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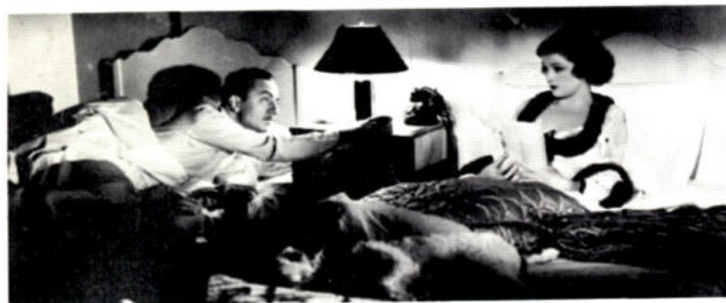
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Christopher Lee
Issue

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The Dracula of modern times is an actor whose varied screen career features more genre roles than any other in film history. The authors attempt to trace the progress and evolution of Lee's career, paying particular attention to his little-known, non-genre roles, using quotations from the actor's numerous published interviews over the years.

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Wonders to come in *THE GOLDEN VOYAGE OF SINBAD* from Columbia Pictures: Background

VOLUME 3

NUMBER 1



James Robert Parish is one of the most active writers on the cinema with numerous film books to his credit, including *Karloff: A Pictorial Study*, *The Cinema of Edward G. Robinson*, *The Fox Girls*, *The Paramount Pretties*, *The Great Movie Series*, and *Flynn: A Pictorial Study*. He has been responsible for such reference volumes as *The American Movie Reference Book*, *The Sound Era*, *The Emmy Awards: A Pictorial History and TV Movies*. A New York based freelance writer, he is a graduate of the University of Pennsylvania and is a member of the New York Bar with a law degree from University of Pennsylvania Law School. Upcoming film volumes by Parish include *The MGM Stock Company*, *The Golden Era*, *Slapstick Queens*, *Good Dames*, *Actors Work On Television* and *The George Raft File*.

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Christopher Lee's standing in the hierarchy of the monster movie world is still very much in flux. Although he has performed in a steady output of ghoulish roles since coming to the genre in 1957 in *CURSE OF FRANKENSTEIN*, Lee is not regarded, even by the contemporary generation of horror film fans, as being in the same league with horror masters Boris Karloff, Bela Lugosi or Lon Chaney, Jr. A strange situation for an actor whose performances in this brand of thrill movie have often been rated superior to the classic portrayals of the masters.

Although Lee has essayed Count Dracula on screen more than any other actor, it is Bela Lugosi who is synonymous with that role. Even John Carradine, who played the vampire on three occasions, usually comes to mind before the English actor. Though Lee has made five recent films based on Fu Manchu, it is Boris Karloff's portrayal of the oriental villain nearly four decades ago which remains in the minds of movie goers. The same holds true for the character of the enshrouded Mummy, which Karloff performed once in 1932 and Lon Chaney, Jr. did three times in the 1940s. Both actors are more closely associated with this role than is Lee, who did it most recently in 1959. Lee, of course, is lost among the list of actors who have donned the heavy makeup of Dr. Frankenstein's Monster, all taking a back seat to Boris Karloff's inimitable interpretation of the role in the Universal films of the 1930s.

Why then is Christopher Lee so continuously active in horror films? The dearth of other name-tright stars on the international scene is one reason. Another, more basic rationale, is that Lee is a fine craftsman who adds a strong sense of reality to his performances, which he takes seriously, projecting as well a relatively high degree of sex appeal and charm. And like Lugosi, who in the 1930s would go from "class" productions to poverty row quickies, Lee has always made himself available to producers who are willing to pay him a stated sum for taking lead assignments in low-budget films like *EL CASTILLO DE FU MANCHU*, as well as meaningless cameo-sized appearances in films like *SCREAM*

AND SCREAM AGAIN. On this subject, Lee once remarked: "It's really the story of my life, that I've done so many pictures I didn't want to because I have a family and responsibilities and you can't live on air."

Now past fifty years of age, Lee wants very badly to shed himself of the horror moniker and branch out into other types of film roles. Though he makes numerous forays into other genres, as in *JULIUS CAESAR* and *THE PRIVATE LIFE OF SHERLOCK HOLMES*, the actor remains firmly typed in the horror film field and the bulk of his celluloid emoting comes in horror films of ever-varying quality. At this point in his career, it seems unlikely that he can successfully break out of the lucrative syndrome, fate and talent have locked him into, a situation which many of Lee's own sado-masochistic alter egos on the screen would find terribly amusing.

Christopher Frank Carandini Lee was born May 27, 1922 at 51, Lower Belgrave Street, London, the son of a Colonel in the King's Royal Rifles. He made his first stage appearance at the age of nine in the annual school play at his preparatory school, Summerfields, located in Oxford. For the next four years, he appeared in the usual run of academic amateur productions, along with schoolmate Patrick Macnee.

Despite a strong military tradition in Lee's family, he attended Wellington College, becoming a classical scholar. After leaving Wellington college, he had business connections with a United States shipping company before he volunteered for war service. During World War II, he served in liaison with the Rhodesian police and with the R. A. F. took flight training in Rhodesia and was then based in South Africa. Later he was transferred to Special Operations in S. O. E. Intelligence, and there acquired his knowledge of several languages, which would prove so helpful years later as a multi-lingual actor.

After being demobilized from military service at the conclusion of World War II, Lee was at loose ends how to progress with a civilian career. It was his cousin, Count Niccolò Carandini, the Italian ambassador in London, who suggested Lee take up acting professionally. Lee was po-

Christopher Lee

The Dracula of modern times is an actor whose varied screen career includes more genre roles than any other in film history.

A career article by *James Robert Parish* & *Michael R. Pitts*

lately informed by the head of Denham Studios in London that he would never make a successful actor because he was too tall. Undaunted, his cousin made arrangements for him to meet Del Guidice, also an Italian, and the head of Two Cities Films, a division of the Rank Organisation. New faces were needed to fill the ranks, and he was awarded a seven year stock contract.

Lee's rise to fame and success in the acting profession was a slow and unsteady process. Because of his above average height of 6'4" and his vaguely foreign appearance, owing to the parentage on his mother's side, an old Italian family that could trace its roots directly back to the Frankish King Charlemagne, it took Lee many years to find his proper niche in the industry. At an early age he received vocal training which has led him over the years to dabble in opera, not as a serious performer but as a devoted fan. His record collection features some 110 recorded operas. His leisure time is spent at golf—he has a handicap of only three, and has played with some of the world's leading professionals at charitable events—and he is an avid reader with a library of more than 1200 books. Historical biography is a favorite subject, but so too is the macabre, science fiction—particularly keen on Bradbury—and fantasy. One of his favorite works is J. R. R. Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings* trilogy "because it is pure fantasy at its most perfect," said Lee, "and this has always been my favorite kind of literature." Lee fancies himself playing Aragorn, the archetypal heroic figure of the piece—he would probably be cast as Sauron, the satanic figure in Tolkien's Middle Earth—but he feels that only a Walt Disney feature cartoon could possibly do justice to the work. He has an avid and not totally professional interest in the film world, and keeps abreast of major trends and motion pictures. With his beautiful wife he is a common sight at London premieres and National Film Theatre Programs. His favorite film is Stanley Kubrick's *PATHOS OF GLORY*. Today, Dracula rides to and from his work for Hammer Films at Elstree Studios in a sleek, grey, Rolls Royce Silver Cloud, and can think back, perhaps with some fondness and nostalgia, to the days of

Volkswagens, bit parts and stunt work, and his early days as a contract player for the Rank Organisation. In this article, we attempt to retrace that path and enumerate not only the actor's genre roles but also his wide and varied participation in all manner of films. In this respect we have listed the dates of film titles to be the year of actual production for the sake of continuity.

Lee made his film debut for director Terence Young in *CORRIDOR OF MIRRORS* (1947) in a bit part. The film starred Eric Portman as an elegant, middle-aged esthete, who is obsessed by the woman in a 400 year-old painting. He imagines that a young girl, played by Edana Romney, is a reincarnation of that woman and that he is the reincarnation of her long-dead lover. Out of his delusion, Portman creates a morbidly stagnant air of the past for the two of them in his exquisitely furnished home. The somewhat offbeat story of the film set the tone for Lee's future screen career, although no one would have noticed in 1947 from his inauspicious film premiere in the minor role of Charles, with only one line of dialogue. Lee can be seen seated at a table in a nightclub scene, turning to his companion and saying: "Take a look—standing at the entrance, Lord Byron." Christopher Lee had become a film actor at the age of 25. That same year he played one of the hangers-on in the entourage of film producer Charles Goldner in *ONE NIGHT WITH YOU* (1947), a nondescript comedy about singers on their way to star in a movie musical, who become stranded without money and must work for their passage.

The Rank Organisation wanted Lee to have experience before the camera and he appeared in eleven films in his first eighteen months in the industry. His parts in these features were generally small ones, as in *HAMLET* (1948), in which he plays a palace guard who shouts "Lights." Ironically, Peter Cushing also appeared in the film, as Osric, the strutting courtier, an actor who himself would become closely associated with horror roles and who would star again, and again with Lee, although the two of them never met during this film in 1948.

In *SCOTT OF THE ANTARCTIC* (1948), a docu-

mentary-like recreation of England's ill-fated expedition to the South Pole, Lee played Bernard Day, a pipe-smoking Australian who was in charge of the motor sleigh. Lee found himself in good company here, with fellow actors John Mills and Kenneth Moore. He can be seen briefly as an uncredited extra in *MY BROTHER'S KEEPER* (1948), a story of two handcuffed prisoners pursued by the police, a basic formula which has been redone many times. In *TROTTIE TRUE* (1948), a romantic period story of a music hall girl, played by Joan Kent, who marries into the nobility, Lee was in for the light, whimsical role of a stage door Johnny, who is seen escorting Constance Smith. The film was released in the U. S. by Universal as *THE GAY LADY*.

In *SARABAND FOR DEAD LOVERS* (1948) Lee was shunted off into a brief appearance as a court dandy riding across an expanse, because of his height (6'4") and vague resemblance to the film's star, Stewart Granger. Lee's appearance in *SONG FOR TOMORROW* (1948) was his first film for director Terence Fisher, the director who would bring Lee and himself to international attention for their stylish revival of the horror film genre nearly twenty years later in 1957.

Occasionally, along with the bit roles and the walk-ons, Lee was given a featured role as in *PENNY AND THE POWNALL CASE* (1948), a low budget Nazi manhunt thriller in which Lee played Jonathan Blair, the leader of a continental underground organization assisting in the escape of German war criminals. In this, the first of Lee's featured roles, he is prophetically cast as the heavy. This amazingly short film, running only 47 minutes, was reviewed in the "British Monthly Film Bulletin" which singled out the performances by saying: "The comparatively unknown cast proves more than equal to the demands made upon them." A featured role, however, was quite the exception in Lee's early screen career. Although he constantly strove for bigger and better roles, he was up against several disadvantages. As he put it: "Being 6'4" was a terrible disadvantage to me. I was the tallest actor in the country. I am also not entirely British in appearance. Although I am English I am of Italian extraction. I



Good times together on the set of *THE GORGON* (1964), for Hammer Films.

INTRODUCTION

by Peter Cushing

In May 1972 Christopher Lee and I made a psychological Thriller, entitled *NOTHING BUT THE NIGHT*, our 18th picture together, a partnership spanning some fifteen years. It was fitting that this "Coming of Age Anniversary" should be celebrated by the first film under his own banner—Charlemagne Productions, Ltd.

One of the greatest compliments any actor can be paid is to hear people say "...it all looks so easy." It is not.

To reach this stage in his career, and maintain his position and enormous popularity, has cost him much in hard work, dogged determination, resolution and sheer drive, sometimes in the face of ruthless competition and misunderstandings, apart from facing and learning all the technical difficulties presented in the art of film acting—yet still making it look "all so easy." The art which conceals art.

Of commanding stature (some 6'4" tall), he uses his physical presence to great advantage, moving with grace and authority. Some are awed when first meeting him in person. But they would do well to know that beneath this outward aloofness and dignity lies a very human being: sensitive, warm, and oft times suffering from nerves which he goes to great lengths to conceal.

Among many accomplishments—perhaps unknown to his public—he is a Greek Scholar, he possesses a magnificent bass singing voice, a wonderful knack for impersonation, has command of at least six languages, is an expert swordsman and superb amateur Golfer. Couple all this with a delicious sense of humor and wit—plus a deep personal kindness—then you will be getting somewhat closer to the real personality of this truly remarkable Man.

He holds strong views about the business in general and, in particular, about the misuse of the word "Horror" as applied to some of his films, rightly preferring the more subtle and correct term "Fantasy," for that, indeed, is what they are.

Unstintingly, Christopher gives his public one hundred percent of himself and his talent, but full use has not yet been made of his range. Knowing him as I do, it will not remain hidden under a bushel forever.

I am privileged to count him as a dear friend as well as a valued and respected professional colleague.

Peter Cushing

Peter Cushing has appeared with Christopher Lee in: *CURSE OF FRANKENSTEIN* (1957), *DRACULA* (1958), *THE HOUND OF THE BASKERVILLES* (1959), *THE MUMMY*, *THE GORGON* (1964), *DR. TERROR'S HOUSE OF HORRORS*, *SHE, THE SKULL* (1966), *NIGHT OF THE BIG HEAT* (1967), *ONE MORE TIME* (1970), *I, MONSTER* (1971), *THE CREEPING FLESH*, *PANICO EN EL TRANSIBERIANO*, *DRACULA A.D. 1972*, *NOTHING BUT THE NIGHT* (1972) and *DRACULA IS DEAD AND WELL AND LIVING IN LONDON*. Each appeared in *HAMLET* (1948), *SCREAM AND SCREAM AGAIN* (1969) and *THE HOUSE THAT DRIPPED BLOOD* (1970), but in these films they did not appear in scenes together.

look, I suppose, foreign to some people to a certain extent. That meant that I didn't represent in the eyes of the distributors or the eyes of the audience a typical Englishman—so they told me."

Lee's second full year in the film business, 1949, saw his appearance in only two minor bit parts. In *THEY WERE NOT DIVIDED* (1949), a World War II story playing up the cooperation and comradeship of the British and Americans, Lee appeared briefly as a tank commander whose vehicle is destroyed in combat. He played a newspaper reporter in *PRELUDE TO FAME* (1949), covering the overnight success of a young Italian singer (Jeremy Spencer) and how he is nearly destroyed by it. Of these early cinema days, Lee has said: "I didn't have anything to do. I never did in those days. I was just around and it was useful experience simply by learning, by being in front of the camera."

After a large number of films during his first two years as a screen actor, albeit in very minor roles, by 1950 the work began to thin out considerably, a year in which Lee appeared in only one film that saw release. A general depression caused by the success of television and other economic factors had hit the film industry. Despite the bleak outlook, Lee was fortunate enough to land a minor role in *CAPTAIN HORATIO HORN-BLOWER* (1950), his first appearance in an American (Warner Bros) produced film, and his most prestigious and widely exhibited film appearance up to that date. Christopher Lee played the Captain of a Spanish Man O' War, captured by Captain Hornblower in a surprise raiding party at night because a direct confrontation with the much larger Spanish ship would have been disastrous. Lee appeared opposite star Gregory Peck in the film for producer/director Raoul Walsh, and is wounded in the arm during a rousing swordfight in which he is, naturally, defeated by Captain Hornblower.

VALLEY OF EAGLES (1951) was Lee's last picture under his Rank Organisation contract. In it, he played a detective in a rather contrived chase adventure in Lapland, involving an inventor's stolen secret for extracting power from sound waves. By this time, the industry was beginning to suffer from the prevailing economic conditions, and Lee was part of the excess baggage discarded in the studio's tightening-up policies. His contract was not renewed. As a freelance artist, Lee managed to find a few scattered movie assignments as in *PAUL TEMPLE RETURNS* (1952), based on the radio serial by Frances Durbridge, in which Lee played one of the numerous suspects in this routine murder mystery, and in *BABES IN BAGDAD* (1952), an Arabian Nights quickie directed by Edgar G. Ulmer on the slide. In this vehicle for Paulette Goddard, Lee played a Slave Trader in old Bagdad who is seen leading his harem of merchandise about the streets on a golden chain. And then... nothing. So Lee, in need of eating money, took a post as a floor walker in Simpson's of Piccadilly and occasionally worked in their export department as an interpreter. His salary was eight pounds a week.

His return to pictures occurred as a result of his obtaining work as a stand-in for Burt Lancaster in costume tests being filmed by director Robert Siodmak at Teddington Studios for *THE CRIMSON PIRATE* (1952). The director then offered Lee a tiny role as a Spaniard in the swash-buckler, in which he has at least a rather spectacular death scene, falling down a flight of steps after being stabbed.

Once back into motion pictures, Lee managed to wangle screen assignments here and there, as for example, playing artist Georges Seurat in one of the incidental Parisian cafe scenes in *MOULIN ROUGE* (1952), directed by John Huston, and as the band leader in *INNOCENTS IN PARIS* (1953), a slapstick comedy filmed on location in France.

To supplement his income and to gain more screen exposure and acting experience, Lee drifted into the burgeoning British television field. Some of the early series he appeared in

Background Right: *DRACULA HAS RISEN FROM THE GRAVE* (1968), Lee's third appearance in the series for Hammer Films. In recent years, the actor has lost interest in appearing in Hammer's Dracula films because the studio has ceased to produce them with any degree of intelligence.

were WILLIAM TELL, HANS CHRISTIAN ANDERSON, FOREIGN LEGION, COLONEL MARCH OF SCOTLAND YARD (in his first appearances with Boris Karloff), SAILOR OF FORTUNE, ERROL FLYNN THEATRE, THE GAY CAVALIER, SCARLET PIMPERNEL, O.S.S., TALES OF THE VIKING and IVANHOE. He also acted in a number of episodes of the dramatic anthology series DOUGLAS FAIRBANKS PRESENTS, some of which were pasted together into features and released to British theatres, including THE TRIANGLE (1953), THE DEATH OF MICHAEL TURBIN (1954) and DESTINATION MILAN (1954). In THE TRIANGLE, Lee played a German student at university who challenges an American student to a duel over a disputed love interest. The American, having been challenged, is allowed to choose weapons and produces two tablets, one of which is impregnated with poison. Lee has only a small bit-part in THE DEATH OF MICHAEL TURBIN, as an Eastern European border guard who looks the other way to permit the escape of a political fugitive. In DESTINATION MILAN, Lee appears as a theatrical agent, attempting to sign a circus performer to a contract. FINAL COLUMN (1955) is yet another patchwork of British video episodes in which Lee has a featured role as a newspaper employee who is blackmailing his editor. Although these features were nothing more than two or three unrelated television shows spliced together, they often gave Lee a chance to tackle more substantial roles than were currently available to him in theatrical film work.

More minuscule screen parts were to follow. In THE WARRIORS (1954), a period drama set in Edwardian England and starring Errol Flynn, Lee was permitted to excel in stunt work, particularly in an elaborate dueling sequence with the star. He often supplemented his acting income during this period by appearing as an extra or doing stunt work, even in films in which he appeared in speaking roles. In THAT LADY (1955), an historical drama of palace intrigue at the court of King Philip II of Spain, Lee did several extra and stunting bits as well as the role of the Captain of the King's Guard. In his best scene, with leading lady Olivia de Havilland, he has been sent by the King to put her under arrest and angrily protests to her that the task is an unhappy duty not of his own choosing.

It was during this period that Lee made his first horror film, the unrecognized but taut psychological drama ALIAS JOHN PRESTON (1955), directed by David MacDonald. In it, Lee appears in the title role of a personable young man who seeks psychiatric relief from a series of recurring nightmares in which he murders a young woman, nightmares which turn out to have a frightening significance for his leading lady, Betta St. John. Much of the film's effectiveness results from its being edited to a very terse and tense 66 minutes.

In 1956, Lee appeared in a Scala Theatre production of Herman Melville's MOBY DICK, filmed at the Hackney Empire Studios and directed by Orsen Welles, who also played the role of Captain Ahab. Lee was Flack, the young third mate aboard the whaler Pequod, in a cast that included Patrick McGowan, Kenneth Williams and Joan Plowright. The telefeature was never shown theatrically due to the competition from the John Huston film in release at the same time, although it had some exposure on American television.

During this period, Lee's versatile knowledge of languages came into use. He was a Spaniard in BATTLE OF THE RIVER PLATE (1956), a German soldier in PRIVATE'S PROGRESS (1956), and the Arab Governor of the Sudan, in brownface, in STORM OVER THE NILE (1956), the fourth film version of A. E. W. Mason's novel *Four Feathers*. And he managed to use his relatively unknown and unused talent for singing in FORTUNE IS A WOMAN (1956), in the small part of a Welsh miner who becomes a pop singer. In one scene, Lee is seen playing a recording of himself on the phonograph. In PORT AFRIQUE (1956), he had the small role of a local artist who is suspected of murder, the other major suspects being fellow performers Pier Angeli, James Hayter, and Dennis Price.

Though much of his footage as submarine Captain Rakes in COCKLESHILL HEROES (1956) for Jose Ferrer landed on the cutting room floor, his part as Gil Rossi, the big game hunter in George Marshall's BEYOND MOMBASA (1956) was a

large one, with co-star billing, and the role Lee considers his first meaty assignment after a decade in the film business.

Roles in better quality films began to come along, as Lee appeared with Richard Burton in Nicholas Ray's BITTER VICTORY (1957), concerning World War II combat on the African front, filmed in Libya. Although in good acting company, the background role of English Sergeant Birney was a small one and offered no artistic satisfaction due to a difference of opinion over interpretation with the film's director. From his own war experience, Lee felt he knew how a Sergeant of the Brigade of Guards would act and talk, but he was not permitted to give a performance that was accurate or believable. "It was a bit of a nightmare," Lee confesses. "I don't look back on it with any degree of pleasure whatsoever." In two other war related roles that year, he played a German police officer in ILL MET BY MOONLIGHT (1957), NIGHT AMBUSH in its U.S. release a year later, and in THE TRAITOR (1957) he appeared as a German resistance fighter who is suspected of betraying his superior. The latter was picked up for release by Allied Artists in the U.S. in 1961 and they attempted to cash in on Lee's newfound popularity in horror films by retitling it THE ACCURSED, although in all respects it was a perfectly conventional entry in the murder-mystery-in-the-mansion genre.

At about this time the word was out that Hammer Films was scouting about for an actor to portray the creature in their remake of Mary Shelley's Frankenstein. Lee's agent suggested that he go see Anthony Hinds, the head of the project. "I thought," explains Lee, "well, I'm not getting very far appearing as myself, so I will appear, if you like, not as myself...unrecognizable." The motivation was a lucky one, for after only an interview he got the role without even a screentest. No doubt, Lee's above average height was a deciding factor, as it had been with Boris Karloff a quarter of a century earlier. Looking back on this lucky bit of casting Lee remarked: "I never imagined I would follow in the steps of Boris Karloff and Bela Lugosi, whose films I had seen as a boy before the war. I certainly don't regret it."

CURSE OF FRANKENSTEIN (1957) was produced on a limited budget of less than \$250,000, but grossed many millions in worldwide release, and sent Hammer Films and Lee, off on a long career in the screen macabre. Lee gave a well modulated portrayal of the creature in the color feature, though his facial makeup left much to be desired. (The original and well-known Jack Pierce conception of the creature used in the 1931 version was copyrighted by Universal Pictures). Despite the springboard to success the film has given Lee, he considers it "a terrible film."

But, at the time, CURSE OF FRANKENSTEIN was just another picture, and Frankenstein's monster was just another role, his 36th motion picture at the age of 35 in what had been, up to now, a relatively undistinguished screen career. He went back to work as usual, in what had the promise of being another unending succession of minor supporting roles. In THE TRUTH ABOUT WOMEN (1957), an episodic catalog of the amorous remembrances of Laurence Harvey as told to his future son-in-law, Lee appeared in the French segment as Francois and the husband to Eva Gabor. Lee was more prominent as the evil Marquis St. Evremonde in the Rank Organisation's color remake of Charles Dickens's A TALE OF TWO CITIES (1958). In this film, Lee has been compared favorably to Basil Rathbone who appeared in the same role in MGM's 1935 version. Lee's Marquis is more youthful than the Dickens character, and is used in the film to symbolize the evil and corrupt old order, and with Lee's spectacular assassination and death scene, the birth of the French Revolution. Lee was a standout in this small but important role.

At this point in time, Christopher Lee's acting career could have taken three distinct paths: 1) he could have sunk back into oblivion, like so many other actors who had played Frankenstein's monster, and continued to work in small, unimportant character roles, 2) he could have used the prominence and success of his participation in CURSE OF FRANKENSTEIN to secure a continuing variety of important character parts, like his recent performance as the Marquis St. Evremonde in A TALE OF TWO CITIES, eventually to

emerge as an important international star (this is, in effect, the course taken by the career of Oliver Reed, an actor who came into prominence when he appeared as the werewolf in Hammer Films' CURSE OF THE WEREWOLF (1961)), or 3) he could continue to participate in and specialize in horror film roles, following in the footsteps of performers like Lon Chaney, Boris Karloff, Vincent Price, et. al. Lee quite naturally was aiming for the second path, but in 1958 he accepted a role that was to seal his fate quite conclusively as a continuing horror film personality. After the financial success of their Frankenstein picture, Hammer Films then turned to Bram Stoker and a remake of his classic DRACULA (1958). Lee accepted the title role in the film which was to reunite him with star Peter Cushing as Dr. Van Helsing and director Terence Fisher, the same successful team that made CURSE OF FRANKENSTEIN. DRACULA became another smashing success and Cushing and Lee developed into a horror film duo that paralleled Karloff and Lugosi.

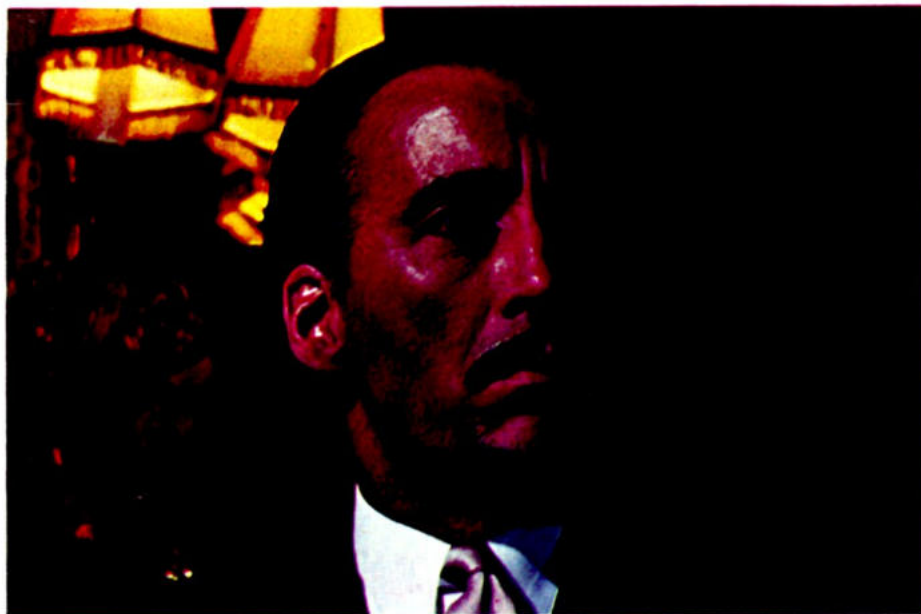
Lee's performance as Dracula was probably his best film work up to that date, in that he presented the suave vampire as a demon, yet a sinisterly evil one to be pitied and put out of its misery of blood lust. A great deal of the role's unforgettable quality is attributable to the very intelligent direction of Terence Fisher, who choreographed Dracula's scenes in a way that communicated the character's frightening power and ferocity. The role, and the picture, with its totally fresh approach to the subject matter utilizing violence and sensuality, was a sensation, and assured Lee's continuing identification with Dracula in particular, and horror films in general. The actor considers it to be a "good film," and has stressed that in his interpretation of the role of Dracula "I've always tried to put an element of sadness, which I've termed the loneliness of evil. Dracula doesn't want to live, but he's got to. He doesn't want to go on existing as the undead, but he has no choice."

Established in the horror genre by his portrayals in CURSE OF FRANKENSTEIN and DRACULA, it was natural that Lee should be hired to appear in a number of features in the same vein, often in only supporting roles. In CORRIDORS OF BLOOD (1958) which starred Boris Karloff, he was on screen rather briefly as the seedy Resurrection Joe, a grave robber who steals bodies for medical research. The picture, although filmed in 1958 under the title DOCTOR OF THE SEVEN DIALS, was not released until 1962. Lee's participation in the film was completely overshadowed by Karloff in the starring role, and his name was not even mentioned in the film's advertising. Lee's role as a stern Nazi S.S. officer at a German prisoner of war camp in BATTLE OF THE V-1 (1958) rounded out the year.

