROMANCY**.



Richard Burton.

BLUEBEARD Released by Cinerama. 8 72. 123 minutes. In Eastman Color. Produced by Alexander Salkind. Directed by Edward Dmytryk. Screenplay by Edward Dmytryk, Ennio Di Concini and Maria Pia Fusco. With: Richard Burton, Raquel Welch, Verna Lisi, Joey Heatherton, Nathalie Delon.

It begins to dawn on us, as we reach the second of this film's exhausting two-plus hours of playing time, that the only reason for its existence, outside of a theme and variations for three egos (producer, director and star), are the gory deaths of each of the unfortunate victims and the bevy of beautiful actresses portraying them largely in terms of baring their chests with all the fervor of the film's R rating. But in these days of freely available hardcore violence and sex, we soon realize that these elements are not enough to sustain the sheer weight of the film. In plain fact, it is maddeningly boring.

For a film that relies on action, it shows remarkably little going on at any one time. The story quickly bogs down into a series of flashbacks as Bluebeard (called Von Sepper, for no particularly valid reason) recounts the fates of five previous wives and admirers. The episodic nature of the film soon takes its toll, aided by unfortunate casting.

Pursued logically, director Edward Dmytryk could have wound up with a witty Marxist criticism of decadent ruling classes. Instead, he sticks to patly Freudianisms and other simplifying devices. The same spirit that accounts for this pitifully stultifying formula probably also must take credit for the film's rather odd decision to banish the Nazi insignias on the various banners, flags and uniforms when it is plain indeed via time, place, and situation who and what the film deals with. (Roger Greenspan suggested it was to avoid offending the Nazis.)

Burton, in the title role, and his lovely co-stars, at least several of whom would appear to be actresses, and Dmytryk are merely caught slumming in the cinematic dregs. His film is trash—elegant, and oh! so tasty and sometimes charmingly decadent, but trash just the same.

David Bartholomew

THE DISCREET CHARM OF THE BOURGEOISIE 20th Century Fox. 11 72. 100 minutes. In Color. Produced by Serge Silberman. Directed by Luis Bunuel. Screenplay by Bunuel and Jean Claude Carriere. With: Fernando Rey, Delphine Seyrig, Stephan Audran, Bulle Ogier, Jean-Pierre Cassel, Muni.

Every genius is entitled to his failures, even Luis Bunuel. That this venerated director would stoop to such banal, infantile middle-class satire is beneath the talents and honesty of this master of surrealist commentary, and what is worse is that people are actually falling for it. Only indiscriminate Bunuel and foreign film addicts,

and culture freaks, could possibly discover much genuine merit in this film.

There is little of the bite, the caustic itch of bourgeois probing that exemplified *THE EXTERMINATING ANGEL*. This is bland, tasteless, and unusually trivial doddering for the great man, and it seems that his thrusts at morality have become as dull-edged as an overused razor blade, de-barbed and virtually defunct. Bunuel does not succeed in making his characters look and become ridiculous as he intended, but only himself in his shallow commercial audience pandering.

His dream imagery is still exquisitely dreadful, displaying the mastery of horror symbolism one always expects from him. But as a whole, it does not seem to be a film by Bunuel, as much as a film by one who thinks he is Bunuel.

Dale Winogura

ZAAT A Barton Films Release. 12/72. In Color. 95 minutes. Produced and directed by Don Barton. With: Marshall Grauer, Paul Galloway, Nancy Lien.

What horrorophile could resist an ad which asks the question, "Is he man... fish... or Devil?" Certainly this filmed-in-Florida fiasco has the right ideas (the mad scientist, the basement lab, the vat of acid for mistakes, the heroine who thoughtfully showers and puts on a frilly nightgown before the monster comes in to carry her away), but in implementing them the film fails miserably, even missing the fun that is inherent on a junk movie level. Zaat, who dreams of establishing an underwater race of super-amphibians, is himself a walking catfish and looks suspiciously like a scaly aardvark. When he terrorizes an entire town (pop. 15), someone suggests calling the National Guard, but Zaat (and film) are strictly for the dogcatcher.

Robert L. Jerome



Peter O'Toole is a zany but poignant Christ figure in *THE RULING CLASS*.

THE RULING CLASS An Avco Embassy Release. 10/72. 150 minutes. In Color by DeLuxe. A Jules Buck Keep Films Ltd. Production. Produced by Jules Buck and Jack Hawkins. Directed by Peter Medak. With: Peter O'Toole, Nigel Green, Arthur Lowe, James Villiers, Carolyn Seymour.

This film is a sort of crazy, mad pop fantasy that is probably supposed to be a satire of English morality, religious scruples, and shallow views of good and evil. Peter O'Toole plays a lunatic among numerous other lunatics, who first believes he is God and, then, after an hysterical "cure" session, Jack the Ripper.

It all might have made a biting, razor-sharp 90-to-100 minute black farce

but instead, it's a 2 1/2 hour asylum of good wit turned sour, outrageous insanity overblown, and themes, styles, and tricks running into endless repetition. After a while, the jokes, gags, and delightful outbursts into song start to pale, eventually going stale and tasteless, slowing the film to a halt.

A little style and contrast might have helped, but director Peter Medak cannot reinforce or develop anything with any structure, taste, or sincerity. His efforts compound the film's failure as much as O'Toole and everyone else strains to make it work, but only Arthur Lowe as a bumbling butler succeeds in lending it the wit and style it so desperately needs.

Dale Winogura

THE TOUCH OF MELISSA A Futurama International Release. 1972. In Color. With: Michael Berry, Emby Mellay, Lee Amber, Yvonne Winslow.

A low-budget but not quite the low-mentality shocker one might expect of a quickie project. The story deals with a young wanderer (Michael Berry) who turns down the wrong farm road and meets an attractive girl, Melissa (Emby Mellay), who is actually a 127-year-old witch. Love blooms, but there are problems. She has a younger sister (125?) who looks ancient and creates havoc in the community by killing farmers and investigators, and during the climactic PG rated sex scene in the woods, Melissa begins to grow old, too, much to the horror of her lover. *HAROLD AND MAUDE* did it better, yet the film, though turtle-slow, keeps most of its modest promises.

Robert L. Jerome

PLEASE DON'T EAT MY MOTHER A Boxoffice International Release. 7/72. In Color. 98 minutes. Produced and directed by Carl Monson. With: Buck Kartalian, Rene Bond, Flora Wisel.

Because triple-X-rated pictures are usually so solemn in their preoccupation with flesh or so unintentionally funny (vide *TERROR AT ORGY CASTLE*) in their sloppy syntax, this Harry Novak release deserves a few points for approaching the outer limits of humor by borrowing from Roger Corman's *THE LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS* the idea of a carnivorous plant which progresses from flies to frogs to dogs to a pair of nude lovers. As the befuddled guardian of the glutinous plant, Buck Kartalian looks like a cross between Ernest Borgnine and Mel Brooks, and he plays the middle-aged voyeur with a degree of affection which distinguishes an otherwise severe case of cinema blight.

Robert L. Jerome

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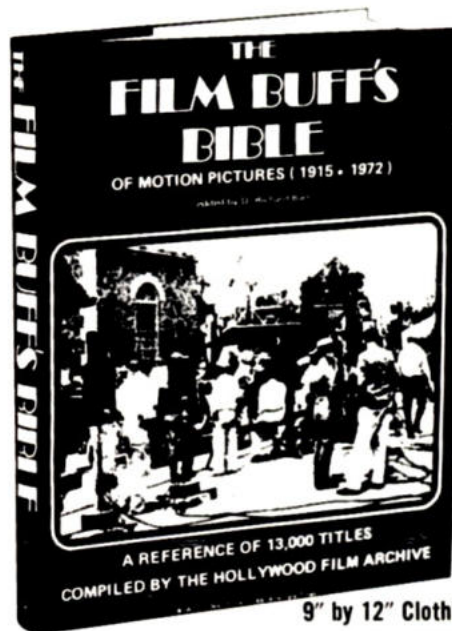
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NEWS AND NOTES

SENSE OF WONDER

Welcome to the eighth issue of CINEFANTASTIQUE (sin-eh-fan-tass-teek'), the magazine with a "sense of wonder," devoted to the study of horror, fantasy and science fiction films. If this is our first issue that you have encountered, we can sum up your reaction to the magazine from letters we have received from first readers as: "Far out. Someone is finally dealing with fantasy films on an intelligent level, and with an admiration and respect that they deserve." We know the feeling, because we experience it ourselves in putting together each issue.

For those of us with a particular and abiding interest in fantasy films, which, as a genre, offers the cinema its best opportunity to realize the full extent of the media's creative and imaginative potential, CINEFANTASTIQUE is a vindication for all the years that horror, fantasy and science fiction films have been written off with smug condescension or ignored by the main body of film critics and publications, or perhaps for what is even worse, for all the years that the genre has been cheapened and debased through its lionization by a popular press aimed at a juvenile mentality. So, Enjoy. Participate. This is the dawning of the age of popular culture.

A great portion of this issue is devoted to a coverage of Amicus Pictures, one of the leading producers of quality horror films in the world. We really didn't plan it this way, but the overall article seemed to blossom and develop on its own as our English correspondent, Chris Knight, began to file reports on the company's recent production activities while at the same time three of its previous productions were coming into release, and causing some considerable interest.

When we speak of Amicus being a producer of "quality" horror films, we should take pains to emphasize that this refers more to the level of competency and the attention to detail that the company brings to the production of genre films, and not necessarily to the artistic and aesthetic achievement of their work. As the company's own production chief readily admits in his interview with Chris, they have never attained the degree of success with the genre that is achieved in DEAD OF NIGHT, an excellent horror film upon which the company patterns most of its productions. We hope the interview with Amicus producer and scriptwriter

Milton Subotsky provides some insight into the company's continuing mediocrity in the face of solidly grounded potential in the use of actors and technical personnel of established talent. In all fairness, it should be noted that some of their work has been outstanding, including their first and probably finest horror film, HORROR HOTEL, directed by John Moxey in 1959, and certain episodes contained within their horror anthology films. Subotsky expresses an enthusiasm and interest in the genre that is both exciting and refreshing, and his frank and revealing discussion of his own work and approach to filmmaking make the feature fascinating and well worthwhile.

John McCarty provides an analysis of the thematic interests of director Jacques Tourneur in "The Parallel Worlds of Jacques Tourneur," and points out the significant influence on his style and directing technique caused by the filmwork of his father, Maurice. McCarty pays homage to one of the most successful directors to work within the fantasy and horror genre and gives credit to his significant contribution toward the success of producer Val Lewton's highly venerated series of horror film classics produced at RKO in the early forties, including: CAT PEOPLE, I WALKED WITH A ZOMBIE and THE LEOPARD MAN.