He was Sir Henry Baskerville in Hammer's remake of HOUND OF THE BASKERVILLES (1959), the first of three Sherlock Holmes pictures in which Lee has appeared to date. In this version, he essayed the part played by Richard Greene in the elaborate 20th Century-Fox version of 1939, while Peter Cushing was detective Sherlock Holmes and Andre Morell appeared as the bumbling Dr. Watson. Although director Terence Fisher turned out a most craftsmanlike product, HOUND OF THE BASKERVILLES did not grip audience interest and was a disappointment at the boxoffice, causing Hammer to drop plans for further Arthur Conan Doyle thrillers.

Lee played his last character on the screen in monster makeup in Hammer's remake of THE MUMMY (1959), again directed by Terence Fisher. Lee went through the established paces of Kharis, the living Mummy who is driven to vengeance against those who defile the sanctity of the tomb of his 3,000 year old love, Egyptian princess Ananka, played by Yvonne Furneaux. Because of shoddy production values, THE MUMMY failed to measure up to the 1932 Karloff version or even the B-film series Universal cranked out in the 1940s, mostly with Lon Chaney, Jr.

With THE MUMMY, Lee made a decision never to play makeup-laden screen monsters again, saying: "I don't want to go through all that misery..." Unlike Lon Chaney, Sr. who seemingly reveled in the use of torturous body and facial disguises, or even Karloff who managed to make a characterization emerge from beneath the layers of pancake, gauze, and molten rubber, Lee



I never imagined I would follow in the steps of Boris Karloff and Bela Lugosi, whose films I had seen as a boy before the war. I certainly don't regret it.

apparently found himself ham-strung by the paraphernalia and unable to emote in any satisfactory fashion. Apart from the rigors of the heavy make up, Lee also complained of the physical strength and stamina required by such a role. He has said that he pulled nearly every muscle in his back and neck carrying away the hapless heroines in the film. Lee was then 37.

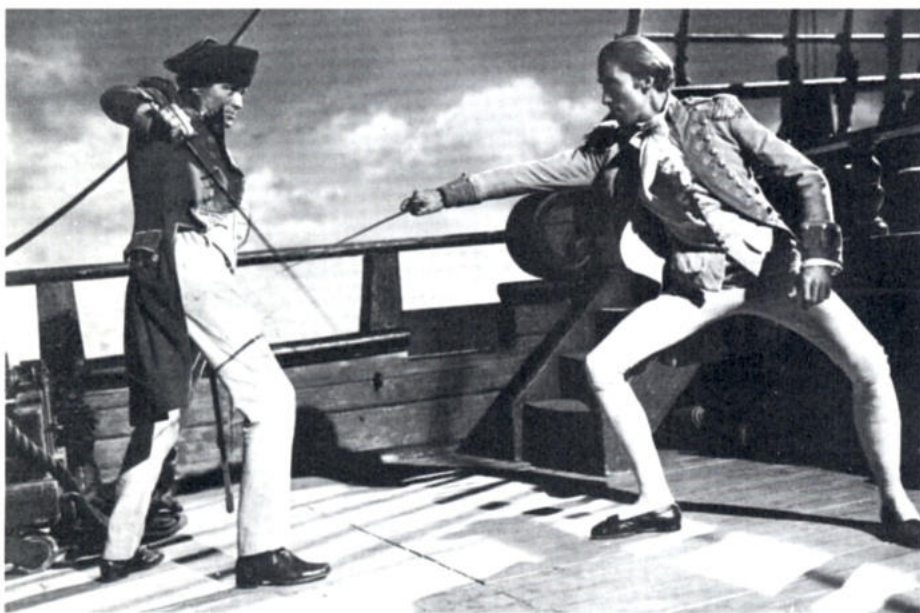
Following his spectacular debut in horror films at Hammer, Lee was soon back to only incidental character roles. In two additional Hammer/Terence Fisher films, he had only supporting roles. In *THE MAN WHO COULD CHEAT DEATH* (1959), a poor remake of the none-too-good *MAN IN HALF-MOON STREET*, he played a colleague forced to assist Anton Diffring, in the film's lead role as Dr. Bonnet, in his medical scheme for immortality, and in Hammer's modern rendition of Robert Louis Stevenson's *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* called *THE TWO FACES OF DR. JEKYLL* (1960), Lee played Jekyll's friend Paul Allen, who is having an affair with the doctor's wife. The film boasted the innovation of having elderly Dr. Jekyll being transformed into a handsome and youthful Mr. Hyde, but despite this gimmick, the film was not a success, and was picked up for U.S. release a year later as *HOUSE OF FRIGHT* to hide its tired origins in the oft-filmed Stevenson story. Although Lee's role is definitely subordinate to that of Paul Massey playing the dual role of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, in screen time and plot structure his character is given almost equal emphasis and importance. The role of Paul Allen was certainly a challenging change of pace for Lee, in that the character was a drunken, lecherous, weak-willed ineffectual cad, yet at the film's conclusion when he is murdered at the hands of Mr. Hyde, it is Lee's character that the audience identifies with and pities. Lee in fact has stolen the picture with a very accomplished performance that is carefully developed, as he proceeds from victimizing Dr. Jekyll to becoming the victim of Mr. Hyde.

It is often not realized that despite Lee's almost overnight success in three highly profitable horror pictures, *CURSE OF FRANKENSTEIN* (1957), *DRACULA* (1958) and *THE MUMMY* (1959) his position as a "star" in films, or even in genre films, was far from assured. Hammer Films passed over several excellent opportunities after *THE MUMMY* to give Lee starring roles in their horror vehicles, instead choosing to relegate him to minor character parts. Up to that time, Lee had never been top-lined in a Hammer film, that is to say, his billing in the credits had always been in a secondary or lesser position. It was Peter Cushing who received top billing in *CURSE OF FRANKENSTEIN*, *DRACULA* and *THE MUMMY*, and it was Peter Cushing that Hammer chose to bring back to star in sequels to these films, while Lee was relegated to lesser roles or not used at all. This is particularly surprising in the case of Hammer's first sequel to *DRACULA*, *BRIDES OF DRACULA* (1961), in which Peter Cushing returned to star in the role of Dr. Van Helsing while Dracula of the title, in the person of Christopher Lee, was strangely absent! Lee



Top: As the Duc de Richleau in Dennis Wheatley's *THE DEVIL RIDES OUT* (1967), Lee's finest heroic role and one of Hammer Films' best horror pictures. Middle: From *DRACULA* (1958), a film which, more than any other, brought Lee to international stardom, considered by many to be the finest horror film ever made. Bottom: From *THE MAGIC CHRISTIAN* (1970), director Joseph McGrath uses a wide-angle lens for Lee's stylish walk-on as Dracula. Right: J. Arthur Rank publicity photo circa 1947, when Lee, at the age of 25, made his motion picture debut.





was not to receive top-billing at Hammer until 1964, and then only in the minor non-horror production of *DEVIL-SHIP PIRATES*. In the interim, Lee's acting career fell upon hard times again, in which he increasingly turned to foreign-based productions for work. It would not be until 1965 that Lee would receive his first major genre role since his early successes at Hammer Films, as Fu Manchu in the Hallam Production *THE FACE OF FU MANCHU*, and only the second horror film in which the actor was to receive top-billing.

The first of Lee's many continental horror films came in 1959 with *TEMPI DURI PER I VAMPIRI* (Hard Times For Vampires), a comedy filmed in Italy. The film starred Italy's then favorite comedian, Renato Rascel, and featured Lee as a mock vampire, Baron Rodrigo. Although the film was intended from the start as an out-and-out parody of the horror genre, Lee essayed his part in a straight manner, which if anything, heightened the burlesque. The film appeared in U.S. release in 1963 as *UNCLE WAS A VAMPIRE* but the broad Italian approach to humor has never found a responsive American audience and the film received little attention.

Returning to British film production, he could find little more than bit parts and minor supporting roles. In *BEAT GIRL* (1959) he played a sinister blackmailer involved with a stripper in the sordid life of soho. The film is sometimes seen on American television as *WILD FOR KICKS*. He was back to playing Germans in *THE TREASURE OF SAN TERESA* (1959), involved in the recovery of priceless gems stashed by a Nazi general during the war. The film was released in the U.S. as *LONG DISTANCE* and is sometimes seen on television under the title *HOT MONEY GIRL*.

Lee was increasingly forced to look abroad for substantial film assignments, where his reputation as a genre star, particularly in France and Italy, was more assured. He journeyed to France in 1960 to co-star in a remake of *THE HANDS OF ORLAC* which was being filmed in both French and English versions, starring Mel Ferrer. In this remake of the Conrad Veidt (1924) and Peter Lorre (1935) thriller, Lee took the horror role, playing Nero, a nightclub magician, who forces his assistant Dany Carrel, an immoral Oriental lass, to cooperate in the blackmail of Mel Ferrer, because they know the secret of the concert pianist's newly grafted hands. Lee did well by the small-time, down-and-out vaudevillian, but the performance was undercut by the screenplay which provided no motivation for the role. At least in *MAD LOVE*, Lorre had been driven by an obsessive infatuation with Orloc's wife. No such reason is given Lee for executing his vague and unlikely extortion scheme, from which no possible reward seems evident. In the concluding scene, Lee murders his assistant who has turned against him while on stage during their magic act before a rapt audience which believes they are witnessing a magician's trick. It's a nice touch, but typical of the film's muddled script in that Lee has no possible means of escape and is easily apprehended and subdued off-stage. Still, this version is of interest, if only to see how Lee dominates the film from a relatively minor supporting position as the evil eccentric with oddly effeminate dress and hairdo, while poor Mel Ferrer is left floundering in the title role which is exceedingly dull and equally unmotivated.

For the same producer (Donald Taylor) and distributor (Britannia Films, this time in association with British Lion), Lee returned to England

Top: From *THEY WERE NOT DIVIDED* (1949), a war story playing up the cooperation of the Yanks and the British during WWII. Lee (second from left) played tank commander Lewis of the Welsh Guard. Middle: From *CAPTAIN HORATIO HORN-BLOWER* (1951). Lee (right) is the Captain of a Spanish Man O' War, defending his ship from a boarding party led by Captain Hornblower (Gregory Peck, left). Bottom: From *VALLEY OF EAGLES* (1951), his last film under contract to Rank. Lee (right, in doorway) is a detective aiding police inspector Jack Warner (center) in apprehending a fugitive scientist with valuable war secrets. Background Right: As the scoundrel Paul Allen from *THE TWO FACES OF DR. JEKYLL* (1960), a complex role well-enacted by Lee which ends up earning audience sympathy.

to appear in *CITY OF THE DEAD* (1960), a cheap black-and-white quickie made by TV director John Moxey with the participation of Amicus producers Milton Subotsky and Max J. Rosenberg. In one of his best, but least-heralded films, Lee appeared as a professor of demonology, who in reality is a reincarnated warlock. The scene is set in an eerie New England town, whose spirit has not progressed much beyond the time of the infamous witch trials centuries ago. Though second-billed to pop singer Dennis Lotis, Lee was the real audience interest, as he leads the sacrifice of virgins to Satan. "Just ring for doom service," said the film's ads, dreamed up by promoter Max J. Rosenberg, when the film received American release as *HORROR HOTEL* in 1963. Lee's name received little play in the ads showing that, even in 1963 and even in a horror film, his name was regarded as having little marquee value or audience recognition. Lee rounded out the year by appearing in *TOO HOT TO HANDLE* (1960) starring Jayne Mansfield, playing a gunman for Soho nightclub racketeer Leo Genn, involved in blackmail and murder.

Lee appeared in *TERROR OF THE TONGS* (1961) for Hammer, as Chung King, the first of his oriental characters and the head of the evil Secret Society of the Red Dragon, engaged in white slavery and the opium trade. The film was merely a straight action-adventure story concentrating more on the exploits of the sea captain played by Geoffrey Toone. It is said that during this period Lee attempted, unsuccessfully, to interest Hammer in the rights to the more colorful and imaginative Fu Manchu novels by Sax Rohmer. Lee also appeared in a flashy cameo in Hammer's *TASTE OF FEAR* (1961), as a pontificating psychiatrist who continually insists to Susan Strassberg that she is imagining things, when clearly she is not. Lee considers the film, which contains several clever plot twists and retwists crafted by veteran horror scriptwriter James Sangster, "an excellent picture." It received an inauspicious release in the U.S. by Columbia as *SCREAM OF FEAR*.

Lee went to Germany to make the first of several appearances in films based on the works of mystery writer Edgar Wallace. In *DAS RATSEL DER ROTEN ORCHIDEEN* (1961), filmed in Hamburg and based on Wallace's *When The Gangs Came to London*, Lee played an FBI agent investigating a gang war between American and European racketeers. His second German outing came in *DAS GEHEIMNIS DER GELBEN NARZISSEN* (1961), a drama about the drug trade in London in the 1920s. Lee played a Hong Kong detective, Ling Chu, assisting Scotland Yard in their investigation. English and German versions were shot simultaneously by director Akos Rathony using different casts, although Lee appeared in both versions. Discussing the German version he has said: "I played a Chinese in German, not the easiest thing to do!" The film was released in the U.S. in 1967 as *THE DEVIL'S DAFFODIL* and is also known under various titles including, *SECRET OF THE DEVIL'S DAFFODIL* and *THE DAFFODIL KILLER*.

Lee journeyed to Italy to work for the newly acclaimed director and cameraman, Mario Bava, who had created quite a stir in horror film circles with his now classic *BLACK SUNDAY* (1960). The resulting film, *ERCOLE AL CENTRO DELLA TERRA* (1961) was quite unsatisfactory. The character that Lee played, Lichas, was a villainous one to be sure, but not the vampire the advertising hinted at when released in France as *HERCULE CONTRE LES VAMPIRES* (1961). Lee has said concerning this misrepresentation of his role: "I fear this is quite incorrect. I was never in a coffin at any time during the film! The producer, for reasons of his own, retitled the film. I cannot imagine why, unless it was for publicity reasons." The film was released in the U.S. in 1964 as *HERCULES IN THE HAUNTED WORLD*, and was lost in the tide of similar sand and sandal epics churning out of Italy. While in Europe for this assignment, Lee also found work doing several stunting bits in Darryl F. Zanuck's all-star production of *THE LONGEST DAY* (1961).

Back in England, Lee made the first of two pirate films for Hammer, *THE PIRATES OF BLOOD RIVER* (1961), in the role of LaRoche, a mercenary and bloodthirsty buccaner. Kerwin Matthews as a wrongfully imprisoned Huguenot leader was the star and hero of the film, but Lee

proved to be the main interest in providing another strong performance in a villainous role. As LaRoche he was clad in black from head to foot, complete with a black eye patch, an extremely commanding and powerful figure, even with a crippled left arm held strangely immobile at his side. He remains aloof from his crew of cut-throats and ruffians whom he rules with an iron will and drives beyond all endurance in their forced march across land in search of Huguenot treasure. His weary crew grumbles in awe among themselves that he seems to be able to go without food, water or sleep. "He don't even sweat like other men," says one. And Lee brings off this commanding figure quite effectively in a detailed performance, speaking in a finely simulated French accent, that transmits some of the awe, respect and fear felt by his crew to members of the audience. While the role was still definitely a heavy, it was an important break for Lee from his newly acquired horror film image.

Lee journeyed to Germany in 1962 to star in a film project that bore exceptional possibilities. Lee was to star as Sherlock Holmes in a production of Conan Doyle's *The Valley of Fear*, with the able support of British character actor Thelma Walters as Dr. Watson. The screenplay was adapted by fantasy film scripter Curt Siodmak and was to be directed by Terence Fisher. The inexplicably shoddy film which resulted, may be the perfect example of the enigma of Lee's seeing-saw movie career. The film, which in its final form bore little resemblance to the original Conan Doyle story, was retitled *SHERLOCK HOLMES UND DAS HALSBAND DES TODES* (Sherlock Holmes and the Deadly Necklace), with Terence Fisher sharing directing chores with Frank Winterstein. Lee gave a superb performance as the intrepid Holmes in a picture so poorly conceived that it was not until 1968 that it found theatrical release in England, and in the United States it was shunted off directly into television playoff. Lee has lamented the film's unrealized potential: "I think it was a pity, this film, in more ways than one. We should never have made it in Germany with German actors, although we had a British art director and a British director. Although it was called *THE VALLEY OF FEAR*, it was not taken from that story. It was a hodge-podge of stories put together by the German producers, which ruined it. My portrayal of Holmes is, I think, one of the best things I've ever done because I tried to play him really as he was written, as a very intolerant, argumentative, difficult man, and I looked extraordinarily like him with the makeup. The picture really wasn't well done. It was a badly edited hodge-podge of nonsense. Everyone who's seen it said I was as like Holmes as any actor they've ever seen, both in appearance and interpretation." The film was so misconceived that it even allowed arch villain Professor Moriarty (Hans Söhnker) to escape scot-free at the finale, thus seemingly paving the way for a forthcoming series of such encounters with Holmes, a series which has, fortunately, never materialized.

Lee went to Ireland to film *IN NAMEN DES TEUFELS* (1961), a German production featuring Peter Van Eyck, Marianne Koch and Macdonald Carey set in post-war Germany. Despite the evocative title, translated as "In the Name of the Devil," the film turns out to be only a routine cold-war spy melodrama in which Lee plays an aristocratic East German working for the communists. In Britain and America the film was retitled, no more honestly, as *THE DEVIL'S AGENT*.

Very eligible bachelor Christopher Lee had disappointed his many female admirers in 1961* by marrying a former Danish model named Birgit Kroencke. The following year the couple moved to live in a comfortable home in Switzerland. Because of the tax considerations involved in Lee being a British citizen in residence in a foreign country, he was forced to remain out of British films for an entire year for purely economic reasons. It was at this time that he began reaping the benefits from his growing reputation as a continental screen actor with international marquee value on the action/horror film market, which resulted in a country-hopping spree to participate

*Prior to 1958, Lee had at one time been engaged to be married to Countess Henrietta von Rosen, a beautiful, red-haired Swedish model.

in foreign-based productions. One of these ventures, *KATARSIS* (1963), is an exceedingly rare film that has been released only in Italy, due to the fact that shortly after its release in 1964 the film was impounded because of legal debts incurred by its producer. This avant-garde production also starred Lily Palmer, Giorgio Ardisson and Bella Cortez and was written and directed by Giuseppe Veggazzi (aka Joseph Vegg). Although Lee has remarked in published interviews that he played "both Faust and Mephistopheles" in the film, the plot is given as follows by the Italian pressbook: "Six young men stop to visit an old castle during their trip. They find that the castle is inhabited by a lonely old man (played by Christopher Lee), who tells them a strange story. He sold his soul to the devil in exchange for eternal youth for the woman he loved. He was tricked, however, in his bargain, and his love died, while remaining eternally youthful in appearance, and he was never able to see her again, although he hears her voice. He asks the young men to help him break the pact with the devil by finding the corpse of his loved one and burying it. The six young men decide to help the old man, but mysterious forces seem to try to prevent them. Finally, they are able to find the corpse and bury it, and that same night the old man, now happy, dies and his castle is destroyed in flames."

Also in Italy, Lee filmed *LA VERGINE DE NORIMBERGA* (1963), written and directed by Antonio Marghariti (aka Anthony Dawson), in which he appeared as a horribly scarred custodian of a museum of medieval torture instruments where a series of unexplained murders are occurring. It received release in 1966 in Britain as *CASTLE OF TERROR* and in the U.S. as *HORROR CASTLE*, but its routine continental horror formula was undistinguished.

While in Italy, Lee worked a second time for director Mario Bava in *LA FRUSTA E IL CORPO* (The Whip and the Body), as a sadistic and brutal aristocrat who is mysteriously stabbed to death early-on in the picture. Bava's film was banned in Italy for being too sado-sexual in nature, and was badly censored in Britain where it was issued as *NIGHT IS THE PHANTOM* (1965) and in the U.S. as *WHAT!* (1965). Concerning the censorship of certain of the film's erotic passages, Lee remarked: "The result was that it only ended up by being a picture of opening and closing doors and shadows and funny footfalls and people spinning 'round and nobody being there. They missed so much by cutting it up that it no longer made an intelligible picture. Originally, it was a good one, full of suspense and full of atmosphere."

He also appeared in the Spanish/Italian coproduction *LA CRIPTA E L'INCUBO* (1963), based on the oft-filmed Sheridan Le Fanu novella *Carmilla*. Though made on a very limited budget by director Camillo Mastrocinque (Thomas Miller), the picture had much to recommend it, with flavorful atmosphere and an honesty to Le Fanu's original that other and more acclaimed versions (Roger Vadim's *BLOOD AND ROSES* and Hammer's *THE VAMPIRE LOVERS*) did not share. Lee played the aristocratic Count Karnstein who fears, correctly, that his daughter may be the reincarnation of an ancestor condemned as a witch, who vowed on her death to return one day and be avenged. He filmed his scenes in English, which makes the picture more enjoyable than many of his other foreign films which are either poorly dubbed, or even dubbed by another performer. The film received only limited release in Britain as *CRYPT OF HORROR* (1966) and in the U.S. on television as *TERROR IN THE CRYPT* (1966).

In 1963, American-International Pictures announced its projected filming of H. P. Lovecraft's *The Dunwich Horror*, to costar Boris Karloff and Christopher Lee, with Mario Vava to direct, to be called *SCARLET FRIDAY*. Karloff rejected the proposed screenplay, however, and while it was retained on the studio's production schedule for several years, it was not filmed until 1969 and then with Sandra Dee, Dean Stockwell and Ed Begley. It was also in 1963 that Christopher Lee, who had married former model Birgit Kroencke in 1961, became a father. Their daughter was named Christina. Looking toward the future and his daughter's possible interest in acting, Lee confided to the press: "I shall warn her against the difficulties which young girls face entering this profession. I hope that it doesn't appeal to



her. But if it does... I shall not stand in her way."

Lee returned to Hammer in 1964 to be top-billed in a film by this studio for the first time in his career, albeit only in a minor pirate-film programmer, *DEVIL-SHIP PIRATES*. In this, his first film for director Don Sharp, he played evil Captain Robeles, a Spanish privateer involved in the ill-fated armada against the English. Interestingly enough, in both of Lee's pirate films, this and *PIRATES OF BLOOD RIVER* (1961), he has starred not as a swashbuckling hero, or even an anti-hero, but as an out-and-out villain. The "British Monthly Film Bulletin" dismissed the film in a damning review that singled out "Christopher Lee's colourless performance as the pirate captain." Lee also appeared in the far more interesting *THE GORGON* (1964) for the same studio, appearing as Professor Mesiter and on the trail of a living Greek legend with top-lined Peter Cushing. In a complete change of pace that has never repeated itself, Lee appeared as the enlightened Van Helsing figure and seeker-of-truth, while Cushing, in the role of Professor Namaroff, could almost be classed as a heavy. Aside from this inversion of traditional Hammer casting procedure (Cushing = good and Lee = evil) which at least allowed Lee to show that he could be credible and effective in an heroic performance, the film had little to recommend itself. The set-piece of horror, the Gorgon's stare which turned men to stone, proved to be too static to provide the film with the action and excitement that Hammer's approach to the genre requires.

Lee's European junket that year included only *IL CASTELLO DEI MORTI VIVI* (1964), an Italian production in which Lee played Count Drago, a mad scientist who embalms animals and humans for display in his personal museum. Directed by Luciano Ricci, this feature did better than adequate in its European release, but upon the death of its producer, the film was impounded and did not reach the U.S. until 1967 when American International released it to television as *CASTLE OF THE LIVING DEAD*, though it would yet be released to British theaters in 1968. While Lee has expressed positive statements about his work on this project, the film is mostly vapid corn.

In 1964, Amicus, a British production company formed to emulate the profitable Hammer operation, signed two of the latter's frequent stars, Peter Cushing and Lee, to topcast its omnibus story film *DR. TERROR'S HOUSE OF HORRORS*, directed by Freddie Francis. In this episodic thriller, which emerged much better than anyone had a right to anticipate, Cushing was the pivotal figure of mysterious Dr. Sandor Schreck. Aboard a train, he encounters several men in his compartment, one of them being the snobbish, acid-tongued art critic Franklyn Marsh, Christopher Lee in a performance that is a delicious caricature of petty meanness. Cushing tells his fortune with tarot cards, showing that Lee will be tortured and tormented by the severed hand of an artist whose work he had denounced and who had lost his hand when Lee deliberately ran the man down with his car. Lee received top billing over Peter Cushing for the first time in his career, a recognition by the film's producers and distributor of the niche Lee had so carefully carved out for himself over the past seven years as a horror

Top: During a lunch break on the set of *THE CRIMSON PIRATE* (1953), Lee (right) grabs a bite and a bottle of beer with fellow actor Elliot Markham (left), who plays the Governor in the film. Lee played an aristocratic Spanish attache, another small, villainous role, which marked his return to films after a brief hiatus as a floor-walker in a London department store. Middle: From *THE TRIANGLE* (1953), a compendium of three episodes from the British teleseries *DOUGLAS FAIRBANKS PRESENTS*. In "An American Duel," Lee (middle and about to get punched by Ron Randall) plays a German student at Heidelberg University who challenges Randall to a duel over the affections of June Thorburn (left). Bottom: From *ALIAS JOHN PRESTON* (1955), his first horror film. Lee (right) in the title role consults a psychiatrist (Alexander Knox) about his recurring, ultra-realistic nightmares. Background Right: As the monster from *CURSE OF FRANKENSETIN* (1957), a lucky bit of casting which brought him international attention and began for him a new screen career.

film actor, a position which was gaining him increasing recognition and popularity with the film-going public. The tremendous financial success of **DR. TERROR'S HOUSE OF HORRORS** did much to consolidate the carefully achieved advancement in Lee's career.

In 1965 Lee was back at Hammer Films for a small cameo role in **SHE** (1965), a glossy but slipshod remake of the H. Rider Haggard classic, in which he appeared as Billali, high priest to Ursula Andress, the queen of eternal life. As with Hammer's later remake of **ONE MILLION YEARS B.C.** with Raquel Welch, the new **SHE** depended largely on the animal magnetism generated by its leading actress to carry the weakly structured picture with action-minded filmgoers.

Lee made his second appearance for Amicus Films that year, again teamed with Peter Cushing, but this time in a small cameo part and billed as a "guest star." The film was **THE SKULL** (1966), based on Robert Blach's short story "The Skull of the Marquis De Sade," in which Lee plays a collector of obscurely murdered by Cushing who is under the evil influence of the skull.

More important for Lee's career was **THE FACE OF FU MANCHU** (1965) produced by Hallam Productions, who no doubt envisioned that the revival of campy pop heroes and villains would make this entry a winner. Evidently the newly formed distribution arm of Seven Arts agreed, and they purchased the picture for release giving it extensive promotion. This newest version of Fu Manchu's misdeeds was set in the 1920s, with Lee topline as the oriental master villain once again determined to conquer the western world. Lee gave his characterization the proper oversized proportions which, when combined with a resourceful publicity campaign and receptive critical reviewers, allowed **THE FACE OF FU MANCHU** to pay off handsome dividends and spawn several followups. Lee has revealed that the role of Fu Manchu was exceedingly difficult to play because of "the plastic eye-lids that I had to wear. I couldn't look up, I couldn't look down, I could only play, so to speak, from side to side. I had to rely entirely on the inflection of the voice and the 'lack' of movement to put over the character."

After two successful starring roles in two financially profitable horror pictures, **DR. TERROR'S HOUSE OF HORRORS** (Amicus Productions) and **THE FACE OF FU MANCHU** (Hallam Productions), Hammer Films began to reassess the importance of Christopher Lee as a film asset, one which they had squandered in unimportant films and in meaningless cameo roles for the past five years. That competitors were benefiting from the services of a star that Hammer had been instrumental in creating, was enough to open the studio's eyes to the fact that they had slighted and ignored the growing prestige and popularity of this actor long enough. **RASPUTIN, THE MAD MONK** (1965) was the result, a vehicle tailor made for Lee in the starring role, and one that would not only showcase his acting ability but which Hammer could sell on the horror market as well. Lee has received top billing and starred in every Hammer film he has appeared in since, even in **DRACULA A.D. 1972** when he was reunited with Peter Cushing in the role of Dr. Van Helsing, a role for which Cushing had received top billing over Lee in 1958.

RASPUTIN, THE MAD MONK (1965), released by 20th Century-Fox as a horror package with **THE REPTILE**, bore little resemblance to the earlier 1932 MGM version, **RASPUTIN AND THE EMPRESS**, which had starred Lionel Barrymore in the role of Rasputin. The new version, bereft of a sensible script or sturdy production values, relied on the macabre and horrific values of the story to stimulate audience interest. But despite the efforts of Lee to engender the title role with a gamut of believable emotions, audiences were not intrigued by the study of imperial Russia and the debauchery of the abnormal monk who came to rule it. Frederick S. Clarke in "Rasputin On Film" (1:16) noted: "Christopher Lee's massive frame and gaunt features make him one of the most physically impressive actors to ever take the part. Rasputin came as his 72nd screen role after eighteen years in the film business, and at the time Lee regarded it as his best film opportunity. It certainly allowed him more latitude as a performer than any part he has ever had pre-

viously or since, although his performance is strictly a losing battle against a script which traps him within a caricature without context or motivation." Whether the film was a success or not, merely the role itself was enough to add prestige and credibility to Lee's growing reputation as a fine character actor.

Filed back-to-back with **RASPUTIN, THE MAD MONK** (1965), for budgetary reasons, using many of the same sets, actors and technical personnel was **DRACULA, PRINCE OF DARKNESS** (1966), reuniting Lee with his most dynamic screen role and satisfying a public itch for a true sequel to Hammer's most successful horror film, **DRACULA** of eight years previous.

DRACULA, PRINCE OF DARKNESS, under the able direction of Terence Fisher, developed into one of the studio's finest productions, rivaling even their original **DRACULA** in quality. Its prime deficiencies resulted from the fact that a modest Hammer budget of \$280,000 did not go nearly so far in 1966 as it had during the production of the original film in 1958. The otherwise excellent screenplay by veteran scripter Jimmy Sangster (aka John Sansom) was overburdened with the responsibility of accounting for Dracula's revival and linking the film with its predecessor, albeit using exciting ideas provided by Hammer producer Anthony Hinds (aka John Elder). What the screenplay did provide were delicately built atmosphere and finely drawn characterizations of the principal characters brilliantly realized by Fisher's direction and the fine ensemble acting of the cast, particularly Andrew Keir as the strong Van Helsing figure and Barbara Shelley, in her best performance, as a prissy, inhibited, nagging wife of one of the principals who is transformed into a sensuous vampire when she falls prey to Dracula. Lee was excellent in his reprise of the Dracula role in a part that was more difficult than his earlier portrayal in that it was written without dialogue, forcing Lee to communicate the character of Dracula by a series of body movements, gestures and facial expressions. The film's script has often been criticized for Lee's lack of dialogue, but hindsight and the dismal experience of further sequels less expertly crafted has shown that the character is not suited to small-talk. Lee's performance in the film prompted the snobbish British film journal "Films and Filming" which rarely condescended to cover genre films, to note: "Christopher Lee, eyes bloodshot and speechless, makes a powerful figure out of Dracula."

In the hastily assembled Harry Alan Towers production **CIRCUS OF FEAR** (1966), based on the Edgar Wallace novel **The Man Without A Face**, Lee appeared as a masked animal trainer and the owner of a circus where a gangster's loot is hidden. This badly butchered effort, which reunited Lee with director John Moxey, was shown in the U.S. in black and white rather than its original color, being released to theatres and television simultaneously as **PSYCHO-CIRCUS** (1967), and chopped down from its original 83 minute running time to a scant 65 minutes. Lee undertook the same role in a German version directed by Werner Jacobs entitled **DAS RÄTSEL DES SILBERNEN DREIECKS** (The Secret of the Silver Triangle). All in all, it was only a little more successful than the subsequent Joan Crawford shocker **BERSERK!** (1967) which had locale and script parallels, but somewhat of a disappointment to Christopher Lee fans in that the actor's face was covered by a black hood throughout nearly the entire film.

CIRCUS OF FEAR was only Lee's second film for Harry Alan Towers, who had done nicely by the actor on **THE FACE OF FU MANCHU** while associated with and receiving the backing of the 7 Arts organization. Without the backing of a major distributor, Towers was to involve Lee in a series of low-budget productions trading heavily on the actor's talent and reputation. The next was **THE BRIDES OF FU MANCHU** (1966), a long way from the quality of the merely adequate initial Fu Manchu outing, but produced by Towers still in association with Oliver B. Unger's Seven Arts and therefore nowhere near the shoddy quality of Tower's solo production of **CIRCUS OF FEAR** and some of his later efforts. Ted Isaacs remarked in his review of the film in the April 16, 1967 issue of "Cinefantastique": "Readers of the Rohmer novel of the same title have realized by now that the plot of this movie has nothing to do with the book.

Instead, scripter Peter Welbeck has come up with an original story that is loaded with more impossibilities and inconsistencies than any in recent memory. Christopher Lee has the proper stature and demeanor for the Fu Manchu role, but he gives a very bland performance as the oriental villain. He's neither very wily or very cunning or very motivated or very anything. Perhaps it is Welbeck's fault that the character has lost all his color, but this is certainly one of Lee's lesser roles and his characterization cannot even be compared with those of Boris Karloff and Warner Oland." Though the quality of the Fu Manchu series was rapidly declining, the worst was yet to come. **THE BRIDES OF FU MANCHU** did have enough exotic appeal and bloodshed (particularly in the version filmed for the Far East) to carry it into the profit ledger.

Little better was **THEATRE OF DEATH** (1966), set in the famed Paris grand guignol horror palace, where Lee is a stern stage director, Philippe Darvas. As with **CIRCUS OF FEAR**, there are again a series of vampire murders, but this time Lee proves to be just a red herring and an unfortunate victim of one of his performers who has developed a blood lust in childhood. In the role of Darvas, Lee again displayed a unique ability to breathe nasty life into a thoroughly despicable characterization. As Darvas, Lee was haughty, domineering and insufferably condescending to those around him, and with a streak of cruelty which the screenplay intended would cast suspicion on him as the film's bloody murderer. Critic Chris Fellner has suggested that these common characteristics found in many of Lee's screen roles are not necessarily the result of "type casting," but are qualities which the actor himself brings to many roles which are only vaguely defined by a script. As Fellner points out: "Even in the early days of Lee's career, before he had become associated with an 'image,' this cold conceit was evident in his roles: the artist in **PORT AFRIQUE**; the husband in **SHE PLAYED WITH FIRE**; Eva Gabor's spouse in **THE TRUTH ABOUT WOMEN**; Preston in **ALIAS JOHN PRESTON**; certainly these roles weren't so well written or well directed, to demand the similar interpretation given to each of them." **THEATRE OF BLOOD** was shunted onto the exploitation circuit as **BLOOD FIEND** (1968) in its U.S. release by Hemisphere Pictures. Lee rounded out the year by appearing as the on-screen narrator for a short subject called **VICTIMS OF TERROR** (1966), a film he did in one day's shooting for director Harold Baim. It's treatment of the ancient cities of Pompeii and Herculaneum before Mount Vesuvius erupted is, according to Lee: "...one of the most valued documentaries on this subject."

In a noble search for fresh material, Hammer filmed the first of several optioned novels devoted to horror and the supernatural by author Dennis Wheatley called **THE DEVIL RIDES OUT** (1967). Christopher Lee provides one of his strongest performances as the titled aristocrat Duc de Richleau, whose expertise and wisdom in occult matters prevents the entrapment of an old friend by a coven of witches. The film, directed by Terence Fisher and set in handsome 1920's detail is widely considered to be Hammer's finest horror picture next to their version of **DRACULA**. The role provided Lee the finest of his all too rare opportunities at playing major heroic characters, and his unqualified success with the part could have done much to remove his stigma as a perennial villain. Unfortunately the film was not a success in America when released by 20th Century Fox as **THE DEVIL'S BRIDE**, a fact due totally to the distributor's own neglect. In a published interview, the author of the original novel felt that the film "was beautifully done," and that "Christopher Lee gave a marvellous performance as de Richleau." Unfortunately the box-office failure of both **THE DEVIL RIDES OUT** and another Wheatley adaptation, **THE LOST CONTINENT**, from his novel **Uncharted Seas**, caused Hammer to abandon plans for further Wheatley screen adaptations already announced. This foreclosed the exciting possibility that Duc de Richleau in the person of Christopher Lee would return to the screen in further Wheatley tales of the occult and the supernatural, although Lee himself has op-

*American release title of **FORTUNE IS A WOMAN** (1956)



I'll never turn my back on horror films. I just want to appear in better ones and have a part I can do something with.

tioned several of the author's works for production.

The same year he made a third Fu Manchu film for producer Harry Alan Towers, *VENGEANCE OF FU MANCHU* (1967), directed by Jeremy Summers. This entry further vitiated the original Rohmer material and was virtually ignored by its distributor, Warner Bros, who had acquired it in a merger with Seven Arts. Lee lamented that "The Fu Manchu films could have been great if only some money had been spent. They had all the ingredients of a James Bond type adventure film with an oriental setting." For the same producer and director he made the first of his many "guest appearances" in international productions in *FIVE GOLDEN DRAGONS* (1967), filmed in Hong Kong for Warner Bros/Seven Arts. But because it offered the horror star an opportunity to work with three actors (Brian Donlevy, George Raft and Dan Duryea) he had long greatly admired, it was a most satisfying experience for him, if not for audiences. Lee played one of the "Five Golden Dragons" of the title, kingpins of an international conspiracy of organized crime.

Lee was reunited again that year with director Terence Fisher on Planet Films' *NIGHT OF THE BIG HEAT* (1967), in which he co-starred with Peter Cushing and Patrick Allen. With the most ordinary of production values, Fisher managed to breathe life into the by now threadbare study of an alien invasion by super intelligent insects. Though released to good boxoffice in Britain, it was not until 1971 that the film had U.S. bookings under the title *ISLAND OF THE BURNING DAMNED*. "Films and Filming" remarked: "...Fisher's leisurely, atmospheric style does for this awful story-idea all that mortal man can reasonably be expected to do." British actor Patrick Allen was the main character interest while, in the words of reviewer John R. Duvoli (1:4:34), Lee was reduced to being "appropriately stern and clinical as Hanson," the obligatory scientist who must explain to everyone and the audience what is going on.

Lee rounded out the year by making a trip to Germany to star with the late Lex Barker and Karin Dor in *DIE SCHLANGENGRUBE UND DAS PENDEL* (1967) for director Harold Reinl. Allegedly based on Edgar Allan Poe's "The Pit and the Pendulum," the feature boasted good photography, but a poor script which made for a very loosely constructed film. It was released in parts of Europe as *TORTURE ROOM* and in the U.S. by Hemisphere Pictures as *BLOOD DEMON*. Lee played Count Regula, a wicked aristocrat who returns from the grave in a story that bore little relationship to any of Poe's writings.

CURSE OF THE CRIMSON ALTAR (1968) provided Lee with his last on screen appearance with Boris Karloff and his only film to date with horror film favorite Barbara Steele. Filmed in Spain by director Vernon Sewell, it was during this eight day quickie that Karloff caught the chest



Top: From *PORT AFRIQUE* (1956), Eugene Deckers and his assistant Guido Lorraine interview Lee, one of the suspects in a murder case they are investigating. Middle: From *FORTUNE IS A WOMAN* (1956), Lee vigorously denies an allegation made by investigator Jack Hawkins that he is attempting to defraud the insurance company. Lee plays a Welsh miner turned pop singer in the film. Bottom: From *BEYOND MOMBASA* (1956), Ron Randall, Leo Genn, Donna Reed and Cornel Wilde listen attentively to big game hunter Gil Rossi (Lee, kneeling, center) about poison darts. This is the role Lee considers to be his first meaty assignment after nearly ten years as an actor. Right: As the aristocratic Spanish attache from *THE CRIMSON PIRATE* (1953) at the age of 31. It has been remarked that Lee does extremely well in haughty, aristocratic roles, and is often seen sporting a mustache and beard.





cold that lead to his death. Lee later recalled of the late star: "...the courage, the cheerfulness, the humor and the tremendously impressive brilliance, professionalism, (and) his wonderful application to the job. You would have thought it was his first film. Wonderful, wonderful man..." Lee's role as the taciturn lord of the manor had originally been slated for Vincent Price, who was forced to bow out of the project when filming was scheduled to begin due to other commitments. It was not until two years later (1970) that this much heralded production received U.S. release from AIP as **THE CRIMSON CULT**.

Lee made yet another reprise in his most noted role in **DRACULA HAS RISEN FROM THE GRAVE** (1968), directed with some style by Freddie Francis. There were also plenty of inconsistencies and some ludicrous moments which were intended to add new kinks to a familiar pattern. It now became necessary for the traditional stake-in-the-heart to be accompanied by a prayer in Latin in order to be effective, no problem for past vampire fighters like Professor Van Helsing or Father Sandor, but a major stumbling block to the hero in John Elder's screenplay, played by Barry Andrews, who is an atheist! But despite its deficiencies, the picture made a bundle for its American distributor, Warner Bros, who had the savvy to merchandise the film with a cleverly mod ad campaign that sold Dracula as being camp, with catch-phrases like "You can't keep a good man down," "I always said he had plenty of get up and go," and "Boy does he give a hickey--" In defending the Dracula films as mass entertainment Lee said: "These films really attract the public by the tens of thousands. What could be better for the motion picture industry than that? The arty people who insist that films should be made about people next door don't impress me. Who wants to know about them anyway? Isn't it enough to always have them there?"

Lee participated in two Harry Alan Towers productions the same year. In the ludicrously amateurish **EVE** (1968), Lee essayed the wheelchair-ridden grandfather of shapely Celeste Yarnall in the title role of a sort of femme Tarzan. The film was directed by Jeremy Summers and appeared in England as **THE FACE OF EVE**. The other Towers production was a fourth episode in the flagging **Fu Manchu** series which Towers had been cranking out, one per year, since the first in 1965. This time without the participation of Seven Arts to provide financing, Towers filmed on the cheap in Spain. Called **FU MANCHU Y EL BESO DE LA MUERTE**, the film was the first of Lee's many Spanish-based productions for director Jesus (Jess) Franco. This English dubbed effort was slightly better than the previous batch of **Fu Manchu** picturizations and supported a chipper cast including Richard Greene and Shirley Eaton. The film received very few playdates in the American market from its distributor, Commonwealth United Entertainment, under the title of **KISS AND KILL**. The fact that the film's title was changed to omit any reference to **Fu Manchu** indicates how nil the exploitability of **Fu Manchu** as a continuing series had become. Only Lee's continued willingness to participate in the starring role was keeping the series alive. In England the film was released as **BLOOD OF FU MANCHU**. A fifth, and last segment of the **Fu Manchu** series was filmed that same year in Spain with the same director, but this time without even the participation of Harry Alan Towers, although Lee returned to take the starring role. Called **EL CASTILLO DE FU MANCHU** (1968), the film

Top: From **CORRIDORS OF BLOOD** (1958), Lee as seedy graverobber Resurrection Joe victimizes Boris Karloff as a London medical researcher. Lee highly values his association with the late, great actor in whose footsteps he has followed. Middle: From **THE HANDS OF ORLAC** (1960), stage magician Lee rehearses with his assistant Dany Carrel. Bottom: From **PIRATES OF BLOOD RIVER** (1961), Michael Ripper gets the drop on Lee as the evil French pirate LaRoche. This was Lee's third film for producer Anthony Nelson Keys (**THE MUMMY**, **TWO FACES OF DR. JEKYLL**) with whom he would later go into partnership to form his own production company. Right Background: A publicity photo taken during the filming of **THE HOUND OF THE BASKERVILLES** (1959) for Hammer Films.

proved so poor in quality that if failed to be even trade-shown in Great Britain. In the U.S. AIP, who had taken an option on the film, let it expire and declined the expense of releasing it, even to television. It has since been picked up for release by International Cinema Corporation.

The following year, 1969, proved to be the most prolific of any in film assignments for the, then, forty-eight-year-old actor. He appeared in an amazing total of 8 releases, a feat somewhat explained by the trend of producers to cast him in small cameo roles purely for the marquee value of his name and reputation. He, Vincent Price and Peter Cushing all put in brief appearances in *SCREAM AND SCREAM AGAIN* (1969), an Amicus Production which only made muster at the boxoffice because of its triumvirate of horror stars. Lee played Freemont, the head of a would be group of world rulers who are producing androids for take-overs in high places. Vincent Price received top-billing.

Lee wandered through a pseudo-pornographic effort called *PHILOSOPHY IN THE BOUDOIR* (1969), based on the book of the same title by the Marquis De Sade and directed by Jesus Franco. In this X-rated screen teaser he appeared as Dolmance, the on-screen narrator. According to Lee, he had received a last-minute call from producer Harry Alan Towers who was desperate for a replacement for the then ailing George Sanders. Lee agreed to do the small number of scenes required and flew to Barcelona where the film was being shot and completed his work on a Saturday and Sunday without ever realizing the type of film in which he was participating. This is one screen appearance the actor would just as soon forget. Says Lee: "I didn't see the film, but I spoke to many people who had and it would seem that I had appeared unknowingly in what can only be described as virtually a 'blue' film." Although the film encountered strict censorship in England, it was released virtually intact in America as *EUGENIE... THE STORY OF HER JOURNEY INTO PERVERSION*.

Hammer Films continued to keep the actor busy, but it seemed now that the studio intended to use Lee for only one role, bringing him back for a fourth time as Dracula in *TASTE THE BLOOD OF DRACULA* (1969), directed by newcomer Peter Sasdy. The new director managed to provide the film with an authentic and richly detailed period atmosphere, and elicited strong performances from a fine British cast including John Carson, Peter Sallis and Geoffrey Keen, only to be defeated in the end by another ill-conceived and poorly written screenplay, by John Elder. Frederick S. Clarke noted in his review (1:2:24): "Christopher Lee's Dracula, while physically impressive, is ill-defined and weakly characterized in the script. Scriptwriter John Elder seems always at a loss with what to have Dracula say and do, and to the utter ruin of a scene, frequently has the vampire talking to himself!" In fairness to the scriptwriters, it should be said that they were nearly forced into mediocrity by the formula imposed on the Dracula films by Sir James Carreras, then head of Hammer, who felt it was the girls in the films that interested the public. This attitude required that a considerable amount of screen time be devoted in each film to a female lead, usually flustering about in a low-cut dress or negligee, involved in some adolescent romance at oblique angles to the story's real concern. This reduced the character of Dracula to almost a static set-piece of secondary importance. At this time, Lee had involved himself in some heated debate with "the powers that be" at Hammer over the poor scripts he was being offered, and the lack of care being shown in the production of the Dracula films. The answer was always the same: the films made money, in fact, Hammer had become perhaps the most successful independent producer in the history of films, why should they change? At obvious ends, Lee threatened to refuse the role, Hammer threatened to replace him with someone else and opined they could no longer afford his price, but Hammer needed Lee to sell the pictures and Lee was in no position to turn down the work, both of them knew it, and so their uneasy collaboration continued. Warner Bros provided *TASTE THE BLOOD OF DRACULA* an American market and Hammer a guaranteed profit, but some were beginning to fail to take the Dracula films seriously. In their review, the

trade-paper "Variety" noted that "Christopher Lee can now play Dracula in his sleep, in this pic, looks occasionally as if he is doing so."

Despite the actor's dismay with the declining production values of his Dracula films at Hammer, the role itself was providing him with a useful trademark with the public. At the request of Peter Sellers, he agreed to perform a walk-on as Dracula in the overblown screen version of Terry Southern's witty satire, *THE MAGIC CHRISTIAN* (1969). Lee was in fine company among the many screen personalities who made ludicrous cameo appearances in the film, including Richard Attenborough, Laurence Harvey, Raquel Welch and Wilfrid Hyde White. He did another Dracula bit that same year in *ONE MORE TIME* (1969), a poor sequel to the rather inept Sammy Davis, Jr./Peter Lawford tough-guy spy spoof *SALT AND PEPPER*, directed by Jerry Lewis. This time he was accompanied by colleague Peter Cushing, appearing as Dr. Frankenstein, as a gag for friend and horror-film-fan Sammy Davis, Jr., and the bit was uncredited.

Next, he appeared briefly opposite Vincent Price in *THE OBLONG BOX* (1969), which claimed to be based on the short story by Edgar Allan Poe. With the presence of Price and Lee to lure in the customers, this less than satisfactory entry made the financial grade. Lee played the country doctor who gives medical attention to Price's murdering brother, only to be murdered himself. The role was disappointing, not only for its brevity, but also for the fact that it did not allow the two stars to appear together in any of their scenes.

Rounding out 1969, Lee did boxoffice duty in two more Spanish-made films for director Jesus Franco, whose second-rate features have done nothing to advance the actor's cinema reputation. In *EL PROCESO DE LAS BRUJAS* (1969), Lee played Baron George Jeffries of Wem, who was Lord Chief Justice of England during the reign of King James II and who used witch hunts and religious persecution as a stepping-stone to political power. The film was announced for U.S. release in 1971 by AIP as *THE BLOODY JUDGE*, but did not receive bookings until selected to be the lower half of a double-bill program with Hammer's *BLOOD FROM THE MUMMY'S TOMB*. For this purpose it was inexplicably retitled as *NIGHT OF THE BLOOD MONSTER* and accompanied by a grossly misleading ad campaign. "I did my best within the confines of the script to suggest the complex forces of his character," stated Lee. "The picture was made in extremely crude conditions in Portugal and Spain. A test of a good actor, some people say, is a good part. I maintain that it is a bad part. If you can surmount the difficulties that are against you and still do something that is recognizable and create a character, you've overcome great disabilities and disadvantages and I think that is more to your credit."

The other Franco project was yet another remake of Dracula, *EL CONDE DRACULA* (1969), which for the first time was to be faithfully based on Bram Stoker's original, including the use of much of the author's own dialogue and having Lee become progressively more youthful as in the book, as well as being the heavy-mustachioed Count described by Stoker. Originally the project had been announced as a multi-million dollar first-class production to co-star Vincent Price in the role of Dr. Van Helsing, to be directed by Terence Fisher, but after going through a number of production changes, Herbert Lom replaced Vincent Price, and Jesus Franco replaced Terence Fisher, and the big-budget, class production turned out to be just another quickie filmed on the cheap in Spain. Commonwealth United Entertainment picked up the Harry Alan Towers production for release, but went out of business before delivering it to American-International Pictures for U.S. distribution, resulting in a court suit. The film has yet to be shown to American audiences, and did not see release until 1973 in Great Britain where it received only a limited amount of bookings on the exploitation circuit as *BRAM STOKER'S COUNT DRACULA*. At the time Lee had been excited about the project because he had often expressed the wish to portray Dracula as Stoker intended, but after actually participating in the filming, he appraised the film's possibilities to his fans by saying: "...knowing what the producer can in fact produce, you won't be

surprised if it is not good, and I shall be delightfully surprised if it is."

While in Spain filming *EL CONDE DRACULA*, Lee appeared in a documentary about the film's production for underground filmmaker Pedro Portabella, called *VAMPIR* (1969). When a break in film assignments came up the following year, Lee agreed to return to Spain to work with Portabella again, this time in an avant-garde production called *EL UMBRACLE* (1970), roughly translatable as "the shady place." Neither a commercial film, Lee's participation was primarily for the experience and his own enjoyment. In working on the latter, which is supposed to be a symbolic protest against restrictive Spanish censorship, Lee did have the pleasure of meeting one of the world's great film directors, Luis Bunuel. Both films were shown at the New York Museum of Modern Art as part of their Cineprobe series devoted to the work of new filmmakers, and have been shown at the National Film Theater in London, as well as at other film societies around the world. Lee has generally been very pleased with his first foray into the realm of the "art" film.

After appearing in a record number of 8 films the previous year, 1970 turned out to be a much leaner year for film assignments in the midst of an industry-wide depression that nearly saw the close of several major studios. Nevertheless, the year turned out to be an immensely rewarding one for Christopher Lee, artistically speaking if not financially as well, because of his appearance in two major non-horror films, *JULIUS CAESAR* (1970) and *THE PRIVATE LIFE OF SHERLOCK HOLMES* (1970). On the basis of these two film assignments Lee observed rather enthusiastically: "...it seems to me that the industry is now beginning to sit up and take notice of me as an actor who will sell a film in other fields than that of the macabre."

Unfortunately, *JULIUS CAESAR* (1970) turned out to be an unfeeling picturization of the Bard's work, and certainly a pale imitation of the slick MGM version filmed in 1953. Lee's brief role as Artemidorus required only two-days of on-camera work, and in the release print he is barely recognizable. He received featured billing in the film's credits for his brief and almost embarrassingly hurried walk-on as the citizen who attempts to warn Caesar of his impending assassination on the steps of the capitol, an honor that reflected his growing importance and stature as a film star. The film itself, however, was quickly forgotten in the light of the Marlon Brando/Deborah Kerr/James Mason version which continues to play the college and art house circuits. Had the film been more successful, producer Peter Snell had plans to follow it with productions of *ANTHONY AND CLEOPATRA* and *TITUS ANDRONICUS*, in which Lee had also been approached to appear.

Lee's best non-horror role in many years came in the Billy Wilder production of *THE PRIVATE LIFE OF SHERLOCK HOLMES* (1970). In this expensively mounted caper, he essayed Mycroft Holmes, Sherlock's restrained brother in government service who is referred to as "the brains in the family" by the great Baker Street detective. Lee received exceptionally good notices for the part, something that the film as a whole certainly did not. In his review of the film (1:3:28), Dale Winogura lamented that "With all its graceful charm, airy simplicity, austere devotion, and colorful detail, it's pitiful that too few people have had the pleasure to see Wilder's faithful, elaborate tribute to Sherlock Holmes." Though Lee hardly represented the corpulent Mycroft of the Conan Doyle canon, he did well with the characterization, and thus became the only actor to have portrayed both Sherlock and Mycroft (not to mention Henry Baskerville) on the screen. Although Lee was forced to go through the unpleasant process of shaving off his healthy head of hair to apply the bald-cap makeup required of the role, he has made it no secret that he considers the part of Mycroft to be his favorite screen role. "I was pleased with my performance because it was totally different for me," he enthused. "It showed that I could do something different. God bless Billy Wilder for giving me that break. Nobody else, until he did, had even considered doing it. It may have started the ball rolling in the right direction. I shall always be grateful to Billy Wilder. I will never forget as long as I live the marvellous experience of working with him."



Part of Lee's euphoria in working on the film is a result of the fact that for perhaps the first time in his entire career he was appearing in a major role, in a first-class production, among fine performers, in the charge of one of the most talented of film directors. For just once in his long career it was an inspiration to appear in a production where everyone was allowed to be at the top of his form, and where money was not being spared for the sake of quality. For one who had labored so long and hard in so many ill-conceived, low-budgeted horror films, it was the experience of a lifetime.

But neither film had changed Lee's position in the industry to any great degree, perhaps because neither film turned out to be an outstanding financial success. When nothing more interesting failed to develop, Lee ascended to do a fifth Dracula for Hammer Films rather than remain idle, and SCARS OF DRACULA (1970) was the result, directed by Roy Ward Baker. This was the first of the Hammer series not to link the resurrection of Dracula to his demise in the previous film, so written on the contingency that Christopher Lee, increasingly active in other types of films and growing reluctant to appear as Dracula, might turn down the part. Lee exercised in some wishful thinking in expressing: "I'm hoping for the day to come when I'll be able to say (to Hammer): 'I don't want to do your film for two reasons—I can't do it because I'm doing another film and I don't want to do anymore pictures for you of this kind.'" Perhaps a sure sign of the day he achieves the degree of independence and success as an international star that he is seeking will be his refusal to appear in Hammer's Dracula series. "Apart from anything else," confessed Lee, "I've reached the end of my resourcefulness with this character!" In reviewing SCARS OF DRACULA (1:4:29) John R. Duvoli called the film "an attempt at returning to form. The series has reintroduced Klove, made Dracula a more vital character and dispensed with the ludicrous subplotting. Christopher Lee regains some of his earlier force as Dracula and aids the film immeasurably." The film was done as part of a production package for the Rank Organisation and was picked up for American release by a small independent distributor, American Continental Films, who got the film few playdates. In their review the trade paper "Variety" now quipped: "Lee can do the Dracula bit on his head now."

Lee returned to Amicus Productions to appear in yet another re-make of Robert Louis Stevenson's "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde," called I, MONSTER (1971) and brought along a young friend and protege, Stephen Weeks, to direct. Knowing full well that another version of the oft-filmed horror story was not very exploitable, the producers had planned to sell the film on the basis of shooting it in a new and inexpensive 3-D process. Unfortunately the producers had not bargained for the fact that their young and inexperienced director would be unable to master the new 3-D technique, which required a specifically proscribed motional relationship between subject and camera, and so when scenes were shot incorrectly and filming fell hopelessly behind schedule, the idea of releasing the film in 3-D was abandoned. Without the excitement of 3-D, even the top notch cast including Peter Cushing and Mike Raven was not enough to create interest in the film and it performed poorly at the boxoffice. Even the film's producers were willing to admit that despite the

Top: From SHERLOCK HOLMES UND DAS HALSBAND DES TODES (1962), Lee's fine and only performance as Sherlock Holmes in this German produced film was undercut by a poor screenplay and the filmmakers' decision to post-synch all of his dialogue using another performer. Middle: With producer Anthony Nelson Keys on the set at Hammer of DEVIL-SHIP PIRATES (1964), Lee's first motion picture after 17 years in the business in which he received top-billing in the credits. Bottom: From ERCOLE AL CENTRO DELLA TERRA (1961), Lee's first film for horror film director Mario Bava, one of the better sand-and-sandal epics churning out of Italy at the time. Background Right: As the Gaelic aristocrat Lord Summerisle from THE WICKER MAN (1972), a recent film for producer Peter Snell, in which Lee represents a last vestige of feudalism and paganism in the modern British Isles.

fine cast, the attention given to atmosphere and detail, and the faithful retelling of the original story, the film was simply boring, even when cut down to a tight and short 75 minutes. Nevertheless, the film did give Lee the opportunity to add yet another classic horror role to his acting repertoire, as well as sink his teeth into a part that was more demanding and dramatically expressive than he had come to expect from horror films. Lee called the film "the toughest picture I've ever done in my life beyond any doubt whatsoever." "Films and Filming" observed in their review of the film that "Christopher Lee convincingly conveys the feeling of a frightened, hunted animal." The film has only recently been picked up for American distribution by Cannon Films, and has received few bookings.