In a companion piece "Tourneur Remembers," Joel E. Siegel recounts the director's own recollections of his film career, his work with Lewton, the tampering and producer interference endured while directing CURSE OF THE DEMON, and the revelation of a "pet" horror film project that never reached the screen. Siegel's heretofore unpublished interview with Tourneur was conducted as source material for his book Val Lewton: The Reality of Terror published by The Viking Press. It is interesting in view of McCarty's article that Tourneur makes a direct allusion in the interview to his fascination with the theme of parallel worlds. After reading the Tourneur interview of which he was unaware while working on the article, McCarty wrote: "I feel that, as a writer on films, I've been vindicated. Next time someone tells me that I read too much into Tourneur's films, I'll show them the quote!"

Another, somewhat startling, coincidence, is the striking similarity between Tourneur's unfilmed horror project and the details reported by Chris Knight concerning the filming of THE LEGEND OF HELL HOUSE. The Richard Matheson screenplay closely parallels the story outlined by Tourneur! Chris Knight interviews the British director of this film, John Hough, to learn that Hough, like Matheson, is deadly serious in his belief and acceptance of the supernatural. This melding of talents has caused their approach to the project to be one less in the direction of a "horror film," and something more in the way of a personal statement on the occult. Hough, who directed the Hammer Film TWINS OF EVIL, comes across as a very promising genre talent.

Also previewed in this issue are the forthcoming Hammer Frankenstein entry, FRANKENSTEIN AND THE MONSTER FROM HELL, by Chris Knight, and Richard Fleischer's new science fiction film, SOYLENT GREEN, reported on by our intrepid Hollywood correspondent, Dale Winogura, who relates the trials and travails of being a Hollywood extra on the film.

We must note before closing that on our cover is lovely Stephanie Beacham, in a specially posed scene taken during the filming for Amicus of --AND NOW THE SCREAMING STARTS! Miss Beacham has appeared in a spate of genre roles, most notably opposite Marlon Brando in THE NIGHTCOMERS and in Roddy McDowall's ill-fated TAM LIN (currently in release through AIP as THE DEVIL'S MISTRESS). She is a talented performer whose star is rising.

Frederick S. Clarke

SITGES '72 THE FIFTH INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF FANTASY AND HORROR FILMS

The city of Sitges is situated near Barcelona in Spain, on the seacoast. It can be compared to the French resort town of St. Tropez for the type of tourist that it attracts: it is the richest beach in Spain. Once a year, this stylish resort also boasts, seemingly incongruous, one of two festivals in the world devoted to cinefantastique. It was V Semana Internacional de Cine Fantastico y de Terror (The Fifth International Festival of Fantasy and Horror Films) which brought me to Sitges during September 30 through October 6, to a beautiful resort that attracts thousands of tourists each year for quite different reasons.

The officials of the festival were very gracious and accommodating to press representatives, and their festival is better organized than their only competition, the much older and more established festival of Trieste. But where Trieste is often preoccupied with side events devoted to related arts such as literature and graphic art, at Sitges there was but one aim, to view a representative sample of the worlds' horror, fantasy and science fiction films, shown in their respective languages (an explanatory program is given to the Spanish viewing public).

The participating countries included:

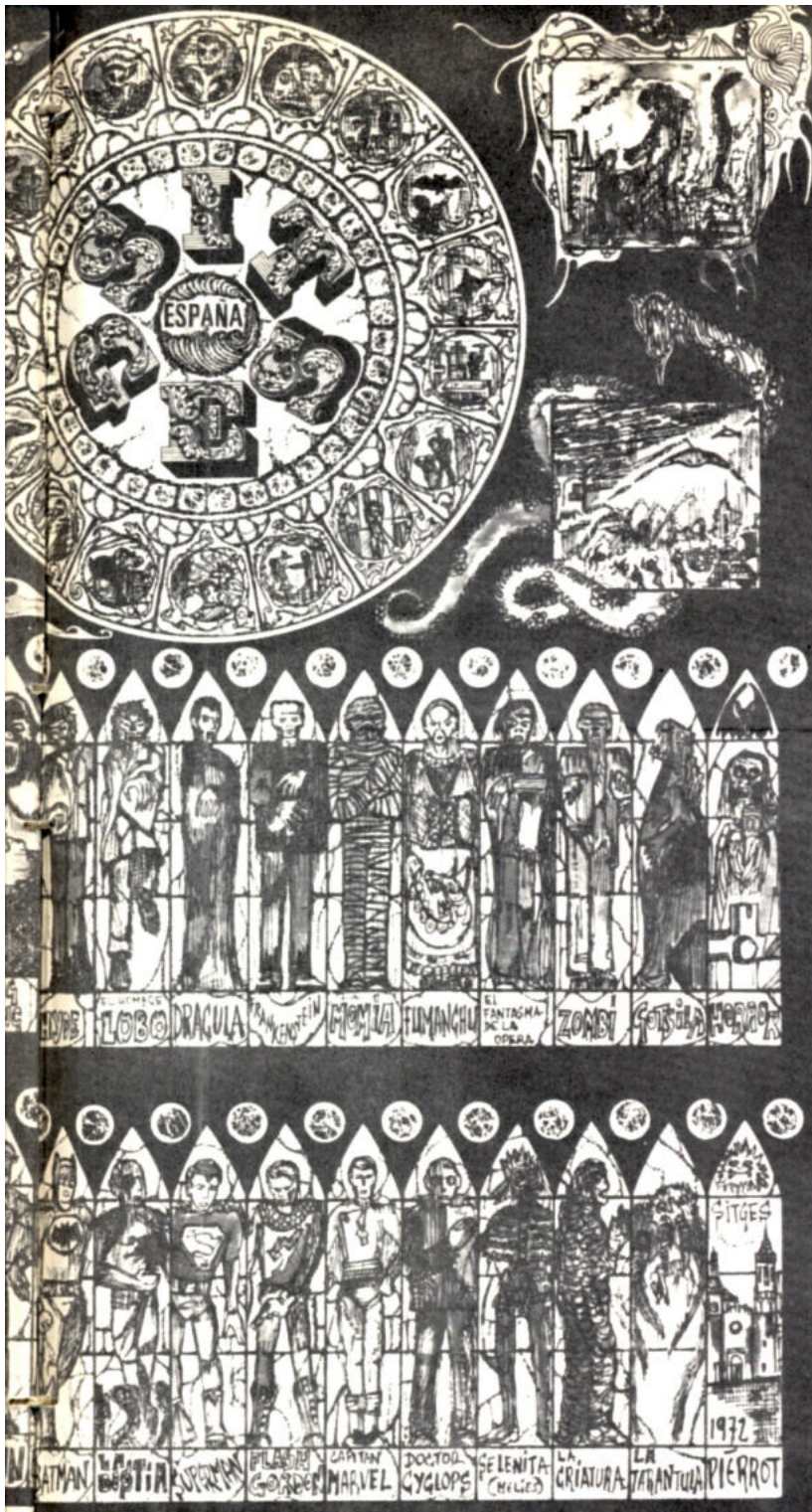
Germany: DER GORILLA VON SOHO, directed by Alfred Vohrer, is merely another film of suspense in the mold of the German series based on the stories of Edgar Wallace.

Brazil: ESTA NOITE ENCARNAR-EL NO TEU CADAVER (Tonight I Shall Enter Your Corpse) is directed by Jose Mojica Martins, known in Brazil as the "cinema murderer," because a woman died during the shooting of the film and an actor had his foot cut. The film is a collage of loosely related horror scenes (as huge spiders invading a girls' dormitory) presented as rather tasteless black comedy.

Spain: Being the festival's native country, Spain was the most represented with five entries and one short film. DRACULA CONTRA FRANKENSTEIN is directed by Jesus Franco, who is well known in Europe for his Dr. Orloff series, and has seen release in the United States with such films as VENUS IN FURS and SUCCUBUS. Franco is a devotee of the Universal horror films of the 1940s, and has been highly influenced by their production style. In fact, certain scenes in his film paralleled directly scenes from these earlier films, however his reverence for the Universal style never results in anything more than mimicry. The film features actor Dennis Price, seeming quite lost in an aimless performance that is surprising from the performer who provided such a delightful characterization in the Hammer film HORROR OF FRANKENSTEIN. Also featured is Howard Vernon, oft-used by Franco. Another Franco entry was EL MUERTO HACE LAS MALETAS (Death Has Packed Up) based on a novella by Edgar Wallace in which an organ player creates phoney spirits. SEXY CAT is an erotic-fantasy which taxes the limits of strict Spanish censorship, and of little interest or appeal outside its native country. LOS CRIMENES DE PETIOT (The Murders of Petiot) is a de-

At right: Scenes from two entrants at Sitges '72. Left: Ewelyn Stewart, Hardee Politoff and Silvia Monti in LES REGINE (The Witches), a French entry about three lovely succubi. Right: The grisly conclusion of LAKE OF DRACULA, a color Dracula film from Japan.





Right: A poster used in proclaiming Sitges '72 (The Fifth International Festival of Fantasy and Horror Films held in Sitges, Spain), a clever montage of genre characters and scenes.

ception and a disappointment. It is a deception because it does not tell the story of the real Dr. Petiot who murdered Jews for his company in France during WWII, instead being a rather conventional thriller. It is a disappointment because it is the work of director Jose Luis Madrid whose superb film *LA RESIDENCIA* (THE HOUSE THAT SCREAMED in America, reviewed 1:4:36) led us to expect more. The most prestigious of the Spanish entries is *PANICO EN EL TRANSIBERIANO* (HORROR EXPRESS in America, supposedly in release through Scotia International) starring both Peter Cushing and Christopher Lee and featuring actor Telly Savalas. The film is the story of an invader from outer space who is capable of assimilating the memories of those he kills, with the action taking place on a railway train. While the story is fascinating, director Eugenio Martin seems to have been troubled in handling his stellar cast and meeting the restrictions of a limited budget. Many scenes are poorly directed, particularly what should have been a very exciting conclusion. Still, *PANICO EN EL TRANSIBERIANO* surpassed by far most of the films shown at Sitges.

Czechoslovakia: *L'INCINERATEUR DE CADAVRES* (THE CREMATOR in England) is discussed in my column on Foreign Film last issue (2:3:41), but it is worth mentioning that "the incinerator" has certainly improved the minds of the audience and the jury.

Denmark: *ZERO POPULATION GROWTH* (Z. P. G. in the United States) has been reviewed in a past issue (2:2:42) and was one of the high points of the festival.

France: *LA GOULVE* is a film I will discuss further in a forthcoming article on French cinéfantastique. It is enough to say here that the film is erotic-fantasy of little interest or merit. Its screening at Sitges created a minor scandal as the film is forbidden in this country by the Spanish censors. Only members of the press were permitted to enter the screening, and only men, wives and distaff correspondents were refused at the door! The other French entry, *LE REGINE* (The Witches), is a co-production with Italy, a country otherwise represented at Sitges only by shorts. The story involves a motorcyclist who loses his way and stays in a deserted house one night. In the morning he awakes to find three lovely women and he stays on to seduce them, only to be murdered and buried away. The last scene has the devil congratulating his sirens for a job well done. As in most Italian films the photography and color values are treated with great care, but the slick treatment and fashion magazine values predominate and the fantasy element becomes only incidental.