Following the standard horror assignment of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, Lee was provided with some off-beat casting that the actor would like to see more of. He described the project enthusiastically as "... something I've wanted to do all my life, my first western." Called HANNIE CAULDER (1971), it was being produced by Patrick Curtis, the husband of Raquel Welch, a producer who had written Lee into several earlier proposals that had fallen through. Lee grew himself a scruffy beard and journeyed to Almira, Spain, to work for two weeks in the role of Baily, a sympathetic gunsmith who assists star Raquel Welch in avenging her own rape at the hands of Ernest Borgnine and his brothers, played by Strother Martin and Jack Elam. Robert Culp served as the male lead in the role of a hired gunfighter and bounty hunter working for Raquel, while Lee's part was only a small cameo role which in past years before he attained international stardom would have been less charitably termed a "bit" part. Nevertheless, the actor approached the assignment with his usual conviction and dedication, and a desire to succeed in a new and challenging type of role, one that could, in fact, open up new vistas of motion picture work. He spent his Sundays before going on location with a stuntman who taught him how to ride western style and make the various maneuvers that would be required on horseback. The elaborate preparation was in anticipation of yet another western role the same year for director Peter Collinson in TOMORROW'S DAWN, with Lee Van Cleef, Telly Savalas, Eli Wallach and Lee J. Cobb. Lee was to play an English newspaper correspondent covering the American Civil War, but like so many other unmentioned and unrecorded projects, the film was never made.

Next came the rather prestigious Amicus production of THE HOUSE THAT DRIPPED BLOOD (1971), with a screenplay by Robert Bloch from several of his own short stories with Hitchcockian twists. Top-billed in a cast that included Peter Cushing, Denholm Elliott and Ingrid Pitt, Lee spent six days working in the episode "Sweets To The Sweet," a macabre vignette concerning a widowed man being done in by his voodoo practicing little daughter. The film, directed by Peter Duffell, was geared to follow the lucrative mold established by the same company's DR. TERROR'S HOUSE OF HORRORS. It did beautifully at the boxoffice.

Christopher Lee made his first trip to Transylvania in Rumania, the homeland of Dracula, in September, 1971 for on location filming of IN SEARCH OF DRACULA, a television documentary directed by Calvin Floyd and 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. Lee appears as Vlad Tepes Dracula, the historical figure upon which Bram Stoker based his famous gothic novel, and narrates the film as well. As an actor who had played Dracula and other vampires numerous times on the screen, Lee was fascinated with the idea of assuming the role of the historical figure and met with one of the book's authors, Radu Florescu to research the part. Once in Rumania, Lee was not satisfied with the costume provided by the filmmakers and went about to local museums and historical sites to piece together a more authentic outfit on his own. Writing in an article for "Film In Sweden," the film's director stated that: "Christopher Lee's Count Dracula and Fifteenth Century portraits of Vlad Dracula are remarkably similar." The film, produced by Sweden's Aspekt Films, has been exhibited in that country and on British

television, but has yet to be screened in America.

Less artistically satisfying was Lee's return to Hammer Films that year to don the Dracula cape for a 6th time in DRACULA A.D. 1972 (1971), being made for Warner Brothers. Hammer attempted earnestly to hypo the rather tired formula by bringing back Peter Cushing in the role of Dr. Van Helsing and transferring the action to modern day London. The result, as described by Lee M. Kaplan in his review (2:4:33) was: "a mediocre rock-culture drama rammed head-first into a traditional, equally mediocre period horror film." Lee's appearance as Dracula was, as usual, brief, and on an acceptable par. The actor had long since disdained working in this role for Hammer Films, and was back again strictly for the money. The film was profitable. The Dracula films always are, and for this reason Hammer sees no point in spending any more time, effort and particularly any more money than is necessary to simply crank them out. While Lee in addition to drawing his salary is interested in appearing in films of quality and intelligence, Hammer is a business enterprise purely and simply, and they will not and cannot be convinced that making these films better will make them more profitable.

For his final film assignment in 1971, Lee journeyed to Madrid in mid-December to appear in PANICO EN EL TRANSIBERIANO with old comrade Peter Cushing. In the film, which was released the following year in Britain and the United States as HORROR EXPRESS, he played a Sir Richard Burton type of English explorer who finds his hands full combating panic and murder that is caused by an alien invader from outer space on board a speeding railway train. The film was screened at the Fifth International Festival of Fantasy and Horror Films in Sitges, Spain in October, 1972 (see 2:4:36) and was awarded a special prize by the association of cinema writers for its original screenplay.

Barely two months later he was back to work again with Peter Cushing, this time for independent producer Mike Redbourn on THE CREEPING FLESH (1972), directed by Freddie Francis. Lee played the evil half-brother of kindly Peter Cushing, both scientists involved in the investigation of human behavior. The "creeping flesh" of the title, is the ancient remains of a Lovecraft-like demon-god, the skeleton of which, when in contact with water, forms new flesh and tissue. The film's climactic scene comes when Lee, jealous of his half-brother's great discovery and anxious to learn from it himself, steals the skeleton during a tremendous thunderstorm. The film's premise was an original and fascinating one, but early on the screenplay by Peter Spenceley and Jonathan Rumbold goes off on a tangent when Peter Cushing discovers that serum from the flesh of the creature can be used to "vaccinate against evil." It is clear that, having thought-up a good idea for a new type of screen monster, the filmmakers were at a loss with what to do with it, for the film ends, somewhat disappointingly, without resolving the monster's fate or whereabouts.

During the filming of THE CREEPING FLESH, Lee filmed scenes for DEATH LINE (1972) on a Saturday for producers Jay Kanter and Alan Ladd, Jr. Lee plays a suave British agent of MI5 who exchanges a few witty retorts with the film's star Donald Pleasance in one brief sequence. The film is a gruesome horror story involving subhumans who survive a tunnel disaster in 1892 and continue to live in the underground tunnel network, preying on unsuspecting subway passengers late at night. The film, which has not yet been released in America, was a phenomenal success in its British release, but was condemned by many critics for its queasy mixture of gore and humor. The film is a classic example of a growing phenomena in Lee's acting career. Producers who cannot afford to hire the actor for a major role that would require weeks of shooting find that they can afford his time for an hour or a day. What they are buying and what Lee is more than willing to sell is prestige. While his appearance in the film may last only several minutes or less, the producer is paying for the privilege of using Lee's name to advertise and promote the picture, not only with the viewing public but with distributors and film brokers as well. For the actor, such work is almost irresistible, for it offers the chance to pick up a substantial fee for a minimum of time and effort.

In the spring of 1972, Lee realized a long cherished dream when he began filming of NOTHING BUT THE NIGHT, the first production of his own independent company, Charlemagne Productions, formed in association with former Hammer Films producer Anthony Nelson Keys. Details of the film, in which Lee plays a Scotland Yard investigator looking into the mysterious deaths of a group of people involved in a charitable organization, have been given in past issues (2:3:24 and 2:4:43). Lee had involved himself in the acquisition and optioning of film properties as early as 1967 when brief notices in trade publications began to announce his activities in this area. Charlemagne was formed in late 1970 and it was not until mid-1972 that their first film production was off the ground. Lee envisioned the company carving out its own niche in the action/horror film market and acquired properties for filming like John Blackburn's Bury Him Darkly and two Dennis Wheatley thrillers *To the Devil A Daughter* and *The Haunting of Toby Jugg*. Blackburn's NOTHING BUT THE NIGHT was chosen as the first property to go before the cameras, in a distribution deal signed with the Rank Organisation, because, as a straight tale of mystery and suspense, it was felt the property would have great appeal outside of just the horror film market. Although Christopher Lee and his co-star Peter Cushing conducted an extended publicity tour in England to promote the film, it has received poor handling by Rank who consigned it mostly to play-off in their B cinemas. The film has yet to be sold for American distribution. At this point, the future of Charlemagne Productions is very much in doubt. Lee and Anthony Nelson Keys are continuing in their acquisition and development of properties, but a great deal will depend on the success of their first venture.

In the final months of 1972, Lee participated in three productions which have not yet gone into theatrical release. He filmed DARK PLACES with Joan Collins, directed by horror film veteran and Academy Award winner, Freddie Francis, and closed out the year in familiar fashion, doing DRACULA IS DEAD AND WELL AND LIVING IN LONDON for Hammer Films. This seventh in the Dracula series, for release by Warner Brothers, is something of a cross between the Dracula and Fu Manchu films in that the script by producer Don Houghton has the vampire plotting world conquest via a Black Death bacteria being developed by a scientist under the control of Dracula. Saving the world from this fate worse than death are the forces of good, led by Peter Cushing in a reprise of his "new" Dr. Van Helsing role introduced in the previous film. From the sound of it all, the Hammer Dracula films are reaching for new depths at which to sink, although we may look forward to the possibility that they may soon bottom out at such a low level of quality and intelligence that they will have become "camp."

On a more promising note, Lee filmed scenes in October/November 1972 for THE WICKER MAN, being produced by Peter Snell for release by British Lion. The screenplay of the film is written by Anthony Shaffer, the author who wrote the smash stage production of "Sleuth," later turned into an equally successful film with Laurence Olivier and Michael Caine, as well as the screenplay for the recently acclaimed Hitchcock film, FRENZY. Lee appears as Lord Summerisle in the film, a Gaelic aristocrat who is dedicated to the worship of the old earth gods and the belief that all life and meaning is derived from the earth bringing forth her fruits and blessings. He is opposed by Edward Woodward, playing a Scottish policeman investigating a strange crime on Lord Summerisle's little island domain off the Scottish coast, who is forced to come to grips with a conflict between the islander's pagan beliefs and Christianity. Lee dresses in authentic Scottish kilts for the role and is given the opportunity to make use of his trained singing voice in performing traditional folk songs. The film, however, is a chiller, and one, from the looks of it, that is made with sophistication and intelligence. Lee has often said, "I'll never turn my back on horror films. My only complaint is against the shoddily made film. I just want to appear in better ones and have a part I can do something with." THE WICKER MAN appears to be the type of quality genre production that offers him just such an opportunity. The film is directed by Robin Hardy and co-stars Britt Ekland, Diane Ci-



It does not bother me to be labeled as a horror actor although it is rather a misnomer. The important thing is to make your mark and be remembered as an actor who is different from others.

lento and Ingrid Pitt.

Thus far, Lee's only recorded film assignment of 1973 has been the role of Rochefort in producer Ilya Salkind's remake of *THE THREE MUSKETEERS*, which began filming on location in Europe in May. The film stars Richard Chamberlain, Michael York, Oliver Reed, Charlton Heston, Faye Dunaway, Geraldine Chaplin and Raquel Welch. Several projects and proposals involving Lee are in the planning stages, including projects in preparation through his own Charlemagne Productions and four projects Lee was offered by French filmmakers when he attended the Premiere Festival du Film Fantastique D'Avoriaz held in Avoriaz, France in February, 1973 (see separate story, page 36). The projects include: *TENDRE DRACULA OU LES CONFESSIONS D'UN BUVEUR DE SANG* (Tender Dracula or the Confessions of a Blood Drinker), being prepared by director Alain Robbe Grillet to star Lee and Jean Louis Trintignant as sympathetic vampires in a story that is a mixture of comedy, horror and satire; *EULALIE QUITTE LES CHAMPS* (Eulalie Lives In the Fields), being prepared by director Jerome Savory in which Lee will play a murderer who kills one of the members of a theatre troupe called "Le Grand Magic Circus," only to be the subject of a bizarre revenge; *LA CONFESSION* (The Confession), being prepared by director Claude Chabrol in which Lee will play a priest whose infatuation with a young boy leads to murder; and *MORT PROFONDE* (Profound Death), being prepared by director Ian Walrus with the setting to be the Avoriaz festival itself. His unique and original concept is for Lee to play a hypnotist who, on the closing night of the festival, accidentally hypnotizes himself while putting several people in a trance as a demonstration. The story involves the attempts made at bringing the group back to consciousness and the visions seen by the participants in their hypnotic state, visions which closely parallel situations seen in the films entered at the festival. To costar are Fernando Rey as a psychiatrist, Maurice Ronet as his assistant, and Stephane Audran as a journalist.

These projects, unlike *THE THREE MUSKETEERS*, are only in the planning stages and may well never see production for a variety of reasons. Lee himself is often unwilling or reluctant to discuss pending projects, a quirk that is a combination of theatrical superstition about jinxing a future prospect and a well of resentment and bitterness over countless cancelled and unfilmed projects and ideas during his career, a sad circumstance with which every filmmaker must come to terms. A classic example occurred

Top: From *LA FRUSTA E IL CORPO* (1965), as the sadistic Kurt Menliff in his second assignment with horror film director Mario Bava. The picture encountered problems of censorship and was badly cut. Middle: From *DIE SCHLANGENGRUBE UND DAS PENDEL* (1967). Lee is an evil Count who is drawn and quartered for the murder of twelve virgins, only to be reassembled and revived by his servant (Carl Lange) for the murder of a thirteenth. The film was directed by Harold Reinl. Bottom: From *EVE* (1968), as a former Amazon explorer Colonel Stuart, examining a relic provided by Herbert Lom. The role and film was one of Lee's lesser efforts for producer Harry Alan Towers, a filmmaker who continually used Lee in a series of low-budget productions, trading heavily on the actor's talent and reputation. Right: As Captain of the King's Guard from *THAT LADY* (1955), in which Lee worked again for director Terence Young, for whom he had made his acting debut in 1947 in *CORRIDOR OF MIRRORS*.



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in 1970 when Lee became involved in protracted and very definite negotiations with producer Mel Ferrer to appear in the title role of a project called SALEM CAME TO SUPPER. Lee was fascinated by and very enthusiastic about the screenplay involving a Swedish farmer unjustly imprisoned in a foreboding insane asylum for the axe murder of a farmhand, and who plans a diabolical revenge on the people who framed him. The role of Salem was a very desirable one that offered not only the challenge, but the opportunity for Lee to excel within the horror film cycle he was imprisoned as an actor. Fortunately, equal, if not better opportunities arose that year, including THE PRIVATE LIFE OF SHERLOCK HOLMES, but you can imagine the actor's disappointment to learn that filming had begun on the project under the title of THE NIGHT VISITOR, in which he had been replaced by Max von Sydow in the role of Salem.

Since becoming active in motion pictures and a top star of the horror genre, Lee has limited his appearances in other media, though he has managed to find the time and inclination to make occasional forays into television, with often impressive results. In his first assignment in Hollywood in 1964, he appeared in "The Sign of Satan" segment of the ALFRED HITCHCOCK HOUR. It was based on a Robert Bloch story, and in it Lee played the dual role of a devil-worshipper and an actor. The plot has the actor killed in a satanist ceremony, but returning from the dead to complete work on a film. Jack Edmund Nolan writing in "Films In Review" evaluated it "...one of the best horror films ever."

In recent years, Lee has also appeared in two segments of the British-produced video series, THE AVENGERS. In the "Never, Never Say Die" segment he played Dr. Francis N. Stone and his creation, the latter without any gruesome make-up, a deliberate parody of the Frankenstein cycle. In the segment "The Interrogators," he essayed the head of a private school which trained people for war. Lee has also guested on a number of British television interview shows, including CINEMA, ON THE BRADEN BEAT, THE DAVE ALLEN SHOW, THE DAMON ANDREWS SHOW and FILM REVIEW.

In the middle of 1972, Lee made his second trip to Hollywood (see 2:4:43) to guest star in a telefeature with good friend Sammy Davis, Jr. called POOR DEVIL. Shown on ABC on February 14, 1973, with the possibility of becoming a weekly television series in the fall, the pilot film did so poorly that Sammy Davis, Jr. turned around and signed a lengthy contract with rival network NBC. The only real interest the light comedy film held was Christopher Lee in the role of Lucifer, one genre role the actor had not previously presented. The tradepaper "Daily Variety" opined in their review: "...Christopher Lee as Beelzebub contributes rich portrayal... But the script, concept and dialogue are hoary with age." Nevertheless, the assignment provided Lee with a pleasant trip and a wistful look at the big production money in Hollywood, not to mention a warm reception by his Hollywood fans and colleagues. "I was treated superbly well," he told interviewer Chris Knight (2:4:43), "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."

On May 3, 1968, Lee was heard on the series RADIO 3 in a 75 minute adaptation of the Ray Bradbury play "Leviathan 99," playing the role of the captain of the spaceship Cetus-7. Bradbury

Top: From JULIUS CAESAR (1970), Lee as Artemidorus, the carpenter who attempts to warn Caesar of his impending assassination on the steps of the capitol. Although Lee received prominence in the billing and advertising, his role was an almost embarrassingly hurried walk-on. Middle: From HANNIE CAULDER (1971), Raquel Welch and Robert Culp accept a special weapon crafted by gunsmith Lee. Lee greatly enjoyed this participation in his first western film, shot in Almira, Spain. Bottom: From PANICO EN EL TRANSIBERIANO (1971), Peter Cushing, Lee, as a Sir Richard Burton style English adventurer, and Telly Sevalas combat an alien invader on board a speeding railway express train.

happens to be one of the actor's favorite authors. Also on radio, Lee has been interviewed on **MOVIE GO ROUND** and **LATE NIGHT EXTRA**.

Another medium in which Lee has performed is opera, in which he has over the years sung some fourteen different roles. He has recorded a number of these performances, mostly for private pressings. In 1964, he made tapes of two Bram Stoker stories "The Judge's House" and "Dracula's Guest." At the time, he said: "I am interested in recording many other stories by Stoker, *The Dunwich Horror* by Lovecraft, and further authors of the macabre whose works I have studied and chosen with a view to future recordings on the gramophone." The next year, he recorded Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, playing all the characters—including females—for a two LP record set, produced by Russ Jones and Ray Taylor in London. It was marketed in the United States by Stamford Records. Most recently, Lee has ventured into the popular music field, cutting a single 45 RPM for EMI "I Am Yours/The Seasons." If the record is more than casually successful, Lee hopes to make more popular music recordings.

In 1958, after Lee's very dynamic appearance in Hammer Films' remake of *DRACULA*, the actor is said to have received several proposals of marriage in his flood of fan mail, more mail, in fact, than any other star in England. Swept in with this tide of newfound popularity, the actor discovered that he not only had fans, but they were organizing—he had a fan club. Fifteen years and three presidents later, The Christopher Lee International Club is still in existence, and growing under the direction of Dorene Hazell*, a Sussex housewife who had joined the club early in its existence and grew up, like many members, to discover that her interest in Christopher and his films was undiminished. One of the primary reasons that the club has prospered is that Christopher has taken a very personal interest in club members and activities, putting in personal appearances at their annual London conventions, providing stills and information on his current film activity, and answering questions submitted by club members in their quarterly club journal. Lee receives nothing very tangible from this association, other than the reactions and opinions of members about his work, information which he values highly, and his participation reflects primarily a general attitude toward all of the millions of people the world over who have continued to patronize his films, an attitude of respect and deep appreciation.

Though Christopher Lee would obviously like to break away from the "King of the Ghouls" name tag, he undoubtedly realizes he will never be able to do so, without great financial and career setbacks. He has rationalized his professional position to the point where he can state: "It does not bother me to be labelled as a horror actor although it is rather a misnomer. The great thing these days is to be remembered for some particular niche or angle which you can occupy without fear of interference from somebody else. The important thing is to make your mark and to be remembered as an actor who is different from others."

*To join send \$6.00 to The Christopher Lee International Club, 40 Thalassa Road, Worthing, Sussex, England.

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Together on the set of *THE MUMMY* (1959), for Hammer Films.

AFTERWORD by Terence Fisher

One of the first impressions I ever had of Christopher Lee was his extreme professionalism and his wonderful sense of movement. I believe he originally studied dancing—ballet to be exact—but found that he was too tall for it. Apart from his professional acting, I've always been tremendously impressed by his control of movement and the way he carries himself.

I first met Chris in 1948 at Highbury Studios when he was a Rank potential—I won't insult him and use the word starlet. Highbury was where the Rank Organisation tested out their personnel to find if they had talent. It wasn't until Hammer made *CURSE OF FRANKENSTEIN* that we worked together again. I wouldn't say that he has changed very much. He's become more self-confident, having worked over a long period of time and gained a high position in the industry.

I find it very easy to work with him. We understand each other and we've worked so often over a period of time that we don't need to have a lot of discussion before we start something new. On the set, we'll pause sometimes and instinctively know what the other is going to say. Chris is tremendously cooperative and dedicated as an actor. During a picture I want his ideas. I don't impose a line of direction on him, but draw from his ideas to develop my approach to the material. When he becomes difficult, as all actors sometimes do, his extremely good sense of humor allows me to get a laugh out of him to balance the situation.

CURSE OF FRANKENSTEIN and *DRACULA* are my favorite films that I have directed that Chris has appeared in. This is because they were the beginning of a new cycle of fantasy films and, as such, were milestones. The filming of *DRACULA* went like a dream. Everything worked. Christopher Lee's performance as Count Dracula was superb, the script was good and the characters were well cast. Chris had given the role of Dracula a great deal of thought, concerning its physical and sexual implications, and his interpretation provided for a very complex characterization. Christopher Lee and Peter Cushing sparked against each other in their scenes together. When you use two actors of their calibre, they draw the best out of each other in their performances.

All actors tend to find that one part that somehow clicks for them. For Christopher Lee, that part is the role of Count Dracula. He is now branching out into other types of roles and showing that, by no means, is he typecast. But no matter what role he assumes, he brings to it those same qualities that made him such a success when he played Count Dracula for the first time some fifteen years ago at Bray Studios.

Terence Fisher

Terence Fisher has directed Christopher Lee in: *SONG FOR TOMORROW* (1948), *CURSE OF FRANKENSTEIN* (1957), *DRACULA* (1958), *THE MUMMY* (1959), *THE HOUND OF THE BASKERVILLES*, *THE MAN WHO COULD CHEAT DEATH*, *THE TWO FACES OF DR. JEKYLL* (1960), *SHERLOCK HOLMES UND DAS HALSBAND DES TODES* (1962), *THE GORGON* (1964), *DRACULA, PRINCE OF DARKNESS* (1966), *NIGHT OF THE BIG HEAT* (1967) and *THE DEVIL RIDES OUT*.

SCHLOCK

Interview
conducted by Dale Winogura

SCHLOCK is an amusing satire on horror and science fiction films, written, directed by, and starring John Landis, a 22 year-old film buff. At one time, an employee of the 20th Century Fox mailroom, he watched and studied the filming of movies like BENEATH THE PLANET OF THE APES, BUTCH CASSIDY AND THE SUNDANCE KID, and HELLO, DOLLY, and television shows like VOYAGE TO THE BOTTOM OF THE SEA, LAND OF THE GIANTS, and PEYTON PLACE. With almost no real first-hand knowledge of film, he proved that anyone can make a good film by finishing his first feature film, SCHLOCK, in only fourteen days. What is truly remarkable about the film is that it is funny and clever, and finally worth some discussion. Toward this end I met both John and his producer, Jim O'Rourke, at the famous Hamburger Hamlet on Sunset Boulevard.

CFQ: How did you two become involved together in SCHLOCK?

O'ROURKE: John and I met in Yugoslavia, doing a picture called KELLY'S HEROES for MGM. We talked about things we'd like to do, and how ridiculous it is, working on a picture where they're wasting so much money. When we got back to L.A., we decided that the only way to make a movie enjoyably is to produce it ourselves, and so we did.

CFQ: What was your working relationship in making the film?

LANDIS: Jim is credited as producer on the screen, but he was also production manager, location finder...he did everything.

O'ROURKE: I just wound up doing everything that needed to be done. I was assistant director as well as an extra.

LANDIS: On SCHLOCK, everyone who worked on the picture did more than what you're traditionally supposed to do. Every member of the crew was also in the picture.

O'ROURKE: You find yourself running around trying to find another location for tomorrow's shooting while everyone else is breaking for lunch.

John and I had so many things to do we hardly had a chance to talk much during the shooting. John's problems were really the creative, and mine were mainly business and how to get things done.

CFQ: Were there any significant production problems?

O'ROURKE: Thousands every day. Usually you learn what not to do on your next film. I really can't give any specific examples off hand. The major problem is making the money that you have stretch far enough to get the job done, which is the same problem everyone has.

We decided to shoot in 35mm because it turned out that it's really much cheaper than 16mm. In 16mm, you need twice the light in interiors as you do in 35mm, and you're not running as much footage. Cutting 35mm is incredibly much easier. You're also not faced with a blow-up problem, or trying to match grain.

LANDIS: The opticals are also easier in 35mm.

CFQ: When did you first get the idea to do this picture?

LANDIS: I went to see a picture called TROG, which has got to be one of the funniest movies I've ever seen in my life. It did two things to me: it absolutely outraged me, and it inspired me. I was insulted that the filmmakers had such a lack of concern for their audience. It's one of the worst movies I've ever seen—the ultimate stupid movie. It angered me so much that I went home and got the germ of the idea for SCHLOCK, and I wrote the screenplay in one night.

The difference between SCHLOCK on the screen, and the way I originally conceived it is that the monster is the hero now—the most intelligent and sympathetic character in the picture.

The audience identifies so strongly with him that bad parts in the movie, due to my inexperience as a director, are carried because Schlock has such audience sympathy going for him.

CFQ: Where was the picture shot?

LANDIS: In and around Agoura, California. It's the place where Carl Leammle said, when Universal was going to make a silent African epic years ago, "A tree is a tree, a rock is a rock, shoot it in Agoura." Every television show in the world has been shot there.

CFQ: How did you do the underground cave scenes?

O'ROURKE: That was a problem. We had a cave set, but something happened and we couldn't use it. It was two hours before dark, and we had to shoot it that night. We went to a public street in the mountains, Laurel Canyon Blvd, stopped traffic which is highly illegal, and we shot it against the side of a cliff, on the road.

CFQ: Did you do that cake and ice cream eating scene as a last take of the day?

LANDIS: We did the eating at the end of the day, and I tore that makeup off fast because I was suffocating under all that ice cream.

I want to say that I feel Rick Baker, who conceived and did the makeup on SCHLOCK, will be one of the great makeup men. It's the same idea that John Chambers used on PLANET OF THE APES, but there were different sculptural details, like four separate foam appliances and six hairpieces. It took four hours to put on, and about one half hour to get off, because we used medical adhesive, and you can't just rip it off.

It was 1200 when we shot it, and that's no exaggeration. It was the hottest summer in California history. Rick and I would get up every morning at 2 A.M., have breakfast, apply the makeup even though Schlock might not have to work until 2 P.M. The only

Behind the scenes of SCHLOCK, a film shot in Agoura, California by 22 year-old director John Landis, and his 28 year-old producer James C. O'Rourke, filmmakers who are probably younger than many of you reading this. Left: Between takes, makeup artist Rick Baker touches up the makeup. The 21 year-old Baker designed and created the suit and ten piece rubber face for the Schlockthropus. (Photo by Saul Kahan) Right: Director John Landis checks a camera set-up, then takes off his glasses to step in front of it in the role of the Schlockthropus. (Photo by Steve Hoffman)



PHOTOS BY SAUL KAHAN & STEVE HOFFMAN



part that's me are my ears, the rest was foam, paint, glue, crepe, hair. No one was hurt making the film except me, doing the stuntwork.

CFQ: How would you recommend a person get into independent filmmaking?

LANDIS: My answer is, don't. Most people aren't aware of what a cutthroat business the industry is, the incredible dishonesty and stupidity. When we made *SCHLOCK*, we didn't have a distribution deal, and that is the dumbest thing you can do. Fortunately for us, we had a product that apparently people were intrigued by. My initial intention was to make a monster movie for children, but it also seems to exist on other levels of sophistication. We made a deal with distributor Jack H. Harris, and we will see some money, hopefully.

O'ROURKE: Every established film person told us we were absolutely insane, that it would never work, and audiences wouldn't accept it. The problem is that most people make films to plug a gap in a distribution schedule. That's not what it's all about. It's more important that you entertain people.

You should have enough money to finish the picture before you start. If you do get it finished, you have to realize that you may not make a dime, unless you get real lucky. The most important thing is to get people to see it.

LANDIS: We showed *SCHLOCK* to the majors, who are not nice people to deal with. They were not interested in the picture, but they were very interested in us.

CFQ: Were you pleased with the final product?

O'ROURKE: Yes, I was. It came out a lot funnier than I expected. I expected a lot more satire and a lot less comedy, but I'm glad it turned out the way it did.

CFQ: Is there anything in particular you want to say about *SCHLOCK*?

LANDIS: I get bored by most of it, and at some of it I cringe. In terms of what I intended to do, seeing the film with an audience, I think we were pretty successful. But there are literally hundreds of jokes that people don't laugh at in the picture.

CFQ: What are your future plans?