England: *VELVET HOUSE* (CRUCIBLE OF HORROR in U.S. release), directed by Victor Ritelis, tells the story of a mother and daughter who do away with their brutal husband father, or do they? One is never really sure in this confusing homage to *DIABOLIQUE*, but a deliciously nasty performance by actor Michael Gough is always of interest. The other British entry, *DOOMWATCH*, from director Peter Sasdy was also an entrant at Trieste X and is covered in my Trieste report last issue (2:3:38).

Japan: Rather than the traditional Japanese men-in-monster-suit epic the entry this time, *LAKE OF DRACULA*, takes a more gothic turn. The film, by director Michio Yamamoto, does not tell of the eternal struggle between Dr. Van Helsing and his supernatural nemesis, it is merely the tale of a vampire loose in modern-day Japan. While

a few scenes are well-done, the script evidences an almost embarrassing naïveté (at one point the vampire's adversary declares: "You don't exist. You're just a figment of my imagination.") and the concluding destruction of the vampire is marred by poor effects work.

Mexico: *LA NOCHE DE LOS GATOS* (The Night of A Thousand Cats) is directed by Rene Cardona Jr., following in his father's footsteps, but with less talent. The story involves a madman who collects human heads, and keeps a horde of cats parked nearby to dispose of the bodies (he tastes the flesh before throwing it to them!). Unfortunately, Cardona stresses not fantasy, but the erotic, which only makes the film a bore.

Russia: *HISTORY OF CZAR TZALTAN*, directed by Alejandro Puchko, is a naive fantasy designed for children which features extensive model work and special effects.

Poland: *SYSTEM* is a short film that is based on the Edgar Allan Poe story "The System of Dr. Tarr and Professor Feather," but transposed to modern times. Director Janusz Majewski has made the film an affecting study of the alienation of the masses in society.

THE AWARDS

The Jury

The Jury was composed of Luis Garcia Barlanga, Salvador Corbero, Jose Maria Caparros, Pedro Serramallera Cosp (Spain), Alain Schlockoff (France), and Nicolas Alejandro Vignati (Argentina).

Best Director

Robert Mulligan for *THE OTHER* (U.S.A.)

Best Photography

Stanislav Milota for *L'INCINERATEUR DE CADAVRES* (Czechoslovakia)

Best Actor

Rudolf Hrusinsky for *L'INCINERATEUR DE CADAVRES* (Czechoslovakia)

Best Actress

Geraldine Chaplin for *ZERO POPULATION GROWTH* (Denmark)

Best Short Film

SYSTEM (Poland), directed by Janusz Majewski

Special Prize

Awarded by the association of cinema writers to Eugenio Martin and Arnaud d'Usseau for their screenplay for *PANICO EN EL TRANSIBERIANO* (Spain)

Belgium: *AU SERVICE DU DIABLE* (On Devil's Service) is a coproduction with France from director Jean Brismee, and has been screened both at Trieste and The First French Convention of Cinema Fantastique (2:3:39).

United States: Robert Mulligan's *THE OTHER* (reviewed 2:3:28) was the triumph of the entire festival and a success we hope to see soon in Paris. Also entered was Bert I. Gordon's *NECROMANCY*, seen last at Trieste.

The Festival's retrospective screening was confined to one lone entry, but a thoroughly pleasant surprise, an American short called *DEMENTIA*, directed by John Parker in 1953, which was completely unknown to Europe. If the script is routine, and the theme, old—a childhood trauma leads a young woman to murder men—the direction and style are completely different. Parker creates an incredible atmosphere of 1940s film noir with performances a la Bogart, and all without dialogue. Performances of rare quality, despite their ugliness, make *DEMENTIA* a masterpiece of cinema bis.

Jean-Claude Morlot



BIBLIO-FANTASTIQUE

by Baird Searles

These book notes must inevitably lead off with news of the publication of what must be close to the most important work of research ever to see print in the field of cinefantastique. I am referring to the initial volume (A through F) of Walt Lee's monumental Reference Guide of Fantastic Films.

This extraordinary work is a listing of every film that has the slightest ingredient of the fantastic in its makeup. Well, you might say, that's all very nice, but certainly we buffs of the genre know most of the films already. Get ready for a shock. The three volumes, in all, will contain 20,000 listings. The range is international, and extends back to before the turn of the century. Each listing contains production credits, cast, source of film story and a brief resume of the fantastic content of the film (easier and more sensible than a synopsis, I think). And the icing on the cake of this basic information is the admirable job of cataloging.

All of this knowledge comes in a handsome, large sized soft cover book, neatly printed, and illustrated every few pages by photographs, some extremely rare. Obviously the Reference Guide to Fantastic Films will be invaluable to researchers, reviewers, and collectors. One might question its worth or attraction for the average fantasy film buff, but it is not only functional as an instant question and bet solver, but great fun (and sometimes maddeningly tantalizing) just to browse through. My guess would be that anyone with more than a passing interest in the field would be happy to have it.

Now that Volume One has appeared, two companion volumes are planned to follow to complete the set. The first volume alone sells for \$9.50. The pre-publication price for the three volume set is \$22.50, which will increase to \$28.00 after publication.

I found Gabe Essoe's *Tarzan of the Movies* (Citadel, \$3.95) one of the best of the flood of cinema "pictorial history" books that have appeared lately, and not just because I have been an Edgar Rice Burroughs devotee for most of my reading life. There's never been a Tarzan film that has really captured the essence of the apeman for me, but I've enjoyed most of them on a different level and, as I've learned more about films before my time, been fascinated by the many different incarnations of Tarzan that have appeared on the screen. I'm sure he has been portrayed by more actors than any other single character (one might bring up Dracula, but that worthy literary figure has been treated more as a sub-genre of vampire than as a consistent character), and I've never been sure as to who they all were, and why the variety.

Tarzan of the Movies answered my questions neatly and informatively in a nice combination of text and photos, well balanced to fill the eye and feed the mind, too. It seems that Tarzan has simply been perennially popular; he and the movies hit their stride at about the same time, and his milieu was eminently cinematic as well as lending itself to a fair number of permutations. These facts, combined with ERB's astuteness at never totally relinquishing rights, account for the 55 years of variations on the theme.

Essoe is not above editorializing in his text; certainly an author's right. I'm just a bit surprised he didn't lavish a bit more praise on the first of the Weissmuller films, *TARZAN, THE APEMAN* (1932), the only Tarzan film of the ones I've seen that transcends the adventure genre (good or bad), particularly in the swimming scene with

Maureen O'Sullivan, a masterpiece of sensuous innuendo that is real cinematic artistry, in my opinion.

While we're on the subject, I might mention Philip Jose Farmer's *Tarzan Alive* (Doubleday, \$5.95), a "definitive biography of Lord Greystoke." It is just that, a combination of the 24 Tarzan books with inconsistencies explained and fictional family connections with other pop literary heroes such as Doc Savage and Sherlock Holmes. The Doc Savage conceit gets a bit heavy, but it's a must for Tarzanophiles, though the films are given short shrift throughout as commercial exploitations of the "real thing."

It may be nit-picking, but I, for one, am tired of books with titles that imply the general and give us the specific. I had hoped that *Cinema of the Fantastic* (Saturday Review Press, \$9.95) would be the definitive study of fantastic films that I've been waiting for (it's got to be done some day). Instead, it turns out to be a detailed look at 15 major fantasy films, one chapter per film. Once I got over my peevisness at the title, I had to concede that authors Chris Steinbrunner and Burt Goldblatt had done a nice job within their limited territory, even though much of it is territory that has been covered before.

The list of films covered gives a pretty good idea of where the book is at: *A TRIP TO THE MOON*, *METROPOLIS*, *FREAKS*, *KING KONG*, *THE BLACK CAT*, *THE BRIDE OF FRANKENSTEIN*, *MAD LOVE*, *FLASH GORDON*, *THINGS TO COME*, *THE THIEF OF BAGDAD*, *BEAUTY AND THE BEAST*, *THE THING*, *20,000 LEAGUES UNDER THE SEA*, *INVASION OF THE BODY SNATCHERS* and *FORBIDDEN PLANET*. Personally, I'd dispute only three on the list as questionable if they've set out to do the major films in the genre; they would be *INVASION OF THE BODY SNATCHERS* (because of the execrable lapse of logic at the end), *20,000 LEAGUES UNDER THE SEA* and *MAD LOVE*. But that's a matter of personal taste, and it's obvious that the selection is a good one. There are for each film, synopses, a history of the production, and biographical sketches of the major figures involved, as well as many, many photos. The text is intelligently done, the pictures are a joy to have, and there are any number of interesting details that were new to me.

But it's still pretty much familiar turf, and I think we're getting to a saturation point on this kind of book, especially in hard cover at hard cover prices. Now if this book had covered fifteen obscure masterpieces (*CARNIVAL OF SOULS*, *NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD*, or such like), I'd probably have been much happier, but it would have been less commercially viable. The picture of Elsa Lanchester on the cover seems to indicate that it's meant for the general public that may or may not still be fascinated by the Frankenstein and Dracula movies. In the meantime, I'll still keep hoping for a book that is all about the cinema of the fantastic.

Baird Searles

The great pity about the majority of writing on science fiction cinema is that there seems to be the old, narrow-minded Puritan sensibility operating not only in filmic terms, but especially in literary ones.

Though I think William Johnson's *Focus On Science Fiction Film* (Prentice Hall) the finest, most comprehensive book extant on science fiction film criticism and aesthetics, some of the articles represent a callous, insensitive approach to the genre that has become almost classic. Chief among them would be Richard Hodgins' "A Brief, Tragical History of the Science-Fiction Film" and Ado Kyrou's "Science and Fiction." The hyper-intellectual, unemotional attitude taken by these writ-

Scenes from foreign films currently in release in Paris. Left: Scenes from *MALPERTUIS*, directed by Harry Krummel, and in release from United Artists. Top: Susan Hampshire, Orson Welles and Mathieu Carriere in the bedchamber of Cassavius at Malpertuis. Bottom: Strange characters encountered by Mathieu Carriere on the street in the Belgian port of Anvers. The film's screenwriter, Jean Ferry, has written concerning the film's poetic, dreamlike quality: "Where, therefore, lies reality, the reality for which the young, angelic hero of the film is so hopelessly searching? A hero, who, in spite of himself, is thrown into a fantasy world, in which an overwhelming love holds him prisoner. Is it by knowledge or by womanhood that he will be saved? But, one does not escape from this haunted building, in whose stones beat the heart of a mad creator, Cassavius." Middle: The ogre from *LE PETIT POUCEOT* (Tom Thumb) played by Jean-Pierre Marielle, from the Parc Film's production of the children's classic. Right: Scenes from *TU-MANNOCT' ANDROMEDY* (The Andromeda Nebula), a Russian science fiction film of 1962.

ers is as perfect a representation of the state of mind of many science fiction fans as anything I've read.