LANDIS: Jim and I have a couple of projects. One is called *AN AMERICAN WEREWOLF IN PARIS*, which is very funny and very frightening. It's now in script form. *TEENAGE VAMPIRE* is another one. I've always wanted to make *Island of Dr. Moreau* since I was four, and I intend to, also *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*.

CFQ: What are your feelings about current science fiction films?

LANDIS: In terms of science fiction production, it's going up tremendously. Fantasy films are what the cinema is all about. I want to make musicals, but I love fantasy films. I think *2001: A SPACE ODYSSEY* is one of the best motion pictures ever made; *KING KONG* also, a brilliant film; *DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL* is a picture I greatly admire; *THE CAT PEOPLE*, a great picture; *INVASION OF THE BODY SNATCHERS*, wonderful. If I thought long enough, I could come up with 60 great fantasy films. But most fantasy films are terrible, and that's what *SCHLOCK* is all about.



Scenes from *SCHLOCK*, currently in release through Jack H. Harris Enterprises. Left: Schlock (director John Landis) falls in love with a blind girl (Eliza Garrett) who thinks he is a dog. Middle: Schlock takes a patron to the bathroom during a kiddie matinee and looks at a poster of King Kong with vague recognition. Right: Schlock discovers the joys of custard pies and ice cream sitting on a curb with two kids and a mongrel dog. *SCHLOCK* is written and directed by John Landis, who also stars as the central character, the Schlockthropus. The film is a joyful takeoff on the whole horror film genre and a satire that exists on many levels of sophistication.

FILM REVIEWS

VAULT OF HORROR

...played more for chuckles than for chills, and succeeds in neither department.

VAULT OF HORROR A Cinerama Release. 3/73. In Eastman Color. 105 minutes. A Metromedia/Amicus Production. Produced by Max J. Rosenberg and Milton Subotsky. Executive producer, Charles W. Fries. Production executive, Paul Thompson. Directed by Roy Ward Baker. Screenplay by Milton Subotsky. Director of photography, Denys Coop, BSC. Edited by Oswald Hafenrichter. Art director, Tony Curtis. Makeup, Roy Ashton.

Inez Dawn Adams
Moore Tom Baker
Maitland Michael Craig
Diltant Denholm Elliott
Sebastian Curt Jurgens
Rogers Daniel Massey
Critchit Terry-Thomas

In economics, the law of diminishing returns states in part that a product which maintains the same quality, or at least does not improve, is doomed to decreasing popularity. The equivalent in films occurs when producers hew to a once successful formula that has clearly outrun both its interest and profitability. This seems to be exactly the spot where Amicus resides at the moment. It is not simply a matter of all the Amicus films basically resembling each other as far as subject matter, stars, and style of filming are concerned. They are now beginning to look almost perfectly identical, particularly the interiors, with their appalling pastel color schemes and sterile, ultra-modern furnishings.

VAULT OF HORROR, their newest and sixth anthology film in a string that stretches back to **DR. TERROR'S HOUSE OF HORRORS** in 1964, again foolishly attempts to run the entire gamut of horror film subjects. The first tale, nicely titled "Midnight Mess," involves murder and vampires. It unavoidably recalls the '50's sick joke about the fellow who finally complains about always being stuck for the drinks. The second story links murder and a raging compulsion for neatness that is ultimately too easily transferable to matters of biology. The third tale combines murder, the humiliation of a fake Indian fakir (or is he?) and his deadly revenge. The fourth fable entwines murder, premature burial and the old stand-by, insurance fraud. The final tale explores murder and voodoo in the life of a too-vain painter who should have stopped to look before he painted. The connecting tissue, that all Amicus features employ, is the usual bilge, this time an elevator with a mind of its own that deposits our

protagonists in a sub-basement which, strangely enough, none of them knew existed.

VAULT OF HORROR is played more for chuckles than for chills, and succeeds in neither department. The special effects are quite the shoddiest that I have seen in recent years, especially in the fakir story where the support wire of the rope trick is plainly visible. (Indeed, the segment is only watchable because several of its scenes are played against a wall of old movie posters which remain tantalizingly unidentifiable.)

VAULT OF HORROR also almost tragically points up the fact that Milton Subotsky is not nearly as skilful a screenwriter as is Robert Bloch, who scripted films 2, 3, and 5 in the Amicus series: **TORTURE GARDEN** (1967), **HOUSE THAT DRIPPED BLOOD** (1971), and **ASYLUM** (1972). The durability and inventiveness of Subotsky, who scripted the other three, are wearing quite thin, as thin, in fact, as the entire anthology conception. The tales, despite their shortness, all manage somehow to be verbose. Missing completely is Bloch's macabre sense of humor, which knows more than one way to visualize a bad joke, and the screenplay equivalent to his published short stories which seem to be written solely to flesh out the wonderfully awful pun in the last sentence. Bloch's uncanny ability to painlessly cram his tales with a sometimes extraordinary amount of exposition is missed, too, as well as his quite exquisite flair for bad taste, both in dialogue and plot.

Veteran horror director Roy Ward Baker, working in the Amicus anthologies for the second time (**ASYLUM**) and this time without the benefit of Bloch, has directed **VAULT OF HORROR** as if to expose as little as possible of his talent. He has proven in previous films (**A NIGHT TO REMEMBER**, **20 MILLION MILES TO EARTH**, **DR. JEKYLL AND SISTER HYDE**) that he is perhaps the medium's only true stylist of horror, but his chores in **VAULT OF HORROR** seem merely functional if not downright perfunctory.

The film also appears to be suffering at the boxoffice because of its extremely unfair R rating, the first of the series to be so rated. I can see no reason at all for it, certainly not language or nudity or its comparatively mild violence. Rumor has it that the film has been "punished" for depicting the amputation of hands (in the voodoo episode). If so, the R rating is akin to kicking a panting horse that has already fallen in its tracks.

David Bartholomew



THE LEGEND OF BOGGY CREEK

...captures a quality of legend, an eerie beauty that is at once lyrical and foreboding.

THE LEGEND OF BOGGY CREEK A Howco International Release. 6/73. In Technicolor and Techniscope. 90 minutes. Produced, directed and photographed by Charles B. Pierce. Story and screenplay by associate producer, Earl E. Smith. Edited by Thomas F. Boutross. Narrated by Vern Stierman. Music composed and conducted by post-production supervisor, Jaime Mendoza-Nava. In Poly-dimensional Sound.

The restless, indignant, and derisive audience at the screening I viewed of Charles Pierce's **THE LEGEND OF BOGGY CREEK** was ample evidence of my long cherished belief that we have become a race of hard-boiled cynics. It's so easy to laugh and chortle promiscuously, to feel smug and superior to the stupidities and naivetes of the characters and situations depicted in the film. But the joke is on the audience.

The people who came to be manipulated by cheap thrills a la AIP, or to indulge in the classic belief that man comes out on top everytime (no creature of nature can possibly be stronger than man, we think, or would like to) left with sore disappointment. **THE LEGEND OF BOGGY CREEK** is not the average monster-hunts-man, man-kills monster movie. It is, in effect, a horror documentary, a true, re-enacted story of the Fouke monster (in Arkansas), and the panic, fear, and terror it created over a town, and still does.

Pierce's film captures a quality of legend, an eerie beauty in the stunning capture of Fouke country that is at once lyrical and foreboding. The only dissonant factor to this feeling are the two songs, which are unnecessary, obtrusive,

Scenes from **VAULT OF HORROR**, Amicus Productions' sixth horror anthology film, in release from Cinerama. Left: Anna Massey. Right: Curt Jurgens and Jasmina Hilton.



Scenes from *THE LEGEND OF BOGGY CREEK*, Charles B. Pierce's horror documentary in release from Howco International Pictures. Above: A hunter is startled by the hazy outline of the monster emerging from the brush. Insets: The film's narrator recalls, as a small boy, the wonder and the dread he felt in running to town the day the monster was sighted on his farm.

and annoying in context.

His film is virtually without story line, but is simply a depiction of some of the major human encounters with the mysterious hairy beast. The people are there, presented in all their candid, perfectly enacted ineptitude and Southern narrow-mindedness. We may laugh at these people and their dumb, cloddish actions and behavior, but Pierce makes us choke on our laughter. These are not people trying to act like real people—they are real, with every human flaw and fallibility intact, but neither are they dominated by the forced sense of stupidity of the people in *NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD*. We may feel superior to them, but we are these cynical, disbelieving toads who come face-to-face with real, not imaginary, horror, left fumbling with our own devices. We are, after all, only human.

Wisely, Pierce never clearly shows us the monster, and allows the audience to use its own imagination, which can be infuriating to those lazy enough not to care to. Though each segment of the creature's dealings with people are not really connected, they gradually accelerate in involvement and tension. The shock moments thus become less infrequent, and the monster's contact gets closer and closer, seeming to enter the shadows like a greater shadow.

The film is leisurely paced, yet never stately or static enough to become arty, and never slow enough to be dull. It's an extraordinary, fascinating, and yet difficult film for people to shake off their prejudices about such strong variations in the genre. It's a hard film for the cynics to grasp and believe, but Pierce believes and knows it so completely that he never balks at showing us the way it was, and still is. He makes one realize that we know so very little. In fact, it is this quality that could make *THE LEGEND OF BOGGY CREEK* a classic in the near future. I hope so, for it is Pierce's triumph that, even with minor contrasts, he smoothly and completely conveys a world at once unreal and all too inescapably real.

Dale Winogura

THEATRE OF BLOOD

...combines comedy and horror with a deft and stunning effectiveness.

THEATRE OF BLOOD A United Artists Release. 4/73. In Color by DeLuxe. 104 minutes. Produced by John Kohn and Stanley Mann. Directed by Douglas Hickox. Screenplay by Anthony Greville-Bell. Director of photography, Wolfgang Schitzky. Music by Michael J. Lewis. Edited by Malcolm Cooke. Production designer, Michael Seymour. Assistant director, Dominic Fulford.

Edward Lionheart Vincent Price
Edwina Lionheart Diana Rigg
Peregrine Devlin Ian Hendry
Trevor Dickman Harry Andrews
Miss Chloe Moon Carol Browne
Oliver Larding Robert Coote
Solomon Psalter Jack Hawkins
George Maxwell Michael Hordern
Meredith Merridew Robert Morley
Hector Snipe Dennis Price

Although film producers have long attempted to merge horror and comedy on the screen, in the astute realization of just how similar the two really are, the history of such efforts has proved less a satisfying journey than a forced march, and overall, a quite unhappy business. Witness, along the way, Abbott & Costello's heavy stomp through the entire Universal morgue of monsters. Then, Roger Corman's ascension with a couple of genuine "fluke" films like *A BUCKET OF BLOOD* and *LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS*—highly interesting and revealing '50s movies if finally disappointing—and continuing through several of his mock epic Poe adaptations. At the same time came AIP's meteoric rise to drive-in popularity with a still unending skein of blatant exploiters which have lately (*THING WITH TWO HEADS*, etc) been too self-mocking to really succeed. And now the more classy Amicus anthologies, all seemingly pun-inspired, have set upon us from England. The only problem here is that few of these films are sufficiently comedic or horrific to maintain our interest, let alone our enthusiasm, and the combination of two weaknesses does not necessarily make a strength.

Of course, the theory holds pat; comedy and horror as film forms both rely on a judicious faith and a willing suspension of disbelief and thus demand much from an audience. The film-making challenge (i.e. audience manipulation) is enormous and very seductive, for bursts of laughter and bursts of screams both alleviate the essentially identical tension that expert filmmakers can build and extend for sometimes absurd lengths of time. The fact that little separates squeals of delight from those of horror can work against the filmmaker—and the critic—which accounts for the inability of critics to agree over the merits of genre films.

Fortunately for us, *THEATRE OF BLOOD*, Douglas Hickox's new British film, combines comedy and horror with a deft and stunning effectiveness. The film relates the tale of Edward Lionheart (Vincent Price), a second-rate and mad (the worst of all possible combinations) Shakespearean actor, who takes savage revenge on a circle of London critics, doing them in one by one, by running play by play through his past season's Shakespearean repertoire that they hated so unanimously from their orchestra seats. Of course, this time around Lionheart casts each critic as a suitably ill-fated character from each play in a warped version of living—and dying—theater.

THEATRE OF BLOOD succeeds so well where many have failed so utterly, in part, because of a genuinely witty screenplay by Anthony Greville-Bell that perfectly fuses comedy and horror (and, incidentally, Shakespeare) rather than employ the usual unsteady juggling wherein one form—usually comedy—takes over when the other falls flat. Greville-Bell not only provides the requisite two puns per death mixed with fittingly hectic dialog, but his conception of the film itself is witty, especially in its shrewd usage of Shakespeare. Not the least effect of all this, I'm afraid, is that we should take a new look (apace Polanski and his

MACBETH) at the violence contained in Shakespeare. Thus, *THEATRE OF BLOOD* is structured around monologues and scenes and characters from a variety of the plays from "Henry VI, Part 1" to "Cymbeline" including: the "To be or not to be" speech from "Hamlet" just before Lionheart's leaping suicide attempt; the gravedigger speech delivered by Lionheart at the funeral of one of his victims; even the somehow touching in all this madness Lear/Cordelia scene between Lionheart and Edwina (Diana Rigg) just before the fiery end, and many others.

Some reviewers have wrongfully, I think, objected to the very graphic effects in *THEATRE OF BLOOD*, created by John Stears. In their bloody extreme, however, the effects only necessarily and convincingly punch up the horror side of the filmic equation. The strongest, most gruesome scene—the "operating room" sequence in which Horace Sprout loses his head while his wife sleeps beside him—is the film's finest grisly welding of black comedy, overt horror, (over) acting, suspense, and technical effects; the sequence is of nearly classic proportions.

One should also please note that not only critics come in for their lumps (and I have been walking on very thin ice here), but also horror film audiences are put in their places by Hickox and Greville-Bell's subtle use of Lionheart's band of merry followers. They first save the actor after his jump into the Thames (as good loyal audiences do save good actors from their occasionally foul surroundings). Yet they roughly hoot him off the stage a bit later on (as fickle audiences sometimes do) as he tries to perform for them. In each of the murders, the ragged group plays an instrumental role, in fact, in 4 of the 8 deaths actually doing the killing rather than merely helping to arrange it (vicarious participation of film audiences in what occurs before them on the screen). And all the way through they are portrayed as a filthy, lecherous, drunken mob, the very foulest dregs any society could tolerate. (Could this be the oft-mentioned-of-by-parents fate of kids who continued to read horror comics during the '50s??) With this huge and grossly humorous metaphor, the film extends its delicious joke to cover everyone.

But this is not to say the film is without faults. I would quarrel stylistically with Hickox's preponderance of short distorting lenses and severe upward angle shots which become infuriatingly mundane and detract from the richness of the material. Also, I would fault the film for not going all the way, to plunge to the blackest depths of its black comedy as it so easily could have. Allowing the last critic (Ian Hendry) to live makes no sense, other than a Joe Breen/Hays Office kind of morality, for it creates a stereotypical hero in Hendry which the film, in championing Lionheart's brand of jovial justice-will-out artistic amorality, has argued against for its entire length.

But these are minor complaints. *THEATRE OF BLOOD* is superbly acted by an astonishing array of British actors. I would say the likes of Michael Hordern, Robert Morley, Arthur Lowe, and Carol Browne seem to have waited for a long while for the chance to portray critics, and they appear to have a fine time returning the gaff. And there's Vincent Price, of course. At one point Diana Rigg hisses, "Hush, this is your master's glorious hour." Edward Lionheart and *THEATRE OF BLOOD* is a kind of reverse of the Chalfont family and *KIND HEARTS AND CORONETS* (1949) in which Alec Guinness masterfully portrayed 8 murder victims. Vincent Price succeeds with Lionheart almost as well, and the film allows him the full freedom to exercise his capable talents in a series of extreme character roles. And there is even a choice sampling of Shakespearean material as well. With *THEATRE OF BLOOD*, Price firmly dons the mantle passed from Boris Karloff, and he from Lon Chaney, Sr., as the master of the horror film. *THEATRE OF BLOOD* is indeed his finest hour.

David Bartholomew

SISTERS

...the freshest, most gripping suspense thriller to hit movie screens since NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD.

SISTERS An American-International Pictures Release. 4/73. In Color By Movielab. 92 minutes. A Pressman-Williams Enterprises Production. Produced by Edward R. Pressman. Directed by Brian De Palma. Screenplay by Brian De Palma and Louisa Rose. Original story by Brian De Palma. Director of photography, Gregory Sandor. Edited by Paul Hirsch. Music by Bernard Herrmann. Production designer, Gary Weist. Sound, Dick Vorisek, Russell Arthur. Assistant director, Alan Hopkins.

Danielle Breton Margot Kidder
Grace Collier Jennifer Salt
Private Investigator Charles Durning
Emil Breton Bill Finley
Phillip Woode Lisle Wilson
Magazine Editor Bernard Hughes
Mrs. Collier Mary Davenport
Detective Dolph Sweet

Brian De Palma's **SISTERS** is the freshest, most gripping suspense thriller to hit movie screens since **NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD**. It is also the most insightful and deeply felt homage to the art of Alfred Hitchcock that a devoted admirer has yet produced. And that is no small accomplishment for the list of admirers who have tried and failed is both long and distinguished (Truffaut, Chabrol, etc.).

Carefully combining elements of plot from **PSYCHO** and **REAR WINDOW** (and occasionally from a non-Hitchcock film like **CABINET OF DR. CALIGARI**) with techniques of suspense creation and storytelling Hitchcock has perfected throughout his career and then serving everything up with tongue firmly in cheek (the crowning Hitchcock touch!), De Palma has quite consciously pulled off a salute to the master that is so like the master that it even surpasses Hitchcock's own last film, **FREZZY**.

Brian De Palma, whose list of six previous feature films only includes one thriller, the little known and rarer seen **MURDER A LA MOD**, has expressly stated that in **SISTERS**, he was "...interested in re-interpreting Hitchcock's plot elements in my own way, in a different form." In this he's only partly successful. Except for some split screen episodes, a form which Hitchcock would never use (and which De Palma uses with more purpose and originality than has been done so far) the technique of the film is Hitchcock as well. But the tightly constructed plot, full of red herrings (one of which at the beginning of the film is an unforgivable cheat involving two shadows where there could only be one) is pure Hitchcock indeed.

Danielle Breton (Margot Kidder), a French Canadian model, and Phillip Woode (Lisle Wilson) meet on a TV quiz show (where she wins a cutlery set), then spend the night together in her apartment. The following morning, Phillip wakes up to the sound of quarrelsome female voices in the next room—Danielle and her twin sister Dominique, who has arrived to celebrate their birthday and is outraged to find a man present. Dominique storms off and Danielle returns to find Phillip dressed and ready to leave. She convinces him to stay and asks him to pick up a re-fill of some pills for her at the drug store—to help ease the pain that is overpowering her. As Danielle has a habit of leaving her drapes undrawn, most of their activities have been observed—off and on—by Grace Collier (Jennifer Salt), a reporter whose articles about "Why We Call Them Pigs" (shown to us via split screen) have not endeared her to the police.

Phillip returns not only with the pills but with a birthday cake ("Happy Birthday Dominique and Danielle") as well. He lights the candles and carving knife in hand presents the cake for cutting to the sleeping Danielle, face down on the

Scenes from **SISTERS**, director Brian De Palma's homage to Hitchcock, currently in release from AIP. Top: Dr. Breton (a superbly creepy performance by Bill Finley) hypnotizes the film's heroine, and De Palma's very functional and effective use of wide-angle lens for the scene almost puts the audience under as well. Bottom: Danielle (Margot Kidder) embraces her mortally wounded ex-husband (Bill Finley) with bloody hands at the film's electrifying conclusion. To complete this almost perfect ode to Hitchcock, there is a brilliantly visceral and unsettling musical score by Bernard Herrmann.

couch. Suddenly the knife is snatched up and plunged into his groin, then his mouth—by Dominique! Dying, Phillip barely manages to crawl to the window and write "help" in his own blood. Grace sees all this and calls the police. But by the time the police have arrived, Danielle and her visiting ex-husband, Dr. Breton (a superbly creepy performance by Bill Finley) have dutifully cleaned up after Dominique. The already hostile police then abandon Grace to solve the crime herself. That Grace discovers Danielle and Dominique are Canada's first set of Siamese twins, separated during a famous surgical experiment performed by Dr. Breton, provides the remainder of the story, which has enough clever twists to it to make my going further an unpardonable sin.

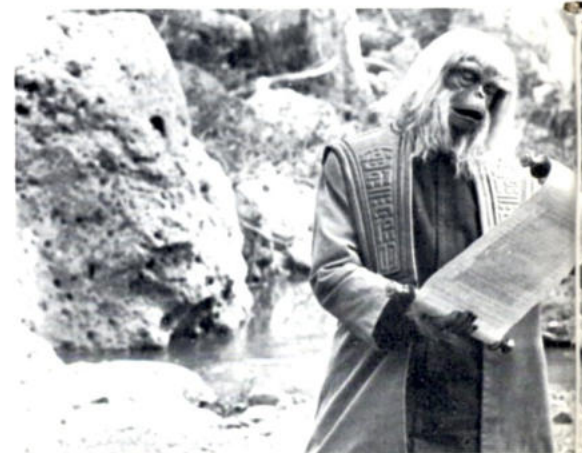
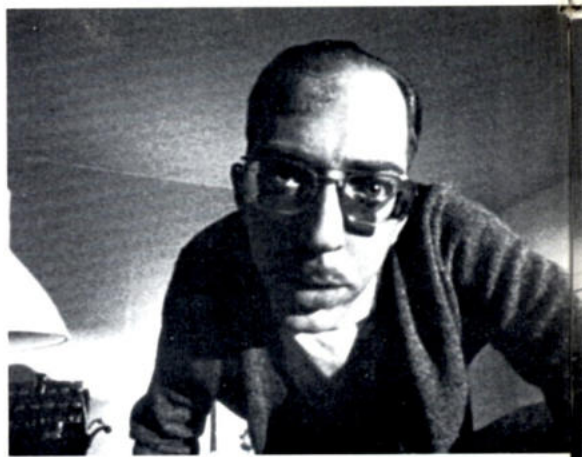
It certainly doesn't take a very discerning eye to spot in all the above, every consistent Hitchcock theme: the sudden confrontation of strangers and its almost fatal aftermath; the voyeurism inherent in human behavior (the TV show is even called "Peeping Toms"); the ineffectiveness of order (the police) amidst chaos (murder); repressed sex; the duality of personalities; and the transfer of guilt (Grace is subsequently forced to conceal evidence due to a post-hypnotic suggestion). All of these Hitchcockian elements De Palma has perceived and copied with skill. But as to re-interpreting them in his own form—no. Apart from the split screen and a hallucination scene which definitely smacks of Polanski, the subtle, suspenseful tracking movements, the wordless-through-binoculars viewing of a private detective exploring Danielle's apartment, and the frenetic cutting all have their definite source in the master's own bag of tricks. And to complete this almost perfect ode to Hitchcock there is, of course, the music score—by Bernard Herrmann. No small part of the film's success is due to it, for it is as brilliantly visceral and unsettling a composition as any he has composed for Hitchcock (and I'm happy to announce that a representative of AIP told me the company is presently negotiating the album rights).

No doubt there will be those who will criticize De Palma's efforts as forgery rather than homage. Well, having created all the rules of suspense film making, Hitchcock himself has reached a point in his career where even his own films seem like imitations. When an artist has perfected his art, there is nowhere else to go, save to re-make his own films with an eye to modern trends and tastes. And despite all the frenzied accolades, **FREZZY** is little more than such a re-make (albeit superior in energy to other re-makes like **TORN CURTAIN** and **TOPAZ**). De Palma is merely showing us that if one wants to make a first rate thriller, one must imitate Hitchcock, for he is the very definition of the genre.

And that is homage indeed!

John McCarty

Scenes from **BATTLE FOR THE PLANET OF THE APES**, Arthur P. Jacobs' fifth and last entry in the popular science fiction series, currently in release from 20th Century Fox. Top: The story involves Caesar (Roddy McDowall, center) in a journey to the devastated mutant city to learn of his dead parents from newsreel footage and old tape recordings stored there, accompanied by Virgil (Paul Williams, left), a wise orangutan, and MacDonald (Austin Stoker, right), his human friend. Bottom: The film brings the series to an ambiguous conclusion by having the Lawgiver (John Huston) telling the story in flashback to a future generation of ape and human children. Upcoming: a Planet of the Apes teleseries.



CONQUEST OF & BATTLE FOR THE PLANET OF THE APES

...the series is a treasured one; a slick, clever body of films, though flawed and uneven, that is truly unique in motion picture history.

CONQUEST OF THE PLANET OF THE APES A 20th Century Fox Release. 8/72. 86 minutes. In Todd-AO 35 and Color by DeLuxe. Produced by Arthur P. Jacobs. Directed by J. Lee Thompson. Screenplay by Paul Dehn. Associate producer, Frank Capra, Jr. Music by Tom Scott. Director of photography, Bruce Surtees. Edited by Marjorie Fowler, A.C.E. and Allan Jaggs, A.C.E. Creative makeup design, John Chambers. Art director, Philip Jeffries. Set decorator, Norman Rocket. Makeup supervision, Dan Striepeke.

Caesar Roddy McDowall
Breck Don Murray
Lisa Natalie Trundy
MacDonald Hari Rhodes
Kolp Severn Darden
Busboy Lou Wagner
Armando Ricardo Montalban
Commission Chairman John Randolph
Aldo David Show

It seems the Planet of the Apes series has finally reached its end, but not its nadir. Without a doubt, Frederick S. Clarke had a point when he labeled the series the first true science fiction epic, to paraphrase him (1:4:28). Although I will not go that far, I will say that the series is a treasured one: a slick, clever body of films, though flawed and uneven, that is truly unique in motion picture history.

In Apes4, **CONQUEST OF THE PLANET OF THE APES**, Paul Dehn fashioned an extremely imaginative screenplay, full of swift, clever plot transitions and devices. The film quickly follows Caesar, the very much alive offspring of the murdered Zira and Cornelius, from his close relationship with circus owner, Armando; to his sudden separation from him; to initiation into the horrors of ape manipulation by man's torture devices; to the establishment of the Caesar-governor conflict and Caesar-MacDonald friendship; to the knowledge of Armando's suicide and subsequent loneliness; and to vengeful ape-leader, retaliation and victory over the human masters.

But the film so loads the dice against humanity that the apes' bloodbath seems entirely justified. My complaint here is not a moral one really, but dramatically an aesthetic balance between the ape and human characters was desperately needed. It becomes a one-dimensional racist parable, perhaps unintentional, in which the death of one man seems enough reason for one ape to go crackers (or bananas?) and kill every human in sight, recruiting every ape he can get his hands on. Only two characters, Armando and MacDonald, are given any sympathy, charity, feeling, or dimension, and the first one kills himself before nearly betraying Caesar under police interrogation, and the other is black (draw your own conclusions). The others are generally despicable, anti-ape, inhuman, or nothing. Even as symbols or representative figures, the people are not related to the extent that we come to feel or understand why humans should become this way.

Even the totalitarian way of life cannot be conveyed with a conviction or involvement necessary to understand why humans have become vegetables, and apes are becoming human. These may seem like academic remarks, but they're vital in relating why the film, though it moves well, doesn't really develop with any kind of force.

Perhaps the one vital, and yet understandably necessary, missing factor, is the ape-ape, ape-human dialog that lends this balance I've been discussing. The meaningful looks that Caesar gives to other apes is no substitute for speech in the context of the film, and it's certainly not enough to get a mass revolt underway, whether the apes are restless or not. It's not just a matter of suspension of disbelief, but a semantic problem in storytelling that is never really conquered. One can't blame Paul Dehn, or anyone for that matter, since the story progression of the series demands some kind of acceptable transitions from one stage to the next. I guess it was inevi-

table that such things had to be sacrificed, but for all its ingenuity and pacing, this lack still inhibits a fuller involvement in the ape-dominated world that is about to commence.

Though all hands try very hard, the battle scenes that take up about the last half-hour or more of the film are its weakest part. The cutting from hand-held, to tracking, to static shots is never smooth enough to be awesome or tight enough to be consistently exciting. It's pure mayhem, admittedly at times suspenseful (especially when the apes blowtorch their way into the control room), but it goes beyond aesthetic reason and endurance to become merely a display of bloody fighting and carnage, with no meaningful context. The scenes often look messy, and not even Century City provides the background to make it seem like the epic it was obviously intended to be. At times, it's like a showcase for Century City, with not enough space and size to make it the totally convincing or awesome metaphorical battlefield it needed to be. Thus, the scope of the series, and the film, seems proportionately diminished almost to unimportance.

But all this can be justified in one way or another because Thompson, and photographer Bruce Surtees, evidently worked arduously to make it work as best they could. On the surface, it is an extremely handsome production. The colors are sharp and clear, the shadows strongly detailed, and it all gleams with a very professional sheen, both in interiors and exteriors.

Thompson performs some remarkable cutting, like after Armando jumps through the window, he sharply cuts to the governor's angry exclamation, "I knew that circus owner was lying!" Also, in the scene where Caesar is choosing his name from a book, it cuts to him staring in secret defiance at the governor. The timing is just right in each of these moments, and in several others.

There are many things wrong with the finish. One is that it's not completely convincing in tone or development, and Caesar's transition from warlord to peacemaker, though essential, is not believable. It looks and sounds tacked-on, although the editing on the scene, just after his speech (aided by a reprise from Goldsmith's score for Apes1), is dramatically rather moving and appropriate.

With all my criticisms, it's still a very enjoyable, thoroughly professional endeavor. It remains the fastest moving, most imaginatively constructed, and the most superficially actionful film of the series. But it remains wanting of some of the qualities that distinguished Apes1 and 3 especially, and often suffers through lack of them.

I say all this to bring out why the latest (and possibly last) one, **BATTLE FOR THE PLANET OF THE APES**, is a considerable improvement in many ways. For one thing, the style is more confident and assured. There seems to be less strain in the flow of the film, and the emphasis is back on the ape-ape, ape-human relationships as it was in Apes1 and 3. There is also a good balance in these relationships that builds the plot framework easily and steadily, and with entertaining fluidity.

But of all the Apes films, **BATTLE FOR THE PLANET OF THE APES** possesses the weakest, least imaginative storyline. It is a virtually bare story, in which Caesar and his friends pay a peaceful visit to the recently-formed mutant city, whose leader (Kolp) decides to destroy the ape city before they supposedly destroy them. It turns out that all Caesar wanted to do was see the filmed records of his long-dead parents, and find out the future of mankind. It sounds remotely like Apes2, but basically, the premise is nothing, and even the subplot of a stupid gorilla, Aldo, trying to take over Caesar's kingdom, and killing Caesar's own son, cannot disguise the empty-headed story. John and Joyce Corrington have written a script (based on Paul Dehn's story) of frequent inanity and banality, but with a few choice lines somewhere in-between. It is all too often dumb in

BATTLE FOR THE PLANET OF THE APES A 20th Century Fox Release. 5/73. 86 minutes. In Panavision and Color by DeLuxe. Produced by Arthur P. Jacobs. Directed by J. Lee Thompson. Screenplay by John William & Joyce Hooper Corrington based on a short story by Paul Dehn. Director of photography, Richard H. Kline. Edited by Alan L. Jaggs and John C. Horger. Music by Leonard Rosenman. Art director, Dale Hennessey. Set decoration, Robert de Vestel.

Caesar Roddy McDowall
Aldo Claude Akins
Lisa Natalie Trundy
Kolp Severn Darden
Mandemus Lew Ayres
The Lawgiver John Huston
Virgil Paul Williams
MacDonald Austin Stoker
Teacher Noah Keen
Alma France Nguyen

both speech and structure, and it becomes awkward to the point of sloppiness.

But J. Lee Thompson comes to the rescue, with a firm, intelligent guiding hand. His timing with camera and editing is ever-sharp, catching action and reaction with acute sensitivity and control. Although the extremely close face shots kill the illusion by exposing the make-up, they are extremely effective for dramatic purposes. Apes3 probably had the finest, most characteristic make-ups (since there were only three characters to make up), but Thompson uses the close-up here for solidly-founded reasons, and it can be justified as such, more than compensating for the lack of conviction in the make-up here.

Photographically, it comes the closest to Apes1 in quality and evocation. Richard H. Kline performs another brilliant feat of true cinematography, capturing the exterior beauty of the arboreal Ape village (not yet a city), and the sullen, murky tones of the ruined mutant city, with stunning stylization and intrinsic power.

The battle scenes are magnificently handled, far superior to Apes2 and 4, with smoothly controlled tracking shots, imperceptibly cut to static shots. Indeed, the epic flavor is captured better here than in Apes4, with beautiful usage of explosions and pyrotechnics.

Leonard Rosenman's score, and its application also comes closest to the first film in strength and functional usage. It's a lushly detailed score, decorated with passages from Rosenman's own past scores. Tom Scott's music in Apes4, though at times effective and exciting, did not have enough intensity and consistent tonality to define or enhance the drama and action of the film. Here, Rosenman applies music with rich conviction and strong development, enhancing Thompson's filmic style admirably.

Even with its looser story and script structure, **BATTLE FOR THE PLANET OF THE APES** succeeds better overall than **CONQUEST OF THE PLANET OF THE APES**. Everyone evidently worked very hard and enjoyably to make it all come together as smoothly as it possibly could.

The series has capped itself with style and conscientious maneuverability, and I, for one, could hardly wish otherwise. If all sequels were made with the same devotion and care as these have been, generally speaking, then they deserve to continue. Unlike the Tarzan, Frankenstein, Dracula, Wolfman, Creature, Sherlock Holmes, Thin Man, Bowery Boys, Charlie Chan, and other like series, the Apes films don't degenerate, but oscillate in varying degrees of quality, mostly with unusually high frequency. Production-wise, script-wise, direction-wise, and acting-wise, the series could be the finest example of a continuing cycle of related films ever produced. In my view, the films in quality would rank 1, 3, 5, 4, 2. But in the long run, it is Arthur P. Jacobs who should be thanked, and praised highest of all, for giving us these films, destined for endless popularity.

Dale Winogura

SAVAGES

...means to relate the entire rise and fall of Man's Civilization in a simple story-less allegory...

SAVAGES An Angelika Films Release. 5/72. In Color. 105 minutes. Produced by Ismail Merchant. Directed by James Ivory. Screenplay by James Ivory, George Swift Trow and Michael O'Donoghue. Director of photography, Walter Lassally. Edited by Kent McKinney. Music by Joe Raposo. Art director, Charles E. White III.

Julian Louis J. Standlen
Charlotte Anne Francine
Oto Thayer David
Cecily Susie Blakely
Andrew Russ Thacker
Emily Salome Jens
Lady Cora Margaret Brewster

SAVAGES, the first American feature of James Ivory who has directed four films in and about India, has not quite survived intact one of the strangest and most frustrating pre- and post-production histories with which a film could be saddled.

Ivory and a non-union crew shot the entire film (camera by Walter Lassally) during a six weeks location stint in a Scarborough, New York, mansion gone heavily to seed. (Ivory describes this extraordinary house, which inspired the movie in the first place, as a "fashionable, run-down Westchester asylum.") The editing consumed months of painstaking work. Originally scheduled for its American premier at the Baronet Theater, a mid-Art spot on Manhattan's West Side, the film was run off several times for the press. A pre-premiere (pre-published) generally negative response from the critics forced the decision to hastily recall SAVAGES for "re-editing" and the opening was cancelled. In the meantime, the Cannes Festival rolled into sight, and the film played there out of competition (in the director's Fortnight) to critical acclaim, mostly provided by the British. Consequently, SAVAGES, apparently with none of the emergency "re-editing" taking place, was re-booked for the Baronet, where a blistering critical reception (1 favorable review—a rave from Penelope Gilliatt—out of 15) greeted it, this time officially in print. The film barely struggled through three weeks of abysmal box office when it was moved to a house in Greenwich Village where it lasted exactly four days. As of this writing, SAVAGES has not been heard of since.

Although an outline hardly does justice to SAVAGES with its scant, almost nonexistent, plot, Ivory's film concerns a tribe of Neanderthal cultured, wild and dirt-smudged...well...savages called the Mud People. One fine day in the sunny forest in the middle of a human execution sacrifice, they are confronted, and pulled out of their environs, by the shocking appearance of a croquet ball (a perfect sphere, unknown in their primate world of Nature) which eventually leads them to an indescribably beautiful house, deserted and cobwebbed like a vintage Pierce Arrow that squats nearby. Once inside the house, the tribe abruptly assume the roles, dress and language of a variety of (stereotyped) characters (poet, artist, servant, society hostess, musician, debauchee, industrial magnate, etc.) which culminates in an absurd, impeccably correct dinner party. The croquet ball, magically displaced from its place on the altar, rolls by again, and the savages each begin to deteriorate until the next morning, after a wonderfully riotous game of croquet, they stream back into the forest to resume their former lives and way of life.

SAVAGES must be one of the most outrageous films ever to play, or judging from its truly disastrous financial returns, fail to play, commercially. But just as success at the box office usually indicates an inverse relationship to the true merit of many films in release, SAVAGES' values refuse to be pinpointed by style or pigeon-



holed by content. Only the film's resolute aim emerges clearly: SAVAGES means to relate the entire rise and fall (the latter not yet so messily concluded as the film portends) of Man's Civilization in a simple story-less allegory that ambitiously reduces a nearly limitless number of centuries to less than 24 hours of film time and 108 minutes of screen time.

Thus the fact that on the whole the film fails should not surprise anyone. The far-flung goals that Ivory and screenwriters George Trow and Michael O'Donoghue set out to conquer strike one as being simply stupid via their sheer hugeness. But the highly satisfying experience one gains from SAVAGES, which makes the film as compelling to watch as an inventively suspenseful chase sequence, is the film's transcendence of its own dumbness—the sense of dumb as revealed so flamboyantly by most Hollywood epics like AIRPORT, NICHOLAS AND ALEXANDRA, SKY-JACKED, etc., and the films of Stanley Kramer and Sam Fuller (c.f. SHOCK CORRIDOR). SAVAGES escapes the pretentiousness that one would expect in such a film by its construction as a progressive series of intimate dialogues and speeches (i.e. words) rather than of events upon which so many broad-themed films flounder, the majority of the lines excellently delivered by a fine aggregation of largely New York stage actors and actresses. Thus the parts of SAVAGES, contrary to most film theorizing, completely outweigh their sum in importance.

And these exquisitely written parts stand bewilderingly in their strange disjointedness and brilliant readings by the various players. From the High Priestess slowly pronouncing a catalogue of the vast extremes of our civilization, ridiculous to profound, from the close inspection of a too-ripe peach to the society hostess finally verbally demolishing a pompous old bore; from the horrendously stilted, regimented and totally meaningless dinner conversation to the lingering tender Lesbian scene in the car in which the evocation of idealistic love subdues the raw carnality of lust; from the savages gingerly touching and exploring the unfamiliar automobile (like the tale of the blind men and the elephant) to the priest

Thayer David.



Scenes from director James Ivory's SAVAGES. Right: The savages of the title, referred to in the film as the Mud People. Left: The savages take on the dress and airs of civilization and hold an absurd, impeccably correct dinner party. The film has disappeared after a brief, disastrous run in New York City.

members of the tribe, after several hours in the house, slowly crumbling the huge mud masks from their heads; from Kathleen Widdoes pantomiming a lively song and dance number to a crackling recording of something called "Stomping On A Spaniel" to a long speech explaining the facts about a model of a villa in one of the house's spacious rooms, a speech that reaches a beautifully resonant, nostalgic remembrance of graceful artistic living (so contrasting the dinner in which it is spoken), a speech immediately contradicted by another.

Ivory has directed SAVAGES with such a fine and delicate feeling for these characters and their lines that we become completely absorbed. None of them are developed in the traditional dramatic sense; rather Ivory (and the splendid acting) concentrates our interest behind them, to the very real beings struggling to shatter their familiar, clichéd surfaces (poet, artist, servant, society hostess, etc.) which, indeed, they eventually, even in a physical sense, do.

The evidence of Ivory's filmic talent abounds. He merely hints of the Mud People's culture, complete with guttural sounds, coarse gestures, and undefined ritualistic actions, in the black-and-white photographed first third of the film although the basic facts are etched between the parallel functions of the characters in the forest and in the house. Ivory captures the dinner party sequence with all its overt false aplomb in a satirical style richly worthy of a collection of witticisms by Oscar Wilde. Most remarkable of all, Ivory mysteriously refuses to concretize his film in any sense. From the forest to the house is no mere (meta)physical hop, but the mansion features a profusion of rooms in various archeological periods, styles and decorations, each individually used for different scenes and kinds of scenes. There is no time element to the film beyond the 24-hour sequence of day to dusk to night to dawn. At one point, a static-filled radio reports unintelligibly of a ship sinking, and while one can postulate both the Lusitania (1915) and the Titanic (1912) or any number of wartime nautical disasters in World War II, no choice seems borne out by the rapidly changing clothing styles (centering vaguely in the '30s) and language of the characters.

SAVAGES falls prey to its weakest moments when Ivory abandons his deeply felt intimacy with his characters and resorts to clumsy "arty" devices as when the musician spends the entire night sawing at his cello and avoids the sexual and drug-enhanced degeneracy of the others (Art over Decadence). The suicide victim jumps three times (same shot repeated) into the swimming pool in full view of the seeing but uncaring com-



pany, and later, a swimmer dives again and again to loot his body. Once in the house, a captured (in the forest) Seed Masher, a black girl, turns into the maid, complete with uniform. Such "message" moments have no place in *SAVAGES*, simply disappointingly giving us what we had doubtfully expected of the film from the very beginning. These direly meaningful actions spoil the adept sense of calculated meaninglessness attributable to the film which thrusts itself, open-ended and ambiguous, to each of our own personal interpretations; like Kuleshov's famous montage experiment with the smiling man, the film is only what it means to each of us individually, as we each respond to *SAVAGES* differently according to what emotional and intellectual qualities we carry with us into the theater.

Initially, *SAVAGES* seemed very much the kind of project that impoverished film artists work for and believe in as the creative, personal film which they want to do so badly, and is so uncommercial, that they are forced to do other films and acting chores to get capital together to make it—Orsen Welles comes instantly to mind as an example. But I sharply doubt this altruistic notion now. Since *SAVAGES* stoutly defies categorization as a film (satire, allegory, comedy, melodrama, farce, parody, elements of all of which are present) a collection of several of its components leads me finally to guess that we, serious, unruffled filmgoers, are very calmly being facetiously put-on. While I am unfamiliar with George Swift Trow (a staffwriter from the "New Yorker"), I do know the second half of the screenplay team, Michael O'Donoghue, from his bitterly comic plays and wildly funny, oft-times pornographic pieces, including one continuing comic strip, "The Adventures of Phoebe Zeitgeist," for the now defunct "Evergreen Review." And it is precisely this undentable, no-holds-barred style that dominates much of *SAVAGES'* eclectic, somewhat anarchic construction*. Looking at the film strictly from that angle may prove the point.

SAVAGES is divided into five sections each introduced by a Godard-esque title card, one of them printed in Latin and another in Greek. Title cards, each mysteriously numbered in the upper right hand corner, punctuate the forest sequences (one reads: "Tribal elders are often distinguished by pebbles in their teeth, though such is not the case here."). Several long spoken discourses of untranslatable German accompany the film in various places. The opening credits run against a flaccid song ("They call us savages...") as ludicrous as "Stomping On A Spaniel" which appears later. The end credits include an endless number of "assistants to..." some of which seem fairly improbable if not imaginary, like the credits to the old Jerry Lewis television show. In this absurd context one bit of dialogue imbedded in the seller-games scene stands out that may be the most significant of the film as far as cueing a put

Above: Robert Preston is surrounded by his boys, as the English professor at a Catholic boys' school, inexplicably struck by evil and corruption in *CHILD'S PLAY*, a satanic parable currently in release through Paramount Pictures.

on is concerned: "Anything's allowed; it is just a matter of how much one can get away with." And *SAVAGES* and its creators have gotten away with plenty.

However, the important point, I suppose, is that it really doesn't matter how we view the film. The appalling but plainly visible fact that such an uncommercial project (box office returns generally determining distribution practices) would not even be given the chance to play to any large potential audience could not have escaped at least the film-experienced Ivory and his producer, Ismail Merchant, if not Trow and O'Donoghue (and the actors, who probably had no inkling of what was going on during the shooting). Thus, *SAVAGES* may be the first example of the cinema of Joy, unalloyed and irresponsible (in a good sense), which handily illustrates the idiotically American idea that getting there must be at least half the fun, an uncommon and nearly insane method of production in this most expensive of arts.

But the fact that we've been taken for a ride by the film (if, indeed, anyone else even shares in this judgement) is of no importance whatsoever when one considers the ride itself. No doubt some esoteric fool (or genius) will land somewhere with a ponderous critique which reduces *SAVAGES* to a filmic roman a clef of social, political, moral, and historical characters, styles, and events. That, too, will not greatly matter. *SAVAGES*, like the trivial snowscene bubble both before and after the dying *Citizen Kane* drops it, is an original, frustrating, daring, ambiguous, challenging, and most of all, entertaining film, and that quality, very nearly paradoxical, in today's melange of nearly totally unsatisfying and timorously unambitious American films, is treasurable indeed.

David Bartholomew

James Mason.



CHILD'S PLAY

Terror is conveyed not through blatant scare tactics, but in words, gestures, feelings, and visual mood...

CHILD'S PLAY A Paramount Pictures Release. 12/72. In Color and Panavision. 100 minutes. Produced by David Merrick. Directed by Sidney Lumet. Screenplay by Leon Prochnik based on the play by Robert Marasco. Director of photography, Gerald Hirschfeld, A.S.C. Film edited by Edward Warschilka and Joanne Burke, A.C.E.

Jerome Malley James Mason
Joseph Dobbs Robert Preston
Paul Reis Beau Bridges
Father Mozzian Ronald Weyand
Father Griffin Charles White
Father Penny David Rounds
Mrs. Carter Kate Harrington

Although *CHILD'S PLAY* is obviously a Satanic parable, there are no supernatural goings-on, no black masses, no rites of witchcraft displayed. Lumet's film is a chilling blend of *ROSEMARY'S BABY* and *IF...*, with none of Polanski's sloppy, thoughtless structuring, and little of Anderson's bald, muddled pretensions. Terror is conveyed not through blatant scare tactics, but in words, gestures, feelings, and visual mood, all skillfully manipulated by Lumet.

The story itself bears no ring of the supernatural or fantastic. In an all-boy Catholic school, there are sudden events of willingly, self-inflicted injuries and pain. An old, exceedingly strict Latin teacher is thought to be a main part of the cause, but there is something else lurking behind all this, an evil, possibly human presence that has taken over the school. That the "Devil" might be on the loose is hinted at, but never fully acknowledged, even at the startling, ambiguous finish. Yet basically what the film says is that the Devil resides in us all, mostly dormant, but ever lethal.

James Mason is superb as the antagonized teacher, both sad and detestable, and ultimately pitiable and compassionate. Beau Bridges is carefully molded into the character of the new gym teacher, an ex-pupil of the school, who realizes great danger and terror alive in the atmosphere. As the English teacher, falsely accused of antagonizing Mason's character, Robert Preston gives his finest performance, a smoothly transitioned and utterly convincing portrayal of a man whose true identity is revealed at the shattering climax.

One of Lumet's best films, he displays the power and instinct that marked *THE HILL* and *12 ANGRY MEN*, his most satisfying works. He has had ups, and numerous downs, and *CHILD'S PLAY* is certainly free of his usual over-disciplined cinematism, but it's much less so than any of his other films.

The sharply precisioned, concentrated literacy of the play has been adapted by Leon Prochnik with beautifully honed timing. The dialogue is brisk, witty, with undertones of black, sinister undertones, and it all flows together with incredible adaptability.

Lumet so gracefully ties the word to the image that his technique seems quite theatrical at first, but at closer range, it's all too chillingly appropriate. It is obviously a stage play, and Lumet rarely disguises the fact, but he knows just when to intercede theatre artifice with cinematic dexterity, more so than did Mankiewicz in his handling of *SLEUTH*, and the effect is dazzlingly hypnotic.

CHILD'S PLAY, in style, is one of the year's best works of fantasy, but it's so subtle that one barely notices or even considers it. But Satan inhabits this film more diabolically than any other recent film, except for *THE MEPHISTO WALTZ*, perhaps not physically, but in spirit. It proves infinitely more frightening and disturbing than Polanski's scaly, rubber claws.

Dale Winogura

*In an article in the Autumn 1971 issue of "Sight and Sound" Ivory states that he and Trow initiated *SAVAGES* in a "wouldn't it be fun if..." mood.

IMAGES

...Altman has filmed the terrifying disintegration of a mind...

IMAGES A Columbia Pictures Release. 10/72. In Panavision and Technicolor. 100 minutes. A Hemdale/Lion's Gate Film Production. Produced by Tommy Thompson. Written and directed by Robert Altman. Director of photography, Vilmos Zsigmond. Edited by Graeme Clifford. Art director, Leon Erickson. Music by John Williams.

Cathryn Susannah York
Hugh Rene Auberjonois
Rene Marcel Bozzuffi
Marcel Hugh Millais
Susannah Cathryn Harrison

Near the midpoint of Robert Altman's *IMAGES*, just before the first murder, we begin to fear, if only momentarily, that the film will disappointingly deliver much less than it has thus far promised. We think for a minute at that point of no return in *IMAGES* that Altman might settle for either the warped psychological games of Susan Sontag (*DUET FOR CANNIBALS*) or the petty criminal tricks of Robert Aldrich (*HUSH... HUSH*, *SWEET CHARLOTTE*); both are film tactics that only flirt with the supernatural or the chillingly real psychotic. One fear for Altman soon passes, however. He has again made an extraordinary film in *IMAGES*, one that is rudely flawed (perhaps more so than his other films except, possibly, *MASH*) yet still powerfully conceived and joltingly stimulating on a number of levels to a degree that easily overcomes the defects.

At first glance, because of its confusingly busy visual surface, *IMAGES* appears much more complicated than it really is. For Altman has slid his camera into the mind of a nearing-middle age, much married if less loved authoress Cathryn (Susannah York) who is tragically veering closer and closer to acute schizophrenia and perpetual nightmare. Altman has attempted nearly the impossible in *IMAGES*—the spinning of his tale from the nearly uninterrupted point of view of its protagonist. *IMAGES* is quite simply a recording of the conflict in the mind of the protagonist between real events and the flashes of fantasy jarred into flight by remembered—perhaps disremembered—events in her troubled past. These two shifting planes of past and present reveal an unfathomable third, the on-going process of thought, which becomes, more or less, the reality of the film. It is Altman's premise, and one that many will reject, even those who consider themselves staunchly anti-traditional at least as far as concerns film psychology, that all three are singularly meaningless, even dangerous, to one who cannot differentiate between them. Altman has, indeed, in *IMAGES*, absorbed the psychic dichotomy between the murder in Antonioni's *BLOW-UP* and the pair of murders in Polanski's *REPULSION*.

Thus, it is extremely difficult to describe *IMAGES* in any way even remotely fair to the film itself. Altman's story covers only a short period of real time in Cathryn's life, but within that space are detailed many years of living, in particular, the three relationships with men that she has had up to and perhaps beyond her present husband Hugh (Rene Auberjonois). Because of the film's carefully and mysteriously occluded form, not very much plot-wise may be deciphered, a fact that had several reviewers scurrying to their pens because they cannot understand that Altman's plot is simply not important. Instead, Altman presents us with the workings of a mind in the last few hours (or days or years) before its utter collapse.

Of course, all of this is really nothing new, at least to those familiar with the work of Alain Resnais. Both filmmakers deal primarily with explorations of memory, fantasy, and thought so as to arrive at a more profound empathy with the character under study (in Resnais' films: the lovers in *HIROSHIMA, MON AMOUR*, "X" in *LAST YEAR AT MARIENBAD*, Helene in *MURIEL*, Di-

ego in *LA GUERRE EST FINIE*, Claude in *JE T'AIME, JE T'AIME*). These films are also linked stylistically to *IMAGES* in their unorthodox forms of *mise-en-scene* and editing). But an important difference intrudes here beyond the fact that Resnais has diverted and refined his montage theories into the saintly realm of philosophy (see John Ward's *Resnais, or the Theme of Time*). Resnais' films center on definite identifiable structures coming to play within the bounds of a strict time-differentiated universe. The montage of each of his films is the product of a (mostly) clear, receptive, logical mind reacting to a constant stream of stimuli in a more-or-less orderly fashion. Resnais' cuts may be farfetched in some cases, but they ultimately are thematically linked (stimulus-response) to some character, situation, locale, or emotion drifting through the character's mental reservoir.

IMAGES is quite a different matter. Altman seems to have traded Resnais' already vague narrative content (and there are always stories in Resnais' films) for a certain Hollywood-esque slickness. Altman cuts—or more appropriately, glides his camera—between elements that may not on inspection reveal a rational linkage of stimulus-response; i.e. Cathryn's mind is not orderly and functioning clearly. Since Altman has filmed the terrifying disintegration of a mind, the form of his film can only be terrifyingly chaotic. Unlike Resnais, where the present ultimately counts the most, Altman's time is continuous; for him as for Cathryn, there can be no past, present or future. Hence, *IMAGES* is visually convoluted, upsetting, harrowingly emotional, and quite literally paranoid, an additional fact that disgruntled the reviewers who found fault with the film's lack of clarity, a complaint symptomatic of, at best, a superficial, and at worst, an obtuse response to both Altman and his film. Considering its psychological probing and the sickness, violence and amoral brutality that are unearthed, *IMAGES* sometimes closely resembles *REPULSION* particularly in the area of stylistics with, for instance, its nervous, extended camera movements and symbolic use of highly amplified sound effects. Polanski's film seems more the traditional horror film and is slightly more audience-wracking and unrelenting, partly due to the gritty forcefulness of black and white photography over Altman's color.

Regrettably, Altman does run into some problems that threaten to rob *IMAGES* of much of its power. For all of *IMAGES*' complex surface, Altman deals too often in obvious symbols, stylistic gimcracks, and general cuteness and then dares to keep flaunting them at us, again and again. For instance, at the country house, the characters periodically work on a jigsaw puzzle only to eventually discover that one important piece is missing. Altman seems visually preoccupied, especially in the first half of the film, with dangling sparkling objects blowing freely in the breeze, like wind-chimes and mobiles, all images of fragmentation. We see and hear Cathryn writing and reading from a book; indeed, the excerpts are from Susannah York's book for children, *In Search of Unicorns*. And she finishes it just before the end of the film. Too often, Altman's characters seem merely vehicles for ideas (a tiresome practice of the films thus far derived from the novels of D. H. Lawrence) as, for instance, Hugh seldom appearing without a dead cigar clamped to his mouth. The images of the title are, of course, figuratively borne out by the constant presence of cameras and lenses and things being photographed; Altman's camera even begins the film by sneaking in a window and coming to rest on a camera lens. The camera does quite a bit of Hitchcockian prowling about, awkwardly peering in through windows and over banisters, repeatedly driving home the fact that as film watchers, we are all essentially voyeurs.

And adding to the extraordinary form of the film, Altman soon makes apparent his strengths. As with all his films, *IMAGES* offers us moments of magnificently gripping visceral force—the immense, immediate power of film above all the other arts—achieved by an inspired and precise rhythmic fusion of camerawork, acting, editing, and sound. These moments afford us the unique kind of dazzling suspense that comes only out of a solid technical knowledge and an intuitive feel for purely cinematic elements. In the past, Altman treated us to Brewster's dizzying doomed flight

Scenes from *IMAGES*, director Robert Altman's new film in release from Columbia Pictures. Top: Susannah York gives a stunning performance as an authoress who is tragically veering closer and closer to acute schizophrenia and perpetual nightmare. Bottom: Bodies of murdered victims lie strewn about her apartment, reminiscent of Roman Polanski's *REPULSION*.

in the Astrodome and the nearly unbearably tense shootout-in-the-snow sequence that occupied the last quarter of *MCCABE AND MRS. MILLER*. In *IMAGES* Altman merges Cathryn's sexual experience with all three men into one blindingly passionate montage as the camera slowly moves in until the screen and changing lovers become one vast erotic blur. The two murders (by shotgun and knife) are detailed quickly if bloodily; yet they linger painfully long in memory, abetted by the uncanny nerve-wracking nonchalance with which the camera notices (or does not notice) the bodies throughout the rest of the film. Near the end of *IMAGES*, in a wrenching reversal of directions, Altman cuts from a slow upward zoom shot of the spray of water from a shower head (homage to Hitchcock in *PSYCHO*) to the roaring downward path of the corpse hurtling through the rapids and down a steep waterfall. Altman also manages to make the Irish landscape seem as unreal in its colors as the fanciful (myth-making?) passages of the novel read most often to accompany Cathryn's wanderings from the cottage. And this is a crucial point and feat lest we draw some bit of natural comfort in the green reality of Nature which could be used to stabilize her mental deterioration in the apartment and cottage, where most of the film takes place. The film is thus saved from unwittingly promoting Nature over Civilization as the environment more beneficial to Man's mental health.

Susannah York has clearly paid her dues and with her performance in *IMAGES* moves into the front rank of screen actresses. Her bravura performance, which rightfully won her the 1972 Best Actress prize at Cannes, is responsible in large part for overcoming Altman's more facile flourishes in the first half of the film and for enriching his later, more meaningful ones. At several times during the film, in extended, intricately charted camera movements worthy of a Welles, Cathryn is seen gazing at herself from a great distance away. We feel perhaps that she will, like a modernized Mildred Pierce, come through it all okay in the last reel. But when the second Cathryn begins showing up at closer and closer range, and when finally the two converse with one another, separated only by a pane of glass, Altman clearly (and wisely) reverts to his accustomed cynicism. *IMAGES* ends in frighteningly complete dissolution with Cathryn shrinking and quivering beneath the shower. The water, which has served traditionally as the symbol of both birth and death, here becomes that of a soulless purgatory, a lasting limbo for the identity-less. It is only the last fine moving moment in a performance of extraordinary perception and feeling, and for Susannah York, it is the pinnacle of both the film and her career.