To start placing instant superiority of the written word over the filmed image; to blatantly ignore the aesthetic relativity of film and literature; to take the narrow, high school teacher tactic of equating film values with those of literature; and to place emphasis on such stupidly irrelevant matters as consistent logic, literary interpretation, and vest-pocket Freudian concepts, are the basic crimes committed by most critics of filmed science fiction, and especially by these writers.

Hodgens' unperceptive, insensitive criticisms of *THE THING* and *THE FLY* are so pathetically obvious in their Judeo-Christian proselytizing that he leaves no ground to discover the deeper, more meaningful and exciting horizons opened up by approaching these films with a cinematic orientation, which he never once considers, writes about, or very likely ever even thought of.

Kyrou takes an opposite, but almost as despicable an approach in analyzing *FORBIDDEN PLANET* by ignoring how sloppily handled were all the thematically exciting ingredients. Kyrou's equating of literary with cinematic values is so totally absurd, unfounded, and meaningless that the essay loses all relevance to filmed science fiction. Also, otherwise intelligent, articulate men like Brian Aldiss and Kingsley Amis seem singularly ignorant of the director's role as well as understanding and appreciating the relative differences of written and filmed science fiction. This is in direct contrast with the sensitive, knowing comments of Alain Resnais.

In spite of a few other shallow, even grossly hypocritical, statements on science fiction, there is featured some of the best, most understanding writing on the subject one could ever hope to find. Johnson's own introduction; Maurice Bessy's revealing "Melies" study; Heinlein's humorous and educational account of the *DESTINATION MOON* filming; Pierre Klost's loving critique of *DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL*; and the perceptive 2001 comments by Michel Comtet are all very much worth spending a few dollars on.

The book is a refreshingly far cry from Carlos Clares' and John Baxter's hollow devotionals, but the definitively perceiving and understanding work of science fiction film criticism has yet to be written as far as I'm concerned. On the basis of Mr. Hodgins' and Kyrou's naive, generalized assumptions, some thinking is light years away from achieving that goal.

Dale Winogura



FOREIGN FILM REPORT FROM PARIS

by Jean-Claude Morlot

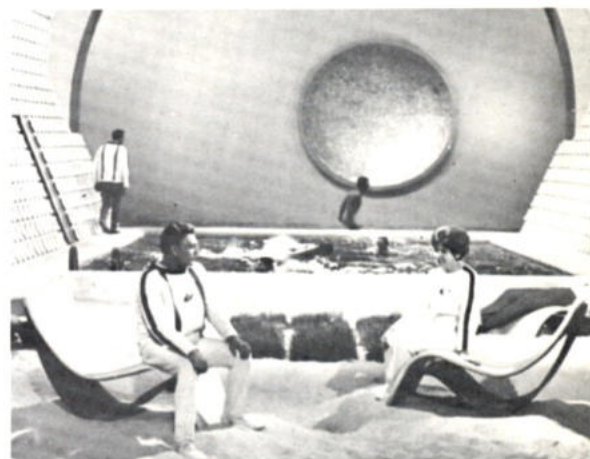
MALPERTUIS, based upon the well-known novel of the same name by Belgian author Jean Ray, has been released through United Artists. The 85-year old author is gaining a growing reputation and following for his works of fantasy and horror, including *25 Black and Fantastic Tales*, *The Merry-Go-Round of Curses*, *Malpertuis*, and *The Last Canterbury Tales*.

Malpertuis is the name of a mysterious house in which live Cassavius (Orson Welles) and his entourage, people, who we are to discover later, are the ancient Gods of Greece, reincarnated and confined to a human form.

The story involves the young hero Jean Jacques, called Yann in the film (Mathieu Carriere), with Euryale, the Gorgon, and her sisters, Nancy and Alice (all played by Susan Hampshire), who are harpies. Jean Jacques, after discovering a love with the younger sister, finds true love with Euryale, whose icy Gorgon gaze turns him to stone.

In the book, the harpies attack a monastery where Jean Jacques is recovering from an illness and he is saved from their claws only by the petrifying stare of Euryale, but by mistake he peers into her eyes...

Sadly the film and the original novel are completely different in essence and approach. The film is completely conventional where the book was a masterpiece of horror and the baroque. It seems that screenwriter Jean Ferry has taken pleasure in eliminating all the horrific sequences as the battle of the Harpies versus the Gorgon at the book's conclusion, but expands upon



amorous scenes which are written off in one line in the novel.

What makes this expurgation doubly tragic is that the film is in the sure directorial grasp of Harry Kumel whose **DAUGHTERS OF DARKNESS** made such a strong impression of his genre talents. I had assumed that only a Belgian director such as Anvers, but instead he has striven for an international flavor not destined for a special audience. Kumel's handling of **MALPERTUIS** is very disappointing, indeed.

Belgian author Jean Ray has been adapted to film rarely and very poorly: there is **CITY OF THE UNSPEAKABLE FRIGHT** by leading French director Jean Pierre Mocky, and there have been some episodes of Belgian TV series based on Jean Ray stories, but **MALPERTUIS** is the first major production of a Jean Ray work.

The film's international cast works well and the film's failure is that of Jean Ferry's poor screen adaptation. Susan Hampshire and Jean Pierre Cassel, who plays Lampernisse in the film, a tattered and inefficient concierge, have received "The Edgar Allan Poe Award" of the Mystery Writers of America for their performance in a fantastic film which has good artistic qualities. This distinction is the first that has ever been given by the association to a horror film. But a film of Jean Ray's **Malpertuis** still cries to be made.

For the first time in Europe a one month tribute to Boris Karloff has been given. The Brussels "Musée du Cinema" presented a retrospective of forty important Karloff films. The dynamic film museum, directed by Jacques Ledoux, has already presented a retrospective on science fiction films in November 1969, and each month presents

a retrospective festival on a genre, director or performer.

Two Russian films seen recently in Paris include **TUMANNOC'T' ANDROM-EDY** (The Andromeda Nebula), a 1962 film of director E. Cherstobitov based on the novel by Ivan Efremov, and the first part of an eight-hour-long epic called **THE IRON STAR**, the name of a planet upon which spaceship *Tantara* seeks to find the wreckage and remains of the lost voyager, The Sail. While the film is of definite interest to genre enthusiasts it dwells too long on political and sociological discussion among its cast. In its plot the film bears a startling resemblance to **FORBIDDEN PLANET**. The special effects are well-done and the journey on the planet Iron Star is interesting, but this comprises only a fifth part of the entire film and many boring and dull passages must be endured throughout the rest of the film. Of the few examples I have seen, sci-

ence fiction in the socialist countries is a synonym for statism.

Christmas saw the release of **LE PETIT POUCE** (Tom Thumb), the fairy tale of Charles Perrault produced by Parc Film, the company who produced Jacques Demy's **PEAU D'ÂNE** (The Magic Donkey) two years previous. Several scenes are well handled, as the ogre puts on his "seven league boots," and the apparition of the ogre and his seven daughters eating human flesh, their mouths stained with blood. This scene and the killing of the daughters must be very frightening to the young audience for which the film is intended. It is a good entertainment for the children, but a bore for the parents who must come along.

The publisher of "Midi-Minuit Fantastique," the French magazine devoted to horror, fantasy and science fiction films since 1962, Eric Losfeld, is being troubled and harassed by French authorities. He is under indictment for the production and dissemination of pornographic materials, which is nothing more than the abridgement of our freedom of expression on the pretext of morality. Losfeld also publishes the cinema magazine "Positif" and has published L'Ecran Demonique and Murnau by Lotte Eisner. An "Association de Defense D'Eric Losfeld" has been created by Jean Schuster at 14 et 16 rue de Verneuil, 75007 Paris, and all interested parties who wish to lend their support and assistance should write for details.

The latest film from controversial director Pier Paolo Pasolini, **THE CANTERBURY TALES**, has received release in Paris. It is a monument of humor and eroticism based on the tales of Geoffrey Chaucer. Among the scenes there is a sequence in Hell where the Devil is defecating...monks! Pasolini's film is proving to be popular and is much less vulgar than his previous work, **THE DECAMERON**.

Left: Titoyo as Tom Thumb removes the sleeping ogre's "seven league boots" in **LE PETIT POUCE**, which features a score by Francis Lai. Right: A vision of Hell as monks flop from the sky in Pier Paolo Pasolini's **THE CANTERBURY TALES**.



FRANKENSTEIN AND THE MONSTER FROM HELL

Hammer returns to the purity of the Gothic horror formula.

With the making of *FRANKENSTEIN AND THE MONSTER FROM HELL*, Hammer Films of England is returning to the traditional Gothic horror genre for which they have been renowned for nearly two decades. The filming of this new episode in their Frankenstein series is a deliberate move on the part of the company to return to tried-and-true and more profitable themes. In the past few years, Hammer has tried many new approaches to genre and non-genre films as well and, while successful, none has shown the popularity of their earlier works.

Playing the title role of Frankenstein is Peter Cushing and other familiar names in the cast include Charles Lloyd Pack, Shane Briant, Patrick Troughton and Dave Prowse as the monster of the title. The list of technical crew is equally impressive: Terence Fisher directs from a screenplay by John Elder; Roy Skeggs is the producer; James Needs is the editor; Eddie Knight takes care of the makeup; Scott MacGregor is art director and the special effects are in the capable hands of Les Bowie.

I journeyed to Elstree Studios during the last full week of shooting and spent most of my time on, and around, the laboratory/surgery set. It is here that Frankenstein, unable to perform his own operations due to his badly burnt hands, supervises the brain surgery involved in transplantation performed by his assistant, Dr. Helder (Shane Briant) and Sarah (Madeline Smith).

The set itself is large and allows the camera to take up a variety of positions, providing for a wider range of angles to shoot from. There is an open fire built into one wall and masses of surgical equipment and specimens littering the tables. Towering over all is the seven foot high monster himself. His huge, misshapen, hairy body dominates everything, a joint effort between Les Bowie and Eddie Knight, it brings a new kind of creature to the screen.

As this new Frankenstein film for Hammer is Terence Fisher's first film in three years, I asked Shane Briant, who plays Peter Cushing's assistant in the film, how Fisher is working: "Terry is a super director because he listens to you and even asks you for your ideas. He doesn't waste six inches of film. He knows how he plans to cut it, and rather than do a master shot and then cover the various angles and close ups, he shoots sparingly what he requires." Madeline Smith told me that she was glad that there was no sex in this picture, unlike her first Hammer film, *THE VAMPIRE LOVERS*, and this seems to be part of the studio's retrenchment to earlier values.