Perhaps foremost of all, *IMAGES* and Altman are breath-takingly alive to feeling. Near the end of the film, when Marcel suddenly darts from his cottage to greet Cathryn, we release a deep sigh of relief from our gut. Such heart-stopping work is the mark not of a director but of a mesmerizer. *IMAGES*, indeed, like most of the world's great films, the calibre of which *IMAGES* does not really attain, is a brilliantly cinematic and intensely emotional experience. It is also a return for Altman to the genre (in fact, to the same blunt kitchen knife and obsessive psychological landscape of his first film *THAT COLD DAY IN THE PARK*) in which he, like so many of the world's acknowledged masters of film from Murnau to Bunuel, from Pabst to Hitchcock, and some of the industry's better popular directors from Losey to Coppola to Bogdanovich, all got their start.

Robert Altman introduced his film at the 10th New York Film Festival as a film that he hoped we would enjoy. Even if we do no more than take a filmmaker at his own word, which is usually a dangerous rule-of-thumb, *IMAGES* is a radical and literally stunning knockout.

David Bartholomew



THE DISCREET CHARM OF THE BOURGEOISIE

...we completely lose track of whether we are watching a dream or a reality...

THE DISCREET CHARM OF THE BOURGEOISIE
A 20th Century Fox Release. 11/72. In Panavision and Color. 100 minutes. Produced by Serge Silberman. Directed by Luis Bunuel. Story and screenplay by Luis Bunuel and Jean-Claude Carriere. Director of photography, Edmond Richard. Film edited by Helene Plemnikoff. Set decorator, Pierre Guffroy.

Ambassador Fernando Rey
Mrs. Thevenot Delphine Seyrig
Mrs. Senechal Stephane Audran
Florence Bulle Ogier
Mr. Senechal Jean-Pierre Cassel
Mr. Thevenot Paul Frankeur
Bishop Julien Bertheau
Colonel Claude Pieplu

Imagine **THE FRENCH CONNECTION** in Oz. Add some moments of the Marx Brothers and season it all with heavy doses of your most vivid nightmares.

That will give you some idea of the content of Luis Bunuel's **THE DISCREET CHARM OF THE BOURGEOISIE**. It will not, however, help you in understanding what this film is about. In one sense, it is about the illusion of reality. Now, whenever I read a review in which someone tells me that a book or film is about illusion and reality, my first impulse is to throw away the review and turn to a detective novel by Ross MacDonald.

The truth is that it is not as important to know what Bunuel's film is about as to experience it. It is like the more exciting roller coaster rides you remember from when you were 13. Bunuel builds slowly up to a comic climax, an often hilarious absurdity, and when he reaches the peak of the joke, plummets us down into the most absolute horror of our dreams.

For example, in one scene a young army officer approaches a trio of middle-class Parisian women in a tea room. A waiter informs the women that there is no tea. There has been a rush on tea. They have no coffee either, nor do they have alcoholic drinks. The young man, apparently involved in an overt flirtation with the women, sits down and asks if he can tell them about his childhood. The women are confused but respond affirmatively. The young officer then tells a grisly tale—which we see enacted—in which at the request of his dead mother and her mutilated dead lover, he poisons his own father. The story ends abruptly and the young man leaves. The women take the whole episode calmly and move on to their next adventure.

Essentially, this is the form of the film. Each build-up to a joke becomes more overt and each story told or nightmare revealed becomes more absurd and horrible. Also, each nightmare recounted contains an element of former Bunuel films, most notably his first film in 1928, the surreal **UN CHIEN ANDALOU** which he made with Salvador Dali.

Simplifying Bunuel's film is easy and reduces it to an intellectual statement which is not at the heart of what the director is saying. Essentially, he is charmed by the ability of the upper middle classes, the bourgeoisie, to survive and prosper, to keep going forward never losing their cool, and never getting anywhere. The most abstract image in the film, to which Bunuel keeps returning, is that of the six central figures in the film walking down a highway looking neither ecstatic nor unhappy. They are getting along, and that, essen-

Scenes from **THE DISCREET CHARM OF THE BOURGEOISIE**, Luis Bunuel's Academy Award winning film in release through 20th Century Fox. Top: The Ambassador of Miranda (Fernando Rey) takes extreme measures to silence rude remarks at a party. Bottom: Madame Senechal (Stephane Audran) smiles bravely at the arrival of dinner guest (Fernando Rey) twenty-four hours early. For Bunuel, the difference between reality and illusion isn't worth mentioning. Both are absurd.

tially is what Bunuel sees and finds comical, admirable, absurd and a bit horrible.

The basic idea of the film is that a group of six well-to-do Parisians (actually, one, Fernando Rey, is the ambassador from the mythical South American country of Miranda) are constantly trying to get together for a meal. The film opens that way and moves on with ever increasing absurdities, interrupting them each time it seems as if the group is about to actually get through a meal. A corpse is discovered in the restaurant they attend. Revolutionaries break in searching for the Ambassador. The French Army comes to spend the night. They discover they are not at a dinner party, but on a theatre stage. And more. Much more. Some of the events and disruptions turn out to be dreams of people in the film. In fact, a dream inside of a dream takes place at the comic center of the film. In the midst of an action, we see one of the characters sit up in bed and say, "I've just had the most horrible dream that Senechal had a dream..." What happens is that we completely lose track of whether we are watching a dream or a reality. Again, it makes no difference to Bunuel, who clearly thinks the idea of a difference between reality and illusion is not worth mentioning. Both are absurd. Perhaps the one difference is that the thing we call reality is essentially comic, and the thing we call dream is essentially horrible.

In the midst of all this chaos of existence, the great comic element is that the five Parisians and the Ambassador from Miranda accept all interruptions of their get-togethers as a matter of course. They handle everything with discreet charm, never appear flustered and never display outward signs of anger while those about them are constantly relating tales of horror and mayhem or living it.

The film is very much reminiscent of Bunuel's early surrealist films, but, at the same time, it is very much like his recent film, **THE MILKY WAY**, in which he ignored the differences in time as in **THE DISCREET CHARM OF THE BOURGEOISIE** he ignores the differences between reality and dream. In **THE MILKY WAY**, the characters walked from one century to another without a word of explanation, indicating visually the relationship of a thousand years ago with today and pointing out both the logic and absurdity of the assumption at the same time.

A number of Bunuel concepts of previous films exist in **THE DISCREET CHARM OF THE BOURGEOISIE** and it helps if you recognize them, but it is not at all essential to understanding or enjoying the film. For example, the horror dream recurs in all Bunuel films and the idea of a figure of terror carrying raw meat also recurs (particularly in **LOS OVIDADOS**). In **THE DISCREET CHARM OF THE BOURGEOISIE**, this recurrent image is turned into a joke when the hungry Mirandian ambassador cannot help in his dream reaching up to the table under which he is hiding from assassins to grab a piece of roast. He is revealed sheepishly grinning and chewing on the meat.

While the ideas of the film are not infinite, they are abundant. One could talk about the idea of the mock fantasy film, the film in which, like Dorothy, one falls asleep, finds oneself in a somewhat frightening dream world, and then wakes up safely in Kansas. For Bunuel, Kansas does not exist. There is no waking up. One could talk about comic blasphemy and the parody of such French directors as Godard or Chabrol in the film, for it exists. One could also talk about the cast of the film, possibly the most distinguished one Bunuel has worked with—Stephane Audran, Jean-Pierre Cassel, Delphine Seyrig, Fernando Rey, and Michel Piccoli.

THE DISCREET CHARM OF THE BOURGEOISIE is not a typical story film, not just an absurd comedy, not an angry experiment, but a highly enjoyable film for those willing to go along with an unsettling master.

Stuart M. Kaminsky

RT NOTICES FILM RATINGS

The Ratings	The Raters
**** High	CK = Chris Knight
***	DB = David Bartholomew
**	DRS = Dan R. Scapperotti
*	DW = Dale Winogura
o Average	FSC = Frederick S. Clarke
-	JCM = Jean-Claude Morlot
---	JM = John McCarty
----	RLJ = Robert L. Jerome
Low	Av. = Average Rating

BARON BLOOD An AIP Release. 10/72. In Technicolor. 90 minutes. Produced by Alfred Leone. Directed by Mario Bava. With: Joseph Cotten, Elke Sommer, Massimo Girotti, Antonio Cantafiora, Alan Collins, Rada Rassimov.

Mario Bava once again proves himself one of the great stylists of the horror film, with the stunningly visual qualities of his latest film for AIP. Unfortunately, the script is riddled with holes in logic, continuity, and pacing, not to mention the amateurish acting. Joseph Cotten, however, has magnificent presence and character control as the evil Baron, and Bava uses his talent wisely with conscience and restraint. But Bava's way with images of horror, nightstalking scenes reminiscent of *HOUSE OF WAX*, and glistening hallways of light and shadow, make this one of the few fascinatingly cinematic horror films in recent years. Bava's visual style redeems the myriad script and acting flaws.

Dale Winogura

CAULDRON OF BLOOD A Cannon Film Release. 8/71. 101 minutes. In Color & Scope. Produced by Robert D. Weinbach. Directed by Edward Mann. With: Jean-Pierre Aumont, Viveca Lindfors, Boris Karloff.

There is an air of tangible sadness about this failed thriller which features a wheelchair-ridden Boris Karloff in one of his last European movies. The story, about a blind sculptor (Karloff) who unwittingly uses real bones (supplied by his fiendish wife) as the foundations for his works, holds promise, but Viveca Lindfors, as the wife, and Jean-Pierre Aumont, as the hero, do not so much walk as slump through their roles, and a killing degree of lethargy hangs, like crepe, over the entire affair.

Robert L. Jerome

THE CLONES A Film-Makers International Release. 7/73. 93 minutes. In Color. Produced by Paul Hunt. Directed by Hunt and Lamar Card. With: Michael Greene, Gregory Sierra, Ollie Young, Susan Hunt.

Cloning, a method of asexual reproduction in the laboratory, has been described as "the new frontier" of science, but the film which utilizes this interesting subject in mainly uninteresting ways can be written off as the last frontier of B-picture making.

The story revolves, and collapses, around a government plot to control the weather ("and the world!") by duplicating the same four scientists 52 times (!) and situating them in meteorological stations around the globe. One of the scientists (Greene) discovers his duplicate "Clone" and tries to sabotage the plan. Thus, for the better part of 90-odd minutes he is chased and shot at all over the California landscape. At one point he stumbles, bruised and bloodied, into the laboratory of a colleague and announces that his life is being threatened. The friend, looking properly concerned, remarks, "That could be serious!" A-huh.

Robert L. Jerome

CURSE OF THE LIVING DEAD A Europa International Release. 7/73. In Color. 83 minutes. Produced by Nano Pisani and Luciano Catenacci. Directed by Mario Bava. With: Giacomo Rossi-Stuart, Erika Blanc, Fabienne Dali.

Mario Bava's exquisitely atmospheric *OPERAZIONE PAURA*, which had a very limited U.S. release in 1968 as *KILL, BABY, KILL*, has now been resurrected under a new, salable title. And a rose by any other name... It is a small yet never minor period piece about a 19th century European hamlet living under the spectre of a seven year-old girl, long dead yet ever-present to lure the frightened villagers into acts of self-destruction. As usual, the camera work is fluid, and the Bava color scheme, a fascinating mixture of eerie blues and greens, gives the viewer a rare glimpse of a nether world where things do go bump in the night.

The film is, incidentally, (the best) part of a horror package being distributed under the heading "Orry of the Living Dead." Also featured are *REVENGE OF THE LIVING DEAD*, which originally made its debut as *THE MURDER CLINIC* and stars the still classy Francoise Provost as a sexy murderess who runs afoul of a hooded killer at a sanatorium, and *FANGS OF THE LIVING DEAD*, which appears of a newer currency and stars a dark-haired, dispirited-looking Anita Ekberg as a model who inherits a vampiric castle.

Robert L. Jerome

FILM TITLE	CK	DB	DRS	DW	FSC	JCM	JM	RLJ	Av.
AND NOW THE SCREAMING STARTS (Roy Ward Baker) Cinerama, 4/73, 87 minutes, color		++	++						
ASPHYX, THE (Peter Newbrook) Paragon, 10/72, 98 minutes, color & scope						++			
ASYLUM (Roy Ward Baker) Cinerama, 10/72, 100 minutes, color	*	o	++	-	++	+++		o	+1.0
BABY, THE (Ted Post) Scotia Int'l, 4/73, 85 minutes, color	--			++					
BARON BLOOD (Mario Bava) AIP, 10/72, 90 minutes, color		o	--	*	--			o	+0.2
BATTLE FOR THE PLANET OF THE APES (J. Lee Thompson) 20th-Fox, 5/73, 86 minutes, color & scope				++	o		----	o	-0.5
BEN (Phil Karlson) Cinerama, 6/72, 93 minutes, color	---	o	++	---	---		----	o	-1.3
BLACULA (William Crain) AIP, 7/72, 92 minutes, color	--	o	*	----	++			-	-0.7
BLUEBEARD (Edward Dmytryk) Cinerama, 8/72, 123 minutes, color	-	o	---	-	-		--	o	-1.2
CHARLEY AND THE ANGEL (Vincent McEvety) Buena-Vista, 4/73, 94 minutes, color		o						o	
CHARLOTTE'S WEB (Charles A. Nichols & Iwao Takamoto) Paramount, 2/73, 94 minutes, color				o	+			++	
CHILD'S PLAY (Sidney Lumet) Paramount, 12/72, 100 minutes, color & scope				+++	++++		++	+	+2.5
CLOCKWORK ORANGE, A (Stanley Kubrick) Warner Bros, 6/72, 137 minutes, color	++	++	++++	++++	++++	+++	+++	+++	+3.1
CODE NAME TRIXIE (George Romero) aka: THE CRAZIES Cambist, 3/73, 103 minutes, color			-						
CONQUEST OF THE PLANET OF THE APES (J. Lee Thompson) 20th-Fox, 8/72, 86 minutes, color & scope	*	--	o	++	----	++	----	o	-0.6
COUNTRESS DRACULA (Peter Sandy) 20th-Fox, 10/72, 93 minutes, color	--	-	-		+	o			-0.6
CREEPING FLESH, THE (Freddie Francis) Columbia, 10/72, 92 minutes, color		o	o		o				
CRESCENDO (Alan Gibson) Warner Bros, 11/72, 83 minutes, color	*	-	o	o	o				0.0
DAUGHTERS OF SATAN (Hollingsworth Morse) United Artists, 10/72, 90 minutes, color			-					o	
DEATHMASTER, THE (Ray Danton) AIP, 8/72, 88 minutes, color					+			o	
DEVIL IN MISS JONES, THE (Gerard Damiano) M. B. Productions, 3/73, 74 minutes, color	---	+	o			----			-1.5
DISCREET CHARM OF THE BOURGEOISIE, THE (Luis Bunuel) 20th-Fox, 11/72, 100 minutes, color & scope	++++		-	++++	+++		++++		+2.8
DR. PHIBES RISES AGAIN (Robert Fuest) AIP, 7/72, 89 minutes, color	++	+	+++	-	++			++	+1.5
DRACULA A. D. 1972 (Alan Gibson) Warner Bros, 11/72, 95 minutes, color	*	-	+	+	---	---		o	-0.6
EVERYTHING TO KNOW ABOUT SEX (Woody Allen) United Artists, 8/72, 88 minutes, color & scope	++		---	---	+++		++	++	+1.2
FELLINI'S ROMA (Federico Fellini) United Artists, 12/72, 119 minutes, color	+++	+++	---	---	---	---	++	++	+2.8
FOUR FLIES ON GREY VELVET (Dario Argento) Paramount, 8/27, 102 minutes, color & scope	o							+	
FRENZY (Alfred Hitchcock) Universal, 6/72, 116 minutes, color	++++	+	++++	+++	++	+++	++	++	+2.7
GREASER'S PALACE (Robert Downey) Greaser's Palace Ltd, 7/72, 91 minutes, color	*		o	+++					
HANDS OF THE RIPPER (Peter Sandy) Universal, 6/72, 85 minutes, color	-	o		--	+++	++	o	+	+0.3
HIGH PLAINS DRIFTER (Clint Eastwood) Universal, 4/73, 105 minutes, color	++		-	+			++	o	+0.8
HORROR EXPRESS (Eugenio Martin) Scotia Int'l, 6/72, 90 minutes, color & scope						++			
IMAGES (Robert Altman) Columbia, 10/72, 101 minutes, color & scope	+++	+++							
JONATHAN (Hans W. Geissendorfer) International TV, 9/72, 110 minutes, color	*					++			
LAST HOUSE ON THE LEFT, THE (Wes Craven) AIP, 10/72, 91 minutes, color	----				-			+	
LEGEND OF BOGGY CREEK, THE (Charles W. Pierce) Howco, 6/73, 90 minutes, color & scope			++	++					

SHORT NOTICES

FILM RAT

FILM TITLE	CK	DB	DRS	DW	FSC	JCM	JM	RLJ	Av.
LEGEND OF HELL HOUSE, THE (John Hough) 20th-Fox, 6/73, 90 minutes, color			**	***	**		*		-2.0
LIVE AND LET DIE (Guy Hamilton) United Artists, 6/73, 121 minutes, color			**	-	**		**	*	-1.2
LOST HORIZON (Charles Jarrott) Columbia, 3/73, 150 minutes, color & scope				-	-			0	
MAN, THE (Joseph Sargent) Paramount, 7/72, 93 minutes, color				***	****			0	
MAN OF LA MANCHA (Arthur Hiller) United Artists, 12/72, 135 minutes, color & scope				***				**	
NECROMANCY (Bert I. Gordon) Cinerama, 8/72, 82 minutes, color		**			**	**		0	-0.5
NEPTUNE FACTOR, THE (Daniel Petrie) 20th-Fox, 6/73, 97 minutes, color & scope				0	----			0	
NIGHT EVELYN CAME OUT OF GRAVE (Emilio P. Miraglia) Phase One, 7/72, 100 minutes, color & scope			--		---			0	-1.5
NIGHT OF THE LEPUS (William Claxton) MGM, 7/72, 89 minutes, color	0	*			----			-	
NOW YOU SEE HIM, NOW YOU DON'T (Robert Butler) Buena-Vista, 7/72, 88 minutes, color				0				0	
O LUCKY MAN! (Lindsay Anderson) Warner Bros, 6/73, 177 minutes, color			***	****					
OTHER, THE (Robert Mulligan) 20th-Fox, 7/72, 100 minutes, color & scope		***		***	****	***	*	*	-2.5
PRIVATE PARTS (Paul Bartel) MGM, 10/72, 86 minutes, color		*	----						
RAW MEAT (Gary Sherman) aka: DEATH LINE AIP, 7/73, 88 minutes, color	--				***	**			
REFLECTION OF FEAR, A (William A. Fraker) Columbia, 12/72, 89 minutes, color			--		***				
RULING CLASS, THE (Peter Medek) Avco Embassy, 10/72, 150 minutes, color		**		-	***		***	***	-2.0
SAVAGES (James Ivory) Angelika Films, 7/72, 108 minutes, color		***				**			
SCHLOCK (John Landis) Jack H. Harris, 4/73, 80 minutes, color				*	***			*	
SCREAM, BLACULA, SCREAM (Robert Kelljan) AIP, 6/72, 95 minutes, color			---		*				
SISTERS (Brian DePalma) AIP, 4/73, 93 minutes, color			***	****		***	**		-3.0
SLEUTH (Joseph L. Mankiewicz) 20th-Fox, 12/73, 137 minutes, color	*		**	***	***	**	*		-1.8
SNOOPY, COME HOME (Bill Melendez) National General, 7/72, 90 minutes, color			---	*					
SON OF BLOB (Larry Hagman) Jack H. Harris, 6/72, 87 minutes, color		0		**	**		0		-1.0
SOYLENT GREEN (Richard Fleischer) MGM, 4/73, 100 minutes, color & scope	***	-	*	***	**	*	0		-1.3
SPIDER'S STRATEGEM, THE (Bernardo Bertolucci) New Yorker Films, 1/73, 97 minutes, color		***				***			
STEELYARD BLUES (Alan Myerson) Warner Bros, 2/73, 92 minutes, color		*		*	*		-		0.0
SUPERBEAST (George Schenck) United Artists, 10/72, 93 minutes, color			---	---					
THEATRE OF BLOOD (Douglas Hickox) United Artists, 4/73, 104 minutes, color	**	**	**	**	**		**		-2.0
THING WITH TWO HEADS, THE (Lee Frost) AIP, 7/72, 93 minutes, color		-	--	--	**		-		-0.5
TWINS OF EVIL (John Hough) Universal, 6/72, 85 minutes, color	*		**	*	*	**	---	*	-0.7
UP THE SANDBOX (Irvin Kershner) National General, 12/72, 98 minutes, color		0	**	***			*		-1.5
VAMPIRE CIRCUS (Robert Young) 20th-Fox, 10/72, 88 minutes, color		+	***	**				0	
VAULT OF HORROR, THE (Roy Ward Baker) Cinerama, 3/73, 105 minutes, color		-	*	--			*		-0.2
VIRGIN WITCH, THE (Ray Austin) Joseph Brenner, 6/72, 90 minutes, color		0	**	----					
WICKED, WICKED (Richard L. Bare) MGM, 4/73, 95 minutes, color & scope		*	*	*	*		0		
YOU'LL LIKE MY MOTHER (Lamont Johnson) Universal, 11/72, 92 minutes, color		*	*	***	*	**	**		-1.7

The Results

Films seen by four or more participants are averaged. Of 72 films in release, 10 are rated +2.0 or better: A CLOCKWORK ORANGE (3.1), SISTERS (3.0), THE DISCREET CHARM OF THE BOURGEOISIE, FELLINI'S ROMA (2.8), FRENZY (2.7), CHILD'S PLAY, THE OTHER (2.5), THE LEGEND OF HELL HOUSE, THE RULING CLASS, and THEATRE OF BLOOD (2.0).

LAST HOUSE ON THE LEFT A Hallmark/AIP Release. 10/72. 91 minutes. In Color. Produced by Sean S. Cunningham. Directed by Wes Craven. With: David Hess, Lucy Grantham, Sandra Cassel, Marc Sheffler.

This is a coarse, thoroughly repulsive little movie, whose self-indulgent ineptitude is alleviated only by sporadic bursts of off-handedly authentic dialogue, as when one character speaks of some "new clothes handpicked from Korvettes." This pleasing value, however, is not worth much, considering all the gore one must, quite literally, wade through to get to it. The movie seems eager, in one particularly offensive ad, to link itself with Bergman's VIRGIN SPRING, which the film does follow, plotwise, more or less in the fashion of a baby duck stumbling after its mother. I can only suppose that director Wes Craven and the distributors (AIP—who else?) hoped that something would rub off in the association. The film develops some of its characters and few of its situations and instead opts for reviling in the sadistic spectacle of its mechanical stickmen characters unemotionally hacking each other to ribbons. This includes, if I'm not mistaken, the screen's first act of felatio/castration.

It does, therefore, arouse some tension, but it is only that heady mixture of fascination and revulsion with which we view Nazi concentration camp footage or perhaps an educational film detailing with clinical interest the technique of, say, butchering hogs. AIP has effectively milked for all it's worth a breathlessly favorable review by Roger Ebert of the Chicago "Sun-Times," which proves that no matter what one can film and project in public, somebody, somewhere, will pronounce it a masterpiece. What is more appalling is the amount of money this slovenly morbid item is raking in. Ultimately, the film is that rare, debasing kind which makes one sad, and a bit ashamed, that the motion picture was ever invented.

David Bartholomew

SILENT NIGHT, BLOODY NIGHT A Cannon Film Release. 2/73. In Color. 90 minutes. Produced by Jeffrey Konvitz and Amy Artzi. Directed by Theodore Gershuny. With: Patrick O'Neal, John Carradine, James Patterson, Astrid Heeren.

Originally filmed as ZORA and having some release in 1972 as NIGHT OF THE DARK FULL MOON, this terrible low-budgeter is getting another push from its distributor under a new title. Taking place in a small New England town, the film rambles on from one gory situation to another until the climax attempts to tie the loose ends together without much success. Although advertised as the story of Satan taking over the earth for a night, the film has absolutely no supernatural involvement. It is the jumbled story of a town run by escaped inmates of an insane asylum who are being picked off one by one by an insane murderer. Although Patrick O'Neal is given star billing, he has little more than a cameo as a lawyer and John Carradine is hopelessly wasted in the poorly conceived role of a deadbeat newspaper editor (?) which does not even take advantage of his magnificent voice. Ill photographed and poorly acted, with a dismal, jumbled plot, the film is a blatant waste of time.

Mike Pitts

WICKED, WICKED An MGM Release. 4/73. In Metrocolor and Duo-Vision. 95 minutes. Produced by Richard L. Bare and William T. Orr. Directed and written by Richard L. Bare. With: David Baily, Tiffany Boling, Randolph Roberts.

Just as SISTERS was a loving homage to Hitchcock, Richard L. Bare's film pokes fun at every horror, mystery, and suspense film cliché and contrivance in sight. Told entirely in split screen (Duo-Vision), writer-director Bare uses the gimmick with mostly amazing agility and slickness. But a gimmick is no substitute for style and, though admittedly it is effective for suspense, shock value, and macabre humor, it remains a gimmick when used so consistently. Unlike the brief, superlative usage of the split-screen technique in SISTERS, here it becomes all too often gratuitous.

The gruesome satire is complimented by the delightfully witty usage of the silent PHANTOM OF THE OPERA pit-organ score. It's good fun, but when style is dictated by a gimmick, style ceases to exist, no matter how ingenious it may seem. Some modernists believe this is real cinema, but history will prove them wrong. But it is fun.

Dale Winogura

NEWS AND NOTES

SENSE OF WONDER

by Frederick S. Clarke

Welcome to the third volume of CINEFANTASTIQUE (sin - eh - faun - tass - teek'), the magazine with a "sense of wonder," devoted to the examination of horror, fantasy and science fiction films. As we enter into our third year of publication, it seems appropriate to pause for a moment, to look back and see what it is we have accomplished, to reevaluate our goals, and to look ahead to future plans.

Our primary function is to be an avenue of review and evaluation for the genre. Ideally, we would like to publish a review or short notice for each new genre film that comes into release. It is our firm belief that genre films, and films in general, are better today than ever before. We want to chart and record the progress of the genre as it develops, and in some small way to guide and influence its direction. CINEFANTASTIQUE has been warmly received by filmmakers who are surprised, and delighted, to find that some segment of their audience has the interest and intelligence to regard their work in the genre as an art and a craft. This knowledge can only result in an upgrading of their intentions, if not their work, as filmmakers.

Unfortunately, however, it is not possible for us to review every new genre film because of our limited quarterly publication schedule and small number of pages per issue, circumstances which are not expected to change in the foreseeable future. In order to broaden our coverage and evaluation of current films we are instituting a film rating system which allows us to attach some qualitative measure of achievement to a large number of films each issue. We hope this will allow us to leave some record, if only a simple listing, for every horror, fantasy and science fiction film that is made and released.

We are concerned with leaving a "record" of genre film production primarily because it has become evident to us that as we proceed and continue to publish, CINEFANTASTIQUE becomes a valuable and primary tool for reference and research, not only because of our reviews, but for our interviews and articles covering, for the most part, little known or ignored films and filmmakers. CINEFANTASTIQUE is currently indexed in "Film Literature Index" (Information Coordi-

nators, Inc) and "Multi-Media Reviews Index" (Perian Press), and is held and catalogued by many major libraries, universities and film schools.

This may all sound a bit stuffy and academic, and so we hasten to add that we've still got our "sense of wonder." Horror, fantasy and science fiction films are popular culture, they're entertainment, they're fun. We can still be serious and intelligent about them, without squeezing the fun and excitement out of it all, and so we hope to continue with our fresh, dynamic, highly visual approach in our presentation. We think we're combining the best of both worlds: the genre as art and the genre as entertainment.

James Robert Parish and Mike Pitts are two new contributors who provide this issue's major feature in a career article devoted to actor Christopher Lee. Lee has had an extremely varied screen career during his quarter-century in the film business, the last fifteen of which he has spent specializing in genre films. He, and his frequent co-star Peter Cushing, may be the last of the great horror film stars, spawned from circumstances in the film industry which no longer seem part of its milieu. The article attempts to trace the progress and evolution of Lee's career, paying particular attention to his little-known non-genre roles, using quotations from the actor's numerous published interviews over the years. What emerges is the picture of a true professional who is not so much concerned with the fact that he has been "typed" as a performer, but that his confinement within genre films has caused him to become increasingly involved in films that are made without care, intelligence, or adequate financing. We hope to publish a complete and detailed filmography of Lee's filmwork in a future issue, along with a lengthy and detailed interview. We would like to thank his colleagues, actor Peter Cushing, and director Terence Fisher, for writing the brief introduction and afterword to the article, respectively, which provide a personal insight and perspective from those with which Lee has done his best work.