I was discussing the intricacies of the makeup work on the film with Eddie Knight when I became aware that we had been joined by someone else, and you can imagine my reaction when I turned to be confronted by Dave Prowse in full monster makeup! Eddie helped him off with his mask and

we sat down to discuss Dave's encore role as the Frankenstein monster.

CFQ: How did you get into film?

PROWSE: I was British Heavyweight weightlifting champion for three years, 1962 through 1964 and I came into the business from being British champion.

CFQ: Does it annoy you to appear under all this makeup?

PROWSE: This film will probably be the first time when you won't be able to tell it's Dave Prowse playing the part. In *HORROR OF FRANKENSTEIN* they used only a headpiece and if you knew me you could recognize me immediately. On that film, the second day I had my makeup on, I went into the restaurant and I thought no one would recognize me. The first person I saw was Roger Moore, who was having lunch, and I went over to him and said, excuse me, Roger, you won't remember me...and he broke in: "Dave, I'd recognize you anywhere."

In this film, the character is a super monster and quite a pathetic creature really. The first time you see him his hands are all wrong and he has no eyes at all. He finally gets hands and a pair of eyes, but he still doesn't function properly because his brain had been damaged.

CFQ: Could you tell us something about the suit you are wearing?

PROWSE: The suit is the culmination of work by three departments: the art department gave the special effects and makeup departments a conception of what they wanted the monster to look like, and then special effects created the body and makeup produced the head. It started off as a wet suit, just the top half, and a big foam rubber body was built up on top of that and covered with skin and body hair. The mask was done from a facial cast made for the previous film and simply zips onto the suit before filming. That's super as far as I'm concerned, because it takes only a quarter of an hour to get into this outfit, whereas on *HORROR OF FRANKENSTEIN* it took two hours to be made up every day. That was a drag.

CFQ: Do you put any of your own ideas into the characterization?

PROWSE: Yes, you put in your own little touches. When I did *HORROR OF FRANKENSTEIN* for Jimmy Sangster I arrived on the set all made up without having discussed how the monster was to be played. I'd seen Jimmy three weeks previous when he cast me for the part and when I arrived on the set he asked me if I had any idea of how I was going to play the monster. I told him I was expecting direction from him and he replied that we'd better get down to it as there wasn't much time. I showed him how I played the monster for the kids at home, just shuffling across the floor mumbling "I am the monster," and he said: "That's perfect! Just what I wanted."

CFQ: I noticed that in this scene you are nearly motionless. Were you, or do you, get bored in scenes like this?

PROWSE: Today is the first time I've been on the set and done nothing.

I've been doing all sorts of different things like bursting through windows and killing various people.

CFQ: I suppose it's only natural that you must play the role in a way that will elicit sympathy from the audience?

PROWSE: In making monster films I think the intentions of the directors and producers have been to make pathetic monsters. Everyone wants to make a creature that the audience will feel for, and who will get them in tears. They remember Boris Karloff sitting by the lakeside playing with the little girl and picking the flowers, and in the back of their minds they are trying to emulate that. I'd love to do a real vicious bastard. I really would. I'd like to do a very athletic monster, like a werewolf, which goes around killing everybody and leaping over this and that, but obviously I have to work in conjunction with what the director requires and for this one I've had to develop a special shuffle for him. During the film, the brain starts rejecting the body.

CFQ: You seem to get a great deal of pleasure from these roles?

PROWSE: I love playing monsters. Although this monster is big, lumbering, ugly and horrific, he's not like the other ones at all.

I think this film is a big step for Hammer and my career because they are reverting back to their original Gothic approach to the horror film. They've had a number of films where the horror has been tinged with sex and comedy and it hasn't really clicked. Madeline Smith is still supplying the sex appeal in the film, but she's dressed from head to toe from start to finish, and there are a few humorous touches, but that's all they're meant to be.

I asked director Terence Fisher if he was happy with his work on the film, during one of those rare moments on the set when he seemed to be at ease. "Oh yes," he replied, "I was very happy with the script, and to work again with Peter is wonderful. I have great hopes for this picture. I like the setting of a criminal lunatic asylum which allows for a variety of characters, and a variety in your approach to characterization. I also like the uncertainty of whether the girl played by Madeline Smith is an inmate or not."

As we walked back toward the set, I inquired about his health after two recent accidents. He smiled and said, "Well, my ankle is a bit stiff still. I broke it twice in road accidents, crossing the road carelessly and not at pedestrian crossings—I've learned my lesson!"

Once back on the set he threw himself into the job of directing. One can sense that he can visualize the finished film going on before him. His training as a cutter—he told me he dislikes the word editor—probably gave him an opportunity to get more insight into the film business than some other directors. It certainly bodes well for horror enthusiasts everywhere that "Terry" is at it again.

Chris Knight





THE LEGEND OF HELL HOUSE

Director John Hough discusses his approach to the supernatural

The "Mount Everest" of haunted houses is how *THE LEGEND OF HELL HOUSE* is described, a film about the supernatural which, the makers claim, is the first of its kind.

Starring Pamela Franklin, Roddy McDowall, Clive Revill and Gayle Hunnicutt, the film is directed by John Hough, produced by Albert Fennell and the screenplay is by noted fantasy author Richard Matheson from his own novel. The executive producer is James H. Nicholson and the film is a Pilgrim Production for Nicholson's own Academy Picture's Corporation. The film is to be released worldwide by 20th Century Fox.

The story's main events follow a dying multi-millionaire's offer of one hundred thousand pounds each to three top experts in their field—a physicist, a mental medium, and a physical medium—to investigate psychic phenomena in a house with a terrifying history of haunting, evil and death. Their task: to try and prove, or disprove, survival after death. The millionaire is prepared to buy the answer one way or the other, "so long as it is factual."

The subject is set from a Richard Matheson novel, *Hell House*, a thriller about the supernatural which is set in the United States. James Nicholson explained why the location had been changed to England: "I think it's the kind of story that will gain through this. Americans in particular like to think of Britain as a country filled with haunted houses, and I feel the change of setting will make it more believable to them." He went on further to explain why the title was changed from Matheson's original, and concise, form. "Matheson called his book *Hell House*. I added 'The Legend of' so it would not be confused with a lot of horror films that have used the words 'hell' and 'house' in their titles." One aspect of the film that Nicholson likes to stress is that it is not just another haunted house movie: "There will be no ghostly clichés, none of your creaking doors, flapping shutters, hooting owls, and all that stuff. This is about a house possessed by a supernatural force. We are not treating it as fantasy, but playing the whole thing for all-out reality."

To ensure that the scenes involving psychic phenomena accord with all the known facts about the subject, Tom Corbett, England's leading clairvoyant and psychic consultant, was engaged to act as technical advisor. Corbett was also responsible for finding a house, genuinely reputed to be haunted, and resembling the one described in Richard Matheson's story, where the location scenes would be shot.

Corbett eventually suggested Wykehurst Park, a gabled Victorian mansion in heavily wooded countryside some fifty miles south of London. Wykehurst, like the house in the film, was built by a wealthy industrialist a hundred years ago and has been empty for the last forty. The studio scenes were shot at EMI-MGM studios at Elstree.

Director John Hough (pronounced huff) dislikes long rehearsals and be-

lieves in what he calls "the 'electricity' of the first take." He prefers to go over the mechanics of a scene with his actors and then shoot what would be the first full rehearsal. The "electricity" he claims comes from the spontaneity of what they do the first time which is often more effective than what comes over in re-takes. This would seem to be the case the day I was there for rehearsals were kept to a strict minimum and although the unit seemed to be working at an extremely quick pace, the director, for example, was never still for more than a few moments, there was still a great amount of care going into each shot.

Hough served his apprenticeship in many different departments at the EMI-MGM studios at Elstree and, as well as directing features, has also directed episodes of *THE AVENGERS* and *THE PROTECTORS*, for which he did the pilot film.

As one who is interested in psychic phenomena, John seemed only too willing to talk about the film and his previous movie, *TWINS OF EVIL*.

CFQ: Were you personally happy with the strong sexual overtones pervading *TWINS OF EVIL*?

HOUGH: Yeah. I would have liked to have gone a bit further with it. For me, sex isn't what you see, it's what you hear. A naked woman doesn't turn me on like a woman in a slip. A woman talking about sexual things is personally more erotic than a woman performing sexual acts. In the film I would have preferred to have a lot more sexual talk between the characters than actual nudity.

There is a sequence in the film where a woman comes up from the grave and she meets a young man who is seeking immortality and she seduces him in his castle. While they are on the bed together her hand reaches out and grabs a candle and she begins masturbating with it. At the moment of her climax she grips the candle tightly and crushes it. It flickers out and the wax slips down the side of the candle. This managed to get past the censor and when the film was screened in London, I went to see it at a local cinema. Everyone in the stalls picked up on the scene right away and roared with applause, whereas everyone in the circle was quiet, perhaps because they were with their dates, I don't know. But all the single people in the stalls got it right away. That pleased me, and it surprised me too, because I had tried to get the sexuality of the scene across symbolically and I had expected that to appeal more to a sophisticated audience.

CFQ: You have said *THE LEGEND OF HELL HOUSE* is not being made for a specific audience. Just how different is the film?

HOUGH: The picture takes a totally different approach and treats the subject matter on a different level.

I believe in spiritualism and mediumship. There do seem to be genuine mediums and spiritualists. Although, let's say, 80% of them are frauds.

that leaves at least 20% who are not. I began to research the subject and incredible things happened at seances that I attended. Now either the medium was the world's best illusionist in the wrong profession, or genuine. The majority of mediums and spiritualists are unsophisticated people, and to create some of the illusions that they would have had to create would require tremendous technical know-how. We're having trouble doing it on this film even with the might of EMI behind us, and yet I can go down to a tiny little bed-sitter somewhere and see a medium do direct voice which is a tremendous talent. I was quite shattered.

CFQ: What kind of research did you do for this picture?

HOUGH: I researched with mediums and spiritualists. I also did research at the Psychic Institute for Research in London, and they are scientists and investigators. There are psychic investigators who work full time travelling throughout the world testing and checking phenomena, and I did a lot of research with them. They came to the conclusion which I had already arrived at—that this film has got a genuine base. Whatever happens in this film could happen and the theory that is used by our investigator in the film to combat spirits with electro-magnetic waves is plausible. It's not so much fantasy, and this is fascinating.

CFQ: There are quite a number of special effects in the picture. Do you tend to think that the picture will depend on them?

HOUGH: No. The special effects just create what we want to see. If one could call the tune I would have called in a medium and had them produce the effects naturally, but as it's not something that they can exactly do on cue, I couldn't rely on that. The special effects are simply reproducing what has been witnessed to in real life. It's not a trick film and we're using special effects simply to put across what people have seen.

CFQ: This is only your fourth film but your second in the horror/fantasy genre. Will you concentrate on this type of film?

HOUGH: I don't think so. This was a very special film for me. It effects everybody because, if there is life after death—and this is what we're asking in the film—then I'm going to be a lot happier, along with everyone else. I would like to do other films on this subject, but I don't regard this as a horror film. I regard it as a statement on spiritualism.

I think a lot of credit must be given to the powers that be for selecting John to direct this picture for not only has he shown signs of being a first class director but he is also greatly interested in the subject matter and is applying himself to the picture on two levels: the professional level and also on a personal level. It is this personal involvement that John Hough brings to the material that could turn a promising project into a great film.

Chris Knight



LONDON SCENE CUSHING & LEE

by Chris Knight

London's National Film Theatre stands on the South Bank of the River Thames directly underneath Waterloo Bridge. From the theatre's balcony one can see the skyline of the city which, not only tourists, but Londoners have come to know and love. To the left stands Big Ben and the Houses of Parliament and one can see the familiar silhouette of St. Paul's. It was in this idealic setting that the N.F.T. ran a short Peter Cushing retrospective of films during January of 1973, the highlight of which was a lecture given by Cushing himself, and sponsored by the tobacco firm of John Player.

The films screened included *DRACULA* (aka, *Horror of Dracula*), *CASH ON DEMAND*, *I, MONSTER* (reviewed, page 16) and *VIGIL IN THE NIGHT* with a special all night show featuring *THE CURSE OF FRANKENSTEIN*, *FLESH AND THE FIENDS* (aka, *Mania*), *ISLAND OF TERROR*, *NIGHT OF THE BIG HEAT* (aka, *Island of the Burning Damned*) and *DR. TERROR'S HOUSE OF HORRORS*. Such was Peter's own interest in these pictures that he attended the all night show himself.

The lecture took place on Sunday, January 21, with David Castell interviewing. I met Peter a few minutes before he went on and from talking to him I gained the impression that he considered it a great honor to be asked to speak.

The opening clip of the lecture was from Hammer's *HOUD OF THE BASKERVILLES* and it was interesting to see how well that film has stood the test of time since it was first made in 1959. One of the aspects that came across particularly well, apart from Peter Cushing's acting of course, were the production values in the sets, an aspect of production which Hammer was superb at during their early years at Bray Studios and which they somehow have never been able to recapture since they moved.

Perhaps the most startling thing to emerge for the majority of the audience, who didn't know him personally, was the fact that Peter has a very dry sense of humor which often had the audience, literally, in fits of laughter. The audience consisted of all ages, ranging from the young through to the elderly, surely living proof that Peter's career and talent can span the generation gap. Also in the audience were various members of the Hammer production team as well as one or two familiar faces from the film world.

Shortly before six, the lecture concluded when the capacity crowd in the auditorium gave Peter a rousing round of applause as he left for a short buffet arranged in an adjoining area where he posed for photographers and later took time to autograph stills for his many fans.

Only the world's top acting talent and film technicians and specialists are invited to give John Player lectures and none have proved to be failures. I'm happy to report that that record is still intact, proving beyond doubt that Peter Cushing, in the film world, is a true star.

Three days before Christmas, I went down to the set of *DRACULA IS DEAD AND WELL AND LIVING IN LONDON* to seek out Christopher Lee and discuss recent developments with his career and his newly formed Char-

lemagne Productions. Shooting was taking place at the EMI-MGM Studios at Elstree, for Hammer Films.

The set itself was constructed to represent a dingy, bare room with a camp bed as the only form of furniture. On this bed lay lovely Valerie Oost who was staring in the direction of the door through which Dracula had just emerged. She is unable to scream for she is under the power of the infamous Count. Dracula advances, mist creeping out from under his cloak. He sits down on the edge of the bed and she draws him closer. She seeks a kiss. Dracula lowers his face to her neck and sinks his fangs. She screams a scream of mixed fear and pleasure.

The word "cut" breaks the silence as director Alan Gibson seems delighted with the take. The next shot is from another angle and turns out to be the last of the day as the actors go through the whole scene again. Then it's all over and everybody seems just a bit more happy than usual, for it's Christmas and that means that there is a break of four days for the crew. As I followed Christopher back to his dressing room, the gaiety of the crew, at the thought of Christmas, must have got the better of them for they burst out into Christmas carols as if to prove that it isn't all long hours of hard work and gloom on a Hammer picture.

Presently, the only film to be produced by Lee's Charlemagne Productions (see 2:3:24) is *NOTHING BUT THE NIGHT*. I asked Chris what the current disposition of his production company is?

"I'm right in the middle of very protracted financial negotiations towards getting the kind of deal that we will accept. I have now been involved for the last six months in financial negotiations with banks, private financiers and various groups of people who keep saying they want to put money into Charlemagne. Either the financial aspects of these offers have been unacceptable to us or we've discovered that there hasn't been anything behind them. I've also been away, working. We have not been able to progress very far with the actual setting up of a financial structure to a point where we can say we've got all the money in the bank and we will make out next picture. If it works out, we should know very soon that we will have a deal whereby we will be able to make two pictures a year for at least five or six years. We have a first refusal on a Blackburn novel called *Devil Daddy* that has just been published, and still have the properties we discussed earlier."

Shortly after the appearance of *NOTHING BUT THE NIGHT*, the National Film Theatre ran two Christopher Lee films called *VAMPIRE* and *EL UMBRACLE*, experimental films made by Spanish director Pedro Portabella. *VAMPIRE* is a semi-documentary account of the filming of Jesus Franco's as yet unreleased *Dracula* film *EL CONDE DRACULA* (see 1:2:40) and both films have received a rather mixed reaction, considered by some to be brilliant and by others to be absolute rubbish. I asked Chris about his reaction to the films and how they were made.

"It's an avant-garde, surrealist approach to film, there's no question about that. This is Portabella's style. He's strongly influenced by Luis Bunuel."

"I did go see *EL UMBRACLE* and as far as I'm concerned no actor could possibly want greater coverage than to be almost entirely alone on the screen and get a chance to sing something. He wanted people to get an idea what my voice sounded like. People were quite startled to see that I really can sing and have a powerful operatic voice. I was pleased with that, although it is not a commercial picture in any way. I often didn't realize that a camera was running, and this is his way of presenting a personality on the screen, not

someone acting but a person. For him, I was the person best capable of expressing what he wanted to put on the screen, whether it was by singing, speaking, moving, walking about or whatever was involved. As a showcase for an actor it was wonderful. It was done in black and white and was somewhat complicated by not having a story, as such. I think the concept of the film was bound up in his own mind and is something I can't really even begin to explain. The whole project was a personal outcry on his part, partly spiritual, partly political, against censorship and the police state. The picture is a curiosity. It was shown at the Metropolitan Museum of Modern Art in New York City and was highly commended. It was regarded as brilliant by "The Village Voice" in America, and the reviewer for "Time Out," a weekly London journal, told me he thought it was a masterpiece.

"*VAMPIRE* was merely his feelings about the use of the vampire in film. It expressed his own impressions of that genre and his own tribute to the people who have appeared in them. I don't think it's meant to be anything more than that. It's probably the more commercial of the two films."

I asked Chris about his involvement and experience in making *POOR DEVIL* which is the pilot for an intended TV series telecast by NBC on February 14 and starring Sammy Davis Jr.

"Sammy has been a great devotee of the fantasy and macabre film. He shows them all the time, so he's very familiar with my work. He decided that for this idea they had of him playing this incompetent demon, I would be the ideal choice to play the devil. It was made at Paramount Studios and I had three wonderful weeks. I'm playing comedy a good deal of the time, some of the time I'm serious and then it's supposed to be slightly scary."

"It gave me an opportunity to work again in an American studio and tremendous exposure as a non-American actor. Fourteen million people will see that show on TV in one night. If it becomes a series, I'll be there for four or five months out of the year to play the devil in each separate story. Out of that will come many opportunities for me to work in American films apart from television and offers great opportunities for Charlemagne. America is the place where you get the money, the action, and the backing and the exposure. It accounts for nearly 50% of the world's film market, whereas Britain is less than 10%. I was interviewed by nearly every newspaperman in California. I was treated superbly well. Never have I received such appreciation, such courtesy, such kindness and good humor as I did on the set at Paramount. I was applauded when I walked on the set, and that's never happened to me in a British studio in all my life. I was accepted as a star which really means something to the Americans, not only the public, but the industry as well. They had marvelous sets and production values, and it cost a million dollars to produce."

It seems at last, within the past few years, that Lee's career has finally blossomed to the point where he is receiving the recognition his talent richly deserves, and as a result he is being offered and is participating in a greater variety of roles and characterizations. True, he is back at Hammer in a role that will probably stand as the hallmark of his career in *DRACULA IS DEAD AND WELL AND LIVING IN LONDON*, but his career has progressed to a point where his participation in this type of film no longer threatens to entrap him exclusively in a morass of unimportant genre roles. In his forthcoming film from British Lion, *THE WICKER MAN*, Lee portrays a muscular Scottish policeman investigating a strange crime on a little island off the Scottish coast who must come to grips with the conflict between the islanders' pagan beliefs and Christianity.



Left: Scenes from *THE LEGEND OF HELL HOUSE*, currently in release from 20th Century Fox. Top: Gayle Hunnicut as Ann. Middle: Director John Hough (right) instructs actors Clive Revill and Roddy McDowall. Bottom: Pamela Franklin as Florence.

SOYLENT GREEN

Dale Winogura spends four days in the life of a Hollywood extra.

I didn't exactly know what I would be in for upon accepting assistant director Jim Boyle's offer to be an extra in the major crowd scenes of MGM's science fiction film, **SOYLENT GREEN**, produced by Walter Seltzer and Russ Thatcher. Originally, my article on the shooting was to objectively report its progress; now, my objectivity is shot all to hell after four grueling days of hard labor and unbelievable strain on body and mind, which I at first thought was going to be just a one-day hiatus.

To begin with, both SEG (Screen Extras Guild) and non-SEG people, or "waivers" as they are called (that's me), had to arise on a cold, dark 6 A.M., drive to MGM, Culver City, backlot #2, and stand in line to receive one's voucher, something of a ticket for entry and pay. Then, you go to the wardrobe department where they give you a drab-colored T-shirt, pants, dull-white caps fresh out of concentration camps, and a dirty old pair of sneakers unless you're already wearing any of these articles. After dressing up, you wander over to the torn up, moth-eaten set that looks vaguely like New York, and stand in line to have your face, hands, and arms plastered with the unappetizing combination of Fuller's earth and vaseline, and sprayed with a water and glycerine mixture to simulate sweat. After all this, one ends up feeling sticky and uncomfortable, looking like a factory worker who hasn't been rained on in months (borrowing a line from **LONELY ARE THE BRAVE**).