Our European correspondent, Jean-Claude Morlot provides a survey of recent French cinefantastique, including interviews with French filmmakers which show how difficult it is to launch a genre film production in France. Surprisingly, the country which produced the great film pioneer Georges Melies, and which launched a critical renaissance in genre film interest in the '60s with the publication of the first serious publication devoted to the genre, "Midnight Fantastique," has a film industry that disdains anything connected with horror, fantasy and science fiction. Fortunately, many young French filmmakers are working against great obstacles to remedy this situation, with some success.

In Hollywood, Dale Winogura interviews 22-year-old film director John Landis and his producer, James C. O'Rourke (an advanced 28), who have broken into the film business with a witty, off-beat horror film satire called SCHLOCK! The two filmmakers have an understanding and affection for genre films that is shared by many young filmmakers. And Chris Knight, our English correspondent, talks with Mike Raven, a developing horror film personality active in producing, directing, writing and acting.

In News and Notes, Jean-Claude Morlot looks at two recent French film festivals and Greg Vander Leun introduces a new column devoted to television films which, among other things, takes a look at a Canadian television version of DRACULA. Judging from the reviews and ratings, 1973 is becoming an unprecedented year for fine quality genre films. Finally, we thank cover artist Bill Nelson for capturing that elusive quality of terror in Christopher Lee's Dracula, which Hammer Films seems to have lost forever.



FOREIGN FILM TWO FESTIVALS

by Jean-Claude Morlot

The First Festival International D'Avoriaz du Film Fantastique was held February 9th through the 11th at the modern French city of Avoriaz, a fashionable ski resort situated high in the Alps. Participants flew into Geneva, Switzerland and drove to Avoriaz by bus, where sleds awaited to transport them to the festival hotel.

Festival entries included: LES OISEAUX, LES ORPHELINS, LES FOUS (The Birds, The Orphans, The Mad), a Franco-Czechoslovakian co-production, directed by J. Jakubisko, received a "Special Prize" from the jury. It is the story of two war orphans who have adjusted to the harshness of reality by retreating into their own private fantasy world. The film's attitude is that in this sad world, whether crazy or not, everything is in vain.

DUEL, an ABC Television segment of their "Movie of the Week" series, written by Richard Matheson and directed by Steven Spielberg. This entry, which is also receiving European theatrical bookings, proved to be the revelation of the festival, and received the jury's top prize, the "Palmares." Dennis Weaver plays a motorist engaged in a deadly game of wits with a vengeful truck driver who is determined to force him off the road regardless of the consequences. The truck driver is never shown. Despite its seemingly ordinary story, the film builds up an intolerable level of suspense like the best of horror films.

ANTEFATTO, Mario Bava's 1971 Italian production, was scheduled to be presented by its director, however Bava never put in an appearance during the three days of the festival, although he was eagerly awaited. His film was not a success. It is quite similar to his SEI DONNE PER L'ASSASSINO, made in 1964, with double the murders, each one more horrifying than the one before. Bava's photography and direction are stunning, as always, but the mediocre subject matter of the film and its routine script defeat it.

THEMROC, a French film from director Claude Feraldo is a rare gem in France's meagre genre production, and a unique and unusual treat. Themroc of the title, played by Michel Piccoli, is a middle-aged bachelor living with his sister and his mother. He is a lonely man, who lives in silence. He works at a factory where he is in charge of re-

Above: Fond farewells at the Second Convention Francaise du Cinema Fantastique: Terence Fisher, Dominique Abonyi, Peter Cushing, and convention director, Alain Schlockoff. Top Left: Christopher Lee at the First Festival International D'Avoriaz du Film Fantastique, with the Alpine city of Avoriaz in the distance. Middle Left: Laura Betti becomes the victim of a brutal murderer in Mario Bava's ANTEFATTO, an Avoriaz festival entry. The Italian film was made in 1971 and is currently receiving U. S. bookings through Hallmark as TWITCH OF THE DEATH NERVE. Bottom Left: Michel Piccoli received the Avoriaz special jury prize for his performance in THEMROC, a sociological allegory.

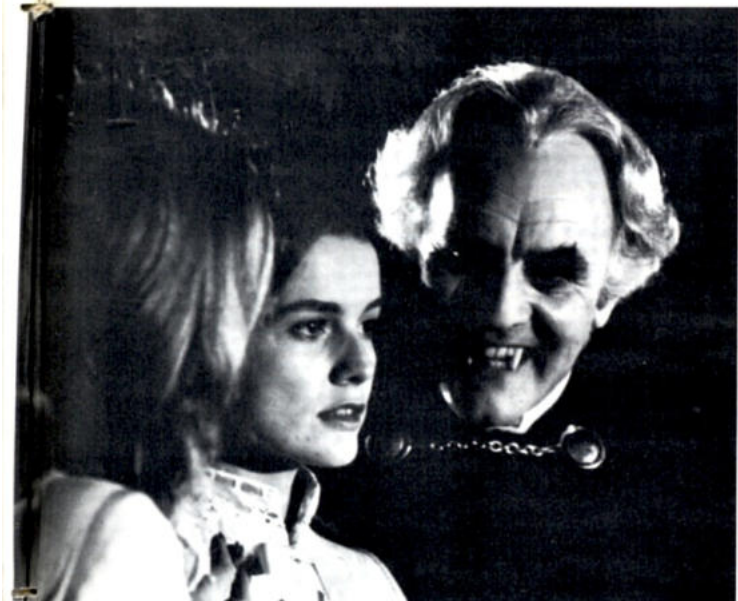
pairing the outside wall. He goes to work each morning with a friend whose occupation is to repair the inside wall of the factory. One day he changes, the silent Themroc roars. He takes stones and mortar to his room and walls up the door. He tears out the window in his room and its wall, and turns it into a cave. The neighbors seeing Themroc, take conscience of their own state, and begin to do the same. Director Feraldo, who also wrote the film's script, is making a joyous mockery of the foundations of society by satirizing the role of work and family, and emphasizing the main character's loneliness and alienation. This remarkable film contains no dialogue or music. The jury awarded Michel Piccoli with the special prize for the best performance of the festival.

IL SEME DEL UOMO (The Seed of Man), is an Italian entry by director Marco Ferreri, telling of life in the world after a great cataclysm which has eliminated three-quarters of humanity. The authorities demand that all women of child-bearing age be pregnant, and the film follows a young couple who do not wish to bring offspring into such a world. Ferreri's odd and disturbing film is quite experimental in nature, utilizing overextended takes, wild colors, and anti-traditional free-form construction, which resulted in its being booed by the audience.

Festival entries also included SILENT RUNNING, THE SORCERERS, DUNWICH HORROR, LA RAGAZZA DI LATTA (see Trieste '71, 2:142), as well as a retrospective showing of the Russian silent classic AELITA.

The Second Convention Francaise du Cinema Fantastique was held April 8th through the 15th in Paris. Peter Cushing and director Terence Fisher were honored for their careers in horror films.





VIDEO-FANTASTIQUE

by Greg Vander Leun

Aniforms, a new type of animation, was demonstrated by animator Dave Doran on the "Dick Cavett Show" March 19th and again on April 16th. It involved the use of a white, rubbery, puppet-like figure on a black background which while being manipulated is shot through a camera and projected on a television-like receiver. This creates a black-lined figure on a white background that can do just about anything on command, including talk via use of a microphone hookup to Mr. Doran off-stage. A very nice effect, but wasn't this used on the old "Captain Kangaroo Show?"

Sorry, Trekkies, but GENESIS II didn't quite make it. Bad, hammy acting by the "stars" (Alex Cord, Mariette Hartley), terrible use of several expandable opportunities (mutants with two hearts, underground cities, misuse of soundstages), and an overall lack of intelligence and sophistication in the scripting took its toll. Gene Roddenberry may have great production expertise, but he just can't write. However, I did enjoy the return of Bill Theiss costuming, the scenes of the tube transportation system a la FORBIDDEN PLANET, the matte work of the mutant community of Tyrannia and the power plant. Despite its shortcomings (or because of them?) CBS has optioned the show for a mid-season start in December. (CBS, 3/23/73, Rating: -)

DR. JEKYLL AND MR. HYDE was, to my surprise, not a major disappointment. Kirk Douglas and the distinguished cast can sing and dance! Douglas' portrayal of the "good" doctor was handled nicely, especially toward the conclusion where he, in a slow motion sequence, protests that he is not Hyde while undergoing a transformation into same. The make-up this time around had Douglas' Hyde a mildly grotesque individual with pronounced five o'clock shadow, an evil milky eye, and no distinct dimpled chin. Susan George handled her role as the barroom singer Annie very well, as did Donald Pleasance as Hyde's helper, Susan Hampshire as Jekyll's fiancée, and Michael Redgrave as her father. Sherman Yellan wrote a first-rate adaptation. Director David Winter staged some dance numbers with marvellous verve, including one with Ms. George

Above: Scenes from DRACULA, an episode of the Canadian CBC TV series "Purple Playhouse." Left: Canadian actor Norman Welsh as Dracula, menaces Blair Brown as Mina with the help of Charlotte Blunt as a vampiric Lucy. Right: Dracula is thwarted by Nehemiah Persoff as Dr. Van Helsing. The videotaped production closely follows the Stoker novel. (Photos by F. Phipps, courtesy of Canadian Broadcasting Co.)

and Judi Bowker (Tupenny) called "Two Fine Ladies." Surprisingly, this routine was done in one continuous take using four video-tape cameras. Thank you Winters/Rosen Productions! (NBC, 3/7/73, Rating: +++)

This season's "new and improved" Saturday morning line-up of cartoons bent on educating those little bastards is just as bad, just as trashy as the year before. Compare new offerings like AMAZING CHAN AND THE CHAN CLAN to the old Warner Bros BUGS BUNNY, or SEALAB 2020 to JOHNNY QUEST and you'll see what I mean. One of the cartoon gems this season was Hanna-Barbera's Emmy Award winning LAST OF THE CURLEWS, an ABC "After School Special." This cartoon is a sensitive story about a curlew on its trip south, all alone due to the wide-scale massacre of this species of bird, trying in vain to find a mate. This special proves that Hanna-Barbera is indeed capable of above-average animation, dealing with a straightforward subject, this time ecology. Truly a nice show with very good music. (Rating: +++) On March 28, CBS featured two half-hour cartoons back-to-back in prime time, DR. SUESS' THE LORAX and Oscar Wilde's THE GENTLE GIANT. The Suess offering, while not equalling Chuck Jones' THE GRINCH WHO STOLE CHRISTMAS, did a very good job of getting a concept across to children on their level. This special gave children a lesson in human greed and materialism and the need for ecology. (Depatie-Freleng Production, Rating: ++) THE GENTLE GIANT was a Reader's Digest presentation and cannot be praised enough. The story concerns an oversized recluse with a heart of ice who grows in human understanding through the love of an extraordinary child, plus the warmth of some ordinary children. The artwork, animation, script and concept were all top quality and a breath of fresh air in light of the usual low quality of television cartoons. Fine detail and camera angles I've never seen attempted before, make this film both astounding and breathtaking. (Rating: +++)

SIX MILLION DOLLAR MAN was

another "ABC Movie of the Week" pilot film for a projected series, that failed miserably. Lee Majors was featured as a cyborg, a half-robot, half-human composed of artificial limbs and body parts, and a one man army. As with GENESIS II, there were so many opportunities and so little creativity. Inevitably, the film was a ratings success and will be seen as a new ABC Fall series under the title of CYBORG. Oh, well. (Rating: -)

MD Tissue is featuring characters from the classic Alice In Wonderland using animation a la Poppin' Fresh in one of their commercials. Three figures used are the Mad Hatter, and friends Ahooka and Cheshire Cat. The Hatter is particularly well done in this nice, clever ad.

Highly recommended shows broadcast on ABC's "Wide World of Entertainment:" FRANKENSTEIN (Dan Curtis Productions) with Robert Foxworth (Dr. Frankenstein), Susan Strasberg (his fiancée), and Bo Swenson (the monster), a skillful two-night (90 minutes each) video-tape film of this much adapted subject with increased emphasis on an accurate interpretation. Swenson's exceptional portrayal of the sensitive creature along with his natural height and realistic makeup made for an enjoyable 180 minutes. (Rating: +++)

SUICIDE CLUB (Universal Productions), provided another proving ground for actors like Joseph Haskell, Margot Kidder, and the always competent Joseph Wiseman. The R. Louis Stevenson story concerned the ultimate gamble: one's own life. The members of the select club, ten members more-or-less, are passed cards out of a regulation deck, turning them all face up until one is dealt the ace of spades—he is the victim. The process is repeated to choose the assassin, except that the cards are dealt face down so as not to reveal his identity. They are playing for the right to kill and be killed. Excellent performances by the cast and the use of blacked-out backgrounds made this a superb video-tape production. (Rating: +++)

AND THE BONES CAME TOGETHER is a truly eerie tale of love beyond death and retribution. A housing development exec (Lawrence Luckinbill) forces an old Jew from a decaying tenement in order to put up a new housing project. The old man resists and employs not only stubbornness born of love for his late wife but also Jewish sorcery as well. The old man dies leaving a terrible curse on Luckinbill and his wife (real wife Robin Strasser). The remainder of the tale details the fulfillment of the curse and contains

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IMPOSSIBLE IS NOT FRENCH

Jean-Claude Morlot surveys French cinefantastique and finds the genre is alive but not well in the country of Melies.

If George Melies can be credited with the invention of fantasy films, his countrymen, the French, have certainly made little use of it. Napoleon remarked that "in the country of Pascal, impossible is not French." Taking an entirely different meaning, it seems that hundreds of years later, the impossible in the cinema is not French. The progress and history of cinema in France is not marked with the production of fantasy and science fiction films as has been the case with Germany, England and the United States. The French, perhaps, with their rich cultural heritage, steeped in centuries of French history feel trapped or limited within the unreal boundaries of fantasy. This rationale however, seems equally applicable to the English and Germans who have, to the contrary, made significant contributions to the development of fantasy in film. But, for whatever the reasons, fantasy has not been a successful topic for French cinema, except in instances when the genre has been attempted as "comedy," as in *LES BELLES DE NUIT* in 1952 by Rene Clair and *LES VISITEURS DU SOIR* in 1942 by M. Carne. Very few are those French films which have incorporated a purer concept of fantasy and horror: most notably the work of film pioneer G. Melies and isolated works as Julien Duvivier's 1936 French-Czechoslovakian co-production *LE GOLEM*, starring the great French actor Harry Baur, and of course, Franju's oft-touted horror film of 1961, *LES YEUX SANS VISAGE*.

In recent years, probably beginning in the middle or late 1950s, there developed a small, but very active, audience for works of *cinefantastique*. While the French cinema made little or no contributions to the genre during this time there was a conspicuous consumption of foreign genre films. A vocal elite of critics developed who were not ashamed to include *cinefantastique* into the body of cinema as an art form, and their analyses of then current fantasy films, probably the first serious work ever done about the genre, led to the recognition of the work of director Roger Corman in other film countries, notably in the United States and England. "Midi-Minuit Fantastique," the first film publication devoted exclusively to *cinefantastique* to deal seriously and cogently with the genre, appeared in the summer of 1962 from the publishers Le Terrain Vague. The real beginnings of a consistent fantasy film production for French cinema did not come until 1968, a year in which a large number of genre films were produced and released, an output which was an outgrowth of the developing fan movement. The genre had first and foremost been enjoyed, then analyzed, and at last, in 1968, interest had advanced to the point where critics and filmmakers wished to put their enthusiasm and knowledge to the practical test of production.

LE VIOL DU VAMPIRE Released by Distributeurs Associes. 1968. Directed by Jean Rollin. With: Solange Pradel, Ursule Pauly, Nicole Romain, Bernard Letron, Catherine Deville, Marquis Pohl, Jaqueline Sieger, Ariane Sapriel, Eric Yan.

LA VAMPIRE NUE Released by Distributeurs Associes. 5/69. In Eastmancolor. Directed by Jean Rollin. With: Caroline Cartier, Ursule Pauly.

LE FRISSON DES VAMPIRES Released by Distributeurs Associes. 4/71. 90 minutes. In Eastmancolor. Directed by Jean Rollin. With: Sandra Julien, Dominique, Nicole Nancel, Michel Delahaye.

VIERGES ET VAMPIRES Released by FRAMO. 5/72. In Color. An A. B. C. Films Production. Produced by Sam Selsky. Directed by Jean Rollin. Director of photography, Renan Poes. With: Marie Pierre Castel, Mireille D'Argent, Philippe Gaste, Dominique, Louise Dhour, Michel Delesalle, Olivier Francois, Antoine Mausin, Dominique Toussaint, Paul Bisciglia.

Director Jean Rollin has been commercially the most successful in utilizing the genre in French films, and has produced a series of four vampire films with the evocative titles of: *LE VIOL DU VAMPIRE* (The Vampire's Rape), *LA VAMPIRE NUE* (The Naked Vampire), *LE FRISSON DES VAMPIRES* (The Vampire's Thrill) and *VIERGES ET VAMPIRES* (Virgins and Vampires) or, as it is alternately titled, *REQUIEM POUR UN VAMPIRE* (Requiem for a Vampire). Rollin's films have succeeded because they mix two subjects of exceeding popularity in France: vampirism and sex. Rollin includes the requisite sex and nudity to satisfy his producer and to make the films financially profitable, while, at the same time, attempting to fashion a worthwhile genre film (and this attempt is often far from obvious). Unfortunately the exploitation content of the films is too all-pervading to allow them to be anything more than interesting curiosities, and that is being charitable. Each succeeding film repeats the familiar elements: hippie vampires in a kind of "happening" with psychedelic music and effects and lots of naked girls. Rollin's continued use of color spot lighting for unusual photographic effects becomes tiresome, as does the nudity and bad acting, and the films all too obviously show the carelessness and lack of planning in their production.

LA ROSE DE FER 1973. 85 minutes. In Color. An A. B. C. Films Production. Produced by Sam Selsky. Directed by Jean Rollin. Screenplay by Jean Rollin and Maurice Lemaitre. Director of photography, Jean Jacques Renon. Music by Pierre Raph. With: Francoise Pascal, Hughes Quester, Mireille D'

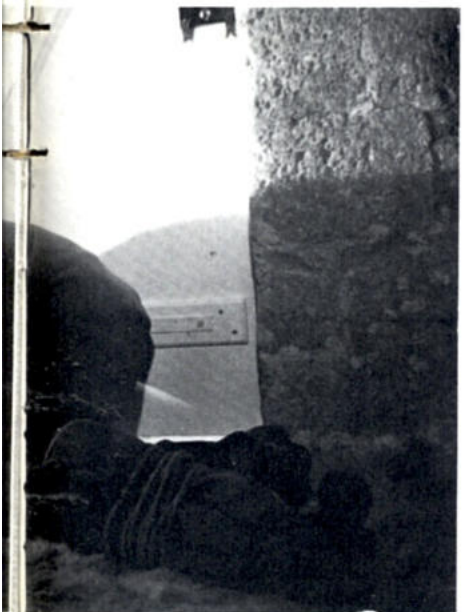
Argent.

Jean Rollin's latest film, *LA ROSE DE FER*, was presented at the 20th Convention Francaise du Cinema Fantastique and was awarded only a cold reception. Rollin has discarded his usual trappings, eroticism, vampires, and pop music to make a serious genre film with subtlety. The film is, at least, a courageous move on the part of the filmmaker who could have assured himself of another commercial success in sticking to his old, undistinguished formula. The story involves a young couple (Pascal and Quester) who meet at a wedding ceremony and make a date for the following Sunday. To be alone, they go to the cemetery, where they make love inside an old crypt. It is near dusk when they come out again, only to find that they have been locked inside the gates of the graveyard. The remainder of the film is devoted to the couple's harried and frenzied search for an exit among the tombs and grave-stones. Unable to leave, they return to the old crypt to spend the night. The last scene takes place in the morning and shows only a clown, a descendent, setting down a bouquet of roses at the crypt. Unfortunately, Rollin is no Val Lewton, and fails at his first attempt to deal with psychological horror and the horror which springs from everyday surroundings. The concept of the film itself begins to pale after an hour of watching this couple walking and running around, often supposedly in mortal terror. There is only one nude dream sequence which is tastefully restrained. Rollin has gambled in attempting to do the type of film he truly wants to do, and it looks as if it may not pay off, for the film has not yet gone into release and cannot find a distributor.

PARIS N'EXISTE PAS Released by Opera. 6/69. 90 minutes. In Color. Produced by Opera/Lycanthrope Films. Directed by Robert Benayoum. With: Richard Leduc, Daniele Gaubert, Serge Gainsbourg, Monique Lejeune, Henri Deus, Jean Lascot, Francois Valorbe.

The first film directed by French critic and horror fan Robert Benayoum was *PARIS N'EXISTE PAS* (Paris Does Not Exist), an attempt to utilize the concept of time-travel without all the pseudo-scientific claptrap. The film's protagonist, played by Richard Leduc, is able to alter time in his mind, pre-dating the time-tripping of Billy Pilgrim in George Roy Hill's film version of Kurt Vonnegut's *SLAUGHTERHOUSE-FIVE* by 3 years. The Leduc character is able to play with time in his memory: he sees a Parisian street in the present as a quaint street scene out of the 1930s. He is able to move objects by concentrating on them. During his travels in the past of Paris, he falls in love with a girl from the 1930s. The film consists of a tremendous number of scenes, well over 600, and until the end they tend to charac-





Scenes from recent French *cinéfantastique*, all unreleased in the United States. Top: Marc Eyraud in *L'ARAGNEE D'EAU* (The Water Spider), 1971, a fantasy in which a lonely man imagines a water spider becomes a beautiful woman, or does he just imagine it? Middle: Anne Varese in *LA GOULVE* (1972) which is supposed to be the feminine gender for ghoul, an example of the French *le cinéma de sorcellerie* which dotes on sorcery and witchcraft. Bottom: French character actor Daniel Emilfork finds another victim of the murderer of "les garrigues," from *MIDI MINUIT* (Midday Midnight), 1970.

terize the visions of the young man as subjective fantasies, until the final shot dwells upon an old photograph in which Leduc appears. *PARIS N'EXISTE PAS* received favorable criticism, but was a commercial failure, despite its release in the fashionable "Art et Essai" ghetto, a theatre specializing in the presentation of artistic and foreign productions not commercially viable. Robert Benayoum's film is what I call "ambitious" *cinéfantastique*, intellectually and artistically fulfilling, but lacking the commercial elements to make it the success needed to encourage the further production of genre films.

LE TEMPS DE MOURIR Released by Prodis. 7/70. 90 minutes. In Eastmancolor. A Filmski/Les Films de la Licorne Production. Produced by Albert Koski and Michel Cousin. Directed by Andre Farwagi. Screenplay by Alain Morineau and Andre Farwagi. Music by Karel Trow. Director of photography, Willy Kurant. With: Bruno Cremer, Anna Karina, Jean Rochefort, Billy Kearns, Catherine Rich, Daniel Moosman.

Andre Farwagi's film was an entrant in the 1971 Trieste Science Fiction Film Festival (see 2:1:42), where it received the Jury's "Special Prize." The story is of a rich man who finds a video tape which reveals to him the time, place and method of his own death, and follows his desperate attempt to thwart destiny and remain alive. Andre Farwagi is a young director who has worked in television and on short films, and in this, his feature film debut, he fails to make his story believable. The film was not a commercial success.

MIDI MINUIT Released by Plan-Film. 6/70. An Albertine Films Production. Produced by Jacques Portet. Written & directed by Pierre Philippe. Director of photography, Pierre Willemin. Music by Toshiro Mayuzumi and Jean Charles Capon. With: Sylvie Fennec, Beatrice Arnac, Jacques Portet, Daniel Emilfork, Laurent Vergez, Patrick Jouane, Antoinette Moya.

MIDI MINUIT (Midday Midnight) is about murders committed in a desolate area of Southern France known as "les garrigues." A couple stop at an estate in the vicinity to visit their friend Laurent (played by Laurent Vergez). The estate is the dark and gloomy place that is the stuff of horror films, and one evening the woman (played by Sylvie Fennec) discovers Laurent in chains staring at her with the wild unseeing look of a hounded animal. She discovers his secret: Laurent is the murderer of "les garrigues," and despite the disgust that she feels, she falls in love with him. Together they murder the young woman's partner so they are, at last, free to be married, but Laurent is squeezing her hand so tightly that a drop of blood appears... *MIDI MINUIT* is directed by Pierre Philippe who wanted to do a film in which evil went unchecked, without the requisite moralizing of the genre. His attitude resulted in a film in which this theme goes much deeper than simply the "twist" ending which now seems

so fashionable. The film was shot entirely on location in Southern France, utilizing interiors of existing estates gloomily isolated in the mountains. The film also features an anguished performance by French character actor Daniel Emilfork as The Marquis, in a film that is a darkly fascinating vision of psychological horror.

L'ALLIANCE Released by Paramount. 1/71. 90 minutes. In Technicolor. Produced by C. A. P. A. C. Directed by Christian de Chalonge. Screenplay by Jean Claude Carriere based on his novel. Director of photography, Alain Derobe. Sets by Hubert Monloup. Music by Gilbert Amy. Edited by Henri Lanoe. With: Anna Karina, Jean Claude Carriere, Isabelle Sadoyan, Tsilla Chelton, Jean Pierre Darras, Rufus, Jean Wiener, Paule Emmanuel, Pierre Julien, Cathy Gaudry, Andre Gili.

L'ALLIANCE (The Wedding Ring) directed by Christian de Chalonge hardly appears to be part of the genre at all until its very last sequence. It is the story of a young woman (Anna Karina) who marries a veterinarian (Jean Claude Carriere) engaged in some bizarre experimentation on insect life, their reaction to atomic explosions and intense radiation. One evening the insects are intensely excited, and suddenly a tremendous white brilliance washes out the scene. The last shot is of two human-like insects walking in the sands of a vast desert. The script by Jean Claude Carriere, from his own novel, is constructed so that the viewer never realizes what is happening until the very end. It segues from love story to thriller and then finally to science fiction but is completely uncharacteristic of genre films throughout most of its length. Some of the dialogue attempts to pave the way for the fantastic ending such as: "The human body is so remarkably adaptable that in the case of a nuclear holocaust it could adapt itself to survive," and "Experimenters have found that after a nuclear explosion only insect life survives." The film was a complete failure in France because of its strange characters and ending, but Anna Karina and Jean Claude Carriere (who also wrote the original story and screenplay) are excellent as the film's leads.

LE SEUIL DU VIDE Unreleased. 1971. In Eastmancolor. A Neyrac Films Production with Jean Francois Davy. Directed by Jean Francois Davy. Script by Alain Gerber, Andre Ruellan & Jean Francois Davy from a novel by Kurt Steiner. Director of photography, Louis Soulanes and Dominique Brabant. With: Dominique Erlange, Pierre Vaneck, Jean Servais, Catherine Rich, Odette Duc, Yvon Lec, Michele Lemoine, Georgette Anys, Claude Melki, Arlette Emery, Jean Francois Davy.

LE SEUIL DU VIDE (On the Brink of Emptiness) is adapted from a novel by Kurt Steiner, well known in France for his popular paperback collections of fantasy and horror stories. The film is the story of a young girl named Wanda (Dominique Erlange) who studies art in Paris, where she hopes to be a painter. She meets a strange elderly woman (Leonide Gallois) who offers her a room for rent. The room is triangular with only three walls, one of which contains a seemingly unnecessary door. Fascinated by the extra doorway, she eventually manages to force it open to discover complete darkness on the other side, with all illumination stopping abruptly at the threshold. But upon entering through the doorway she finds herself in a completely different world. The fascination of the "other room" draws her back again and again, and each time she appears to be growing older. On her last visit she finds herself in a garden paradise where an old man tells her that she has entered a dream, that long ago someone stole his youthful body and that someone will try

to steal her body. Wanda wakes up in the triangular room as a young woman again, and mechanically gets up and walks out into the street toward the old woman who let her the room. The exchange of bodies is completed and Wanda is seen dying in the old woman's body. The film is the first genre work of young director Jean Francois Davy, who used a minimum of special effects to execute his story, instead relying on lighting and special laboratory treated color for effect. Davy's attempts at realism heighten the believability of the film's fantasy element. Dominique Erlange ages as Wanda without the use of involved makeup, a wig and a change of dress allow her to make the transformation convincingly. Davy's film was unable to find a distributor in France and is almost impossible to see.

LE SADIQUE AUX DENTS ROUGES Released by C.P.F. 1/71. 100 minutes. In Color. A Cinevision Production. Directed by Louis Van Belle. Director of photography, Jacques Crevin. Music by Raymond Legrand. With: Jane Clayton, Albert Simono, Daniel Moosman.

LE SADIQUE AUX DENTS ROUGES (The Sadist With Red Teeth) is the story of a research scientist who turns a young man into a vampire. The subject of the experiments is naturally disturbed by this turn of events, and attempts to escape. We have here an "I Was A Teenage..." horror film, borrowing from the genre films of that American cycle of a decade ago that would have best been forgotten. Acting and direction are crude and the vampire's teeth are as laughable as wax Halloween fangs.

L'ARAGNEE D'EAU 1/71. 80 minutes. In Eastmancolor. Produced by Tanit Films. Directed by Jean Daniel Verghaeghe