But what especially distressed many people outside of the heavy, self-conscious makeup and skimpy wardrobe was the fact that no one could wear jackets or sweaters on account of the extreme heat that was supposed to be existing at this time of the story. Thus, everything was about as physically taxing as it could possibly be for everybody since there was no sun or even an ounce of warmth on the lot for three days. Some relief came at the five-minute breaks, and at about 12 noon especially, when lunch was called, and about five hundred people dash to a much-welcomed hot meal.

After standing in line once more for free coffee, donuts, and Danish to ward off the icy cold, second assistant director Gene Marum speaks to the tremendous crowd of cold, weary, confused people. He informs them of the shocking news that this is not 19th century Russia, but an extremely hot New York day, circa 2022 A.D., at a time when mankind has overpolluted and overpopulated his planet so that life has become unbearable. At this time, there are 40 million people living in New York.

What Mr. Marum didn't tell the crowd were the particulars of the plot. Charlton Heston plays a detective named Thorn, investigating the murder of one of the Soylent Corp. directors, the company that manufactures most of the synthetic food for the entire world's survival. As the film progresses,

Thorn comes to the realization that this is not just another one of the some 137 murders committed in New York City every day, but that it is definitely tied in to the whole worldwide food crisis. There is something about the important food product called Soylent Green that few people know about; the truth, if revealed, would cause earthly panic and disaster.

Back to the set, Monday, October 16th, 1972. The first scenes shot are in a crowded, outdoor market place, set up with tables selling hubcaps, soylent products (french rolls and cookies dyed red, yellow, and blue), sandals made of auto tires, and various cheap odds and ends. Both extreme long shots and close-ups were filmed that day, and very little excitement ensued. During these and other scenes, some people (including myself) had to wear little cloth masks, because for some the air has become unbearable to breathe. These masks would get dirty after constant handling, and one would eventually be breathing in a rather unpleasant odor.

The hardships of the first day were minor compared with the next three days. Unlike myself, some people were giving their time to various charities and worthy causes, while others were recruited from schools and theatre workshops, and a number of people could not even withstand the difficulties of just one day's work. There was to be even greater difficulty when it was announced in the call sheet that the mob riot scenes were to be filmed the next day. Many, like myself, thought it was going to be fun. Fun, my ass.

In these scenes, policeman Kulozik (played by Mike Henry), announces to the mob of people outside a store that the supply of Soylent Green is gone. A large-scale riot ensues, as it always does when there's no more food, and these large, orange-colored garbage-disposal trucks called "scoops" enter the scene, clearing a path by literally scooping up people and dumping them into the back. What we had to do mostly was attempt to escape from the scene, but the press of humanity is so great that all attempts are in vain. While the trucks dumped some very fine stunt men/actors into the hold, the extras shouted and screamed, and shoved, pushed, pulled, and jostled each other with a violence not born of make-believe.

Unfortunately, these scenes were not devoid of jokers. There were the inevitable laughers and smilers who would ruin takes, and that coupled with technical difficulties, made it even harder to get scenes accomplished. The crowd was even harder to manage because the speaker horns were often unsatisfactory, and many extras would continue the scene long after it was cut.

As the crowd battled a line of silver helmeted cops, and desperately tried to escape in fear of these monstrous people-removers, a maniac was on the loose—fortunately, not a real one. Ac-

tor Stephen Young (**JUDD FOR THE DEFENSE**), as the killer, Gilbert, is gunning for Thorn in the rioting mob. In trying to kill the determined cop, he accidentally kills several innocent victims in the crowd. Very carefully rehearsed scenes, mostly one-take jobs, were used, with the victims outfitted with tiny explosive charges connected to a blood capsule, inserted into their clothes, that would spray blood on those next to them when set off.

Through all this havoc, chaos, and batch of endless problems reigned director Richard Fleischer and photographer Richard Kline with admirable cool. Kline had been Fleischer's photographer on **THE BOSTON STRANGLER**, and received an Oscar nomination for photographing **CAMELOT**. Fleischer, with his good humor, strict discipline, and endless patience, is a director's model. He exudes an air of calm and confidence on the rough waves of picture-making that puts everyone at ease. Neither despot or domineering tyrant, Fleischer softly commands a tight ship, making it as trouble-less and happy as he can possibly make it.

Dick Kline's diligent, hard-working energy is inspiring to watch as he meticulously sets up shots with the director, often using three or four cameras for one scene. Especially in the scene where the mob pushes a number of cops through windows of the Soylent Green store, the Fleischer-Kline duo take full advantage of their resources and assets, to make it as visually exciting a scene as they possibly can. Through their efforts, suspension of disbelief became total immersion in nightmare reality for the extras.

In Stanley R. Greenberg's (**SKY-JACKED**) ingenious script, based on Harry Harrison's favorite of his own books, **Make Room! Make Room!**, he describes the mob as "a collective will which expressed nobody's will," and this is what Fleischer and Kline have evidently attempted to achieve, and which should surely prove successful in capturing.

Basic to the atmosphere of the film are the sets, especially the two contrasting apartment sets. One is Thorn's tiny, filthy, book-ridden hovel which he shares with his Book, or research man, Sol Roth, played by the great Edward G. Robinson. The other is the ultra-modern, high-class, sterile abode, inhabited by the murdered executive, Simonsen (Joseph Cotten), his girl,

Right: A scene taken during the filming of **SOYLENT GREEN**, directed by Richard Fleischer and based on the novel by science fiction writer Harry Harrison, **Make Room! Make Room!**, and now in release from MGM. Here, director Richard Fleischer confers with Heston on location at the Southern California Edison plant which doubles as the Soylent Synthetic Food plant in the film, surrounded by barbed wire and armed guards to keep out the starving populace.





Left: Charlton Heston plays detective Thorn, in a darkly pessimistic vision of Earth's future. **SOYLENT GREEN**, now in release from MGM. Here, Thorn attempts to pick his way through to his dingy apartment, amid people sleeping in the hallways and on the stairs.

Shirl (or furniture as they are called, played by the lovely Leigh Taylor-Young), and the bodyguard, Tab, enacted by Chuck Connors. Tab's roommate, Martha, is portrayed by Paula Kelly.

There is also a Police Headquarters, hectic and dingy, run by a tough, good-natured fellow named Hatcher, played by Brock Peters; a Cathedral, fully packed with sleeping people on mattresses instead of benches; and a beautiful, sinister place called Home which I won't reveal. Full of detail and imagination, the art director's prolific taste and talent are clearly evident.

Locations used included the Sports Arena, and The Hyperion and Southern California Edison plants in El Segundo used for the Soylent factory, whose shocking significance in the story I refuse to give away.

Anyway, on the fourth day, the sun came out, but the hot quartz lights made the day almost as unbearable as before. The makeup maniacs kept spraying the crowd silly with their water sprinklers for sweat, and on top of this just about everybody got a little sunburned by the end of the day. Not as many riot scenes were filmed, but some establishing shots of New York were done, to set up for the depressed, claustrophobic feeling of the film, and for this there was simply a lot of walking and milling around, no smiling as usual (What's there to smile about?).

But it was not all frowns. On October 3, there was a little birthday party set up for Charlton Heston, where everyone sang "Happy Birthday!" and ate a cake with an iced picture on the surface, depicting Moses holding the Ten Commandments. There was a general atmosphere of good humor and frivolity on the set in spite of the labor and tensions, which illustrates how effective a confident director can be in controlling the atmosphere on the sound stage. All in all, it was 4 happy, barely endurable, backbreaking shooting days.

After crowd shooting wrapped up on the fourth day, at 5 P. M. as usual, Gene Marum graciously thanked everyone for being so professional and patient during these trying times. I could not help but look back on the four days, remembering the title of a war movie directed by Richard Fleischer in 1956, which aptly conveys my feelings about the whole adventure—**BETWEEN HEAVEN AND HELL!**

Right: Scenes from **SOYLENT GREEN**, a futuristic drama set in the overpopulated earth of the near future, currently in release from MGM. Top: Charlton Heston as Thorn, a detective investigating the murder of one of the Soylent Corp. directors, the company that manufactures most of the synthetic food for the entire world's survival. Edward G. Robinson plays Sol Roth, Heston's book or research man. Here in the detective's tiny, filthy, book-ridden hovel, Robinson looks tearfully at Heston's stolen groceries, in sadness of what mankind has come to. 2nd: Thorn examines Simonsen's dead body (Joseph Cotten) as the man's bodyguard (Chuck Connors) stands watchfully near at hand. 3rd: Heston's wounds are taken care of after a savage encounter with Tab (Chuck Connors). Bottom: A subdued scene, as Leigh Taylor-Young attempts to soothe Heston's wounds, both physical and spiritual. **SOYLENT GREEN** is directed by Richard Fleischer who successfully handled science fiction material in Disney's 1956 version of **20,000 LEAGUES UNDER THE SEA** and again for 20th Century Fox in 1966 with **FANTASTIC VOYAGE**.



COMING

Following is a rundown of the horror, fantasy and science fiction films now filming, or in preparation, as well as notes on those in release. Titles listed in previous issues are indicated by (0:00) at the end of the article, giving a reference where additional information can be found. The first digit is the volume number, the second digit is the issue number, and the remaining digits are the page number on which the earlier listing can be found.

AFTER SHOCK deals with a world wide earthquake and subsequent geodesic exploration of the former coastline of California in the year 2000 which unearths some startling facts. The Ted V. Mikels production is being budgeted at \$750,000. The screenplay by Roger Ernest will be filmed on location at several California sites. Mikels has produced only poverty-row quickies in the past, including **THE UNDERTAKER** and **HIS PALS** and **THE ASTRO-ZOMBIES**...

BLOOD CULT OF SHANGRI-LA is a D and B production to be filmed in the Philippines to cash in on the interest created by Ross Hunter's lavish musical production of **LOST HORIZON**. Terry Becker directs the Wes DePue production starring John Considine...

COUNT DOWNE has been completed starring Ringo Starr as a vampire and directed by Freddie Francis who is well known for his horror films for both Hammer Films and Amicus. No release has been set for the film which also stars Freddie Jones...

CRAZE is the new title for producer Herman Cohen's **THE INFERNAL IDOL** which began filming at Shepperton Studios earlier this year with Jack Palance, Diana Dors and Martin Potter toplined. Horror vet Freddie Francis is directing. Cohen was responsible for the abysmal **TROG** a few seasons back as well as several grade-Z AIP quickies in the mid-fifties (2:145)...

DEATHDAY will be made by Amicus starring Peter Cushing, Vincent Price, Christopher Lee and Robert Quarry providing that the contracts can be negotiated. This is the same film which AIP announced for filming under the title of **DEVILDAY** based on the novel by Angus Hall (1:143)...



Christopher Lee as Vlad Tepes Dracula, the historical progenitor of the Dracula legend in Calvin Floyd's documentary **IN SEARCH OF DRACULA**, based on the scholarly non-fiction work by Raymond McNally and Radu Florescu published by Time-Life Books.

DEATHLINE is a cheap little horror film that is doing boffo business in London at the New Victoria cinema where it became the third largest grosser in the cinema's history. With a production tab of only £80,000, it is bound to be highly profitable for its producers, Jay Kanter and Alan Ladd Jr. The setting of the film is the London Underground, specifically Russell Square Station, where a plague-infested madman who bites rats to death, is also going around putting the bite on isolated passengers stranded at the station late at night. Director Gary Sherman appears to have had difficulty in making up his mind whether the film is horror or comedy, and the critics have almost unanimously labeled it as sick. Donald Pleasance plays a comic police inspector investigating the case and Christopher Lee is providing marquee value in a short scene that was shot in one Saturday morning. This nauseous mixture of gore and humor, with this grotesque madman running amuck mumbling "Mind the doors" (London Underground jargon) as he mutilates his victims in luscious Technicolor has that "crude, poverty-row vitality" that has captured the public's fancy. No U.S. release has been set...

DISCIPLE OF DEATH stars Mike Raven as The Stranger, a damned soul unwittingly recalled from the grave in 18th century England. His appearance sets off a chain of startling events, disappearances and murders and only the village Parson, armed with three magic weapons supplied

by a learned Jewish cabalist is able to resist his power. Raven has appeared in **LUST FOR A VAMPIRE** and **I, MONSTER** and co-stars with Virginia Wetherall who was amply on view in Kubrick's **A CLOCKWORK ORANGE**. The film is written and produced by Churton Fairman and Tom Parkinson and is directed by Tom Parkinson. Avco Embassy has acquired the film for U.S. release...

THE FINAL PROGRAMME is to be directed by Robert Fuest at Elstree Studios, starring Jon Finch and Jenny Runacre. The film is based on a book by science fiction author Michael Moorcock about Jerry Cornelius, a cult hero and contains elements of science fiction, sorcery and fantasy. Fuest directed **WUTHERING HEIGHTS** and the Dr. Phibes films for AIP...

IN SEARCH OF DRACULA is a documentary by director Calvin Floyd based on the book of the same name by Raymond McNally and Radu Florescu which traces the historical roots of the Dracula legend as well as its filmic interpretations. The 60 minute, color production of Stockholm's Aspekt Films also features actor Christopher Lee in the triple role of Prince Vlad (the original Dracula), Dracula, and as himself as the film's narrator. Christopher Lee made his first trip to the homeland of Dracula, Transylvania (Romania), in the Autumn of 1971 where the picture was shot on location. The book upon which the film is based is published by Time-Life Books and Columbia University Press. Floyd's film, although documentary, strives for suspense and mystery in its mood and style...

KRONOS is a new kind of vampire film from Hammer Films produced by Albert Fennell and Brian Clemens. The hero of the title is a swashbuckler who sets out to destroy evil wherever and whenever it is to be found. Filmed in the idiom of the western with a third of its schedule devoted to outdoor location work, Captain Kronos, late of the Imperial Guard, and his companion Professor Grost deal with an outbreak of vampirism in a small village. The script is by producer Clemens who also directed. The film has been completed, although no U.S. release has been set, and stars Jack Carson, Shane Briant, Horst Janson, Caroline Munro and Ian Hendry. The Fennell/Clemens team was responsible for the popular and critically acclaimed television series **THE AVENGERS**...

PLUMED SERPENT is the title of the latest screenplay from the prolific pen of Nigel Kneale, the creator of the Quatermass television plays and theatrical films, to go into production in the fall. Kneale is also work-



Scenes from Ray Harryhausen's forthcoming work from Columbia Pictures, **SINBAD'S GOLDEN VOYAGE**. Tom Baker, who made his debut as Rasputin in Franklin Schaffner's **NICHOLAS AND ALEXANDRIA** plays the evil-wizard figure (top and bottom). Caroline Munro provides femme appeal (middle) in the Charles H. Schneer production. Filming under the direction of Gordon Hessler has been completed and the long and arduous post-production effects work under the supervision of Ray Harryhausen is underway. John Phillip Law plays Sinbad. Release is not expected until Fall.

Left: Caroline Munro is threatened by a vampire attacker in Hammer Films' **KRONOS**, written and directed by Brian Clemens. No U.S. release has been set. Right: Mike Raven as The Stranger in **DISCIPLE OF DEATH**, an effective occult thriller currently in release by Avco Embassy.



ing on a further teleplay based on the Quatermass character for the BBC, after a span of almost fifteen years since the telecast of his last play "Quatermass and the Pit" in 1959...

WELCOME TO ARROW BEACH is an off-beat original screenplay by Wallace Bennett and Jack Gross Jr. which deals with cannibalism and human bodies wrapped up in the fridge. Filming on location in Santa Barbara for producer Jack Cushingham, the film stars Sammy Davis Jr. and his wife, and is being directed by actor Laurence Harvey who also stars...

WESTWORLD is described by MGM as a "far-out adventure story." The original screenplay is by science fiction author Michael Crichton who is also signed to direct. Crichton is best known for **The Andromeda Strain** which was filmed by Robert Wise in 1971...

LETTERS

In issue 2:3, the French title of TOWER OF THE SCREAMING VIRGINS was LA TOUR DE NESLE and was reviewed at 90 minutes after a March 1969 Paris premiere. Its German title was DER TURM DER VERBOTENEN LIEBE. The French review considers it a German film of 1968.

NORMAN MILLER
116 Lenox Rd, Brooklyn, NY 11226

A film which may be released soon here in Canada is SHADOW OF DRACULA. The film was done by a group of students and neighborhood people in Toronto under a fifteen thousand dollar grant from the federal government's Opportunities for Youth Program. It is sixty minutes long and is now in the process of being edited.

CANNIBAL GIRLS, another Canadian production has been sold to AIP for U.S. and Canadian distribution. The film deals with a tribe of black cannibal women.

THE NEPTUNE FACTOR has been completed in Toronto and on location in the Bahamas and should be at theatres by late spring or early summer. Numerous undersea monsters are featured in what the "Toronto Star" magazine called an effort to make an undersea 2001.

GARY R. WILLIAMS
436 Parliament St #1, Toronto 225, ONT

CFQ's interest in largely neglected "minor" films is welcome, and one I sincerely wish you would look into is 1961's CARNIVAL OF SOULS, an extremely disturbing low-budget masterpiece which also works on many levels.

LARRY KING
Route 1 Box 240, Steelville, MO 65565

Thought I might mention it since your review doesn't say anything about it: the film you review as FRIGHT showed here as NIGHT LEGS, a totally meaningless title.

NED BROOKS
713 Paul St, Newport News, VA 23605

Re: Jerry Goldsmith interview in 2:2. The coverage as printed is both incorrect and not fully informative. His statement re the score for PLANET OF THE APES: "...the Austrian Ballet is using it in their production of Othello." should read Australian Ballet!

Here is what Dame Peggy van Praagh said about it: "The new ballet was originally devised for a graduation performance at the Australian Ballet school in Melbourne. It was a private performance and we just used a tape recording for the music, as there were some unusual instruments used for the sound track of the film. So we didn't think we could use it for the stage. Then, when I was in Hollywood I met Jerry Goldsmith. He agreed to redo some parts for the ballet. 20th Century Fox was flattered by our use of the music and they have promised to present us with the unusual percussion instruments which we will need." From "Sydney Morning Herald," March 27, 1971.

Also for your Errata List: in issue 1:1, page 12, the man in the bottom photo is C. Henry Gordon, not Gustav von Seyffertitz.

JOCK MCKENNA
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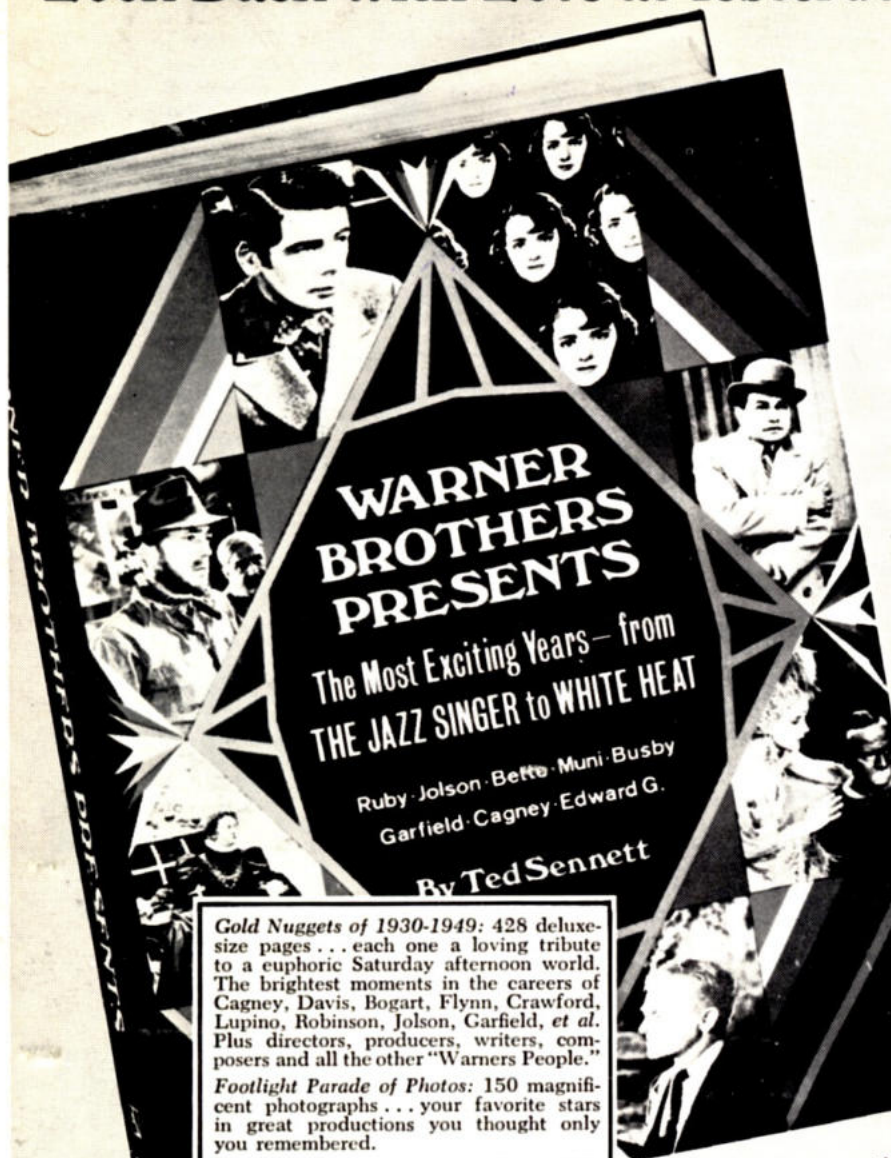
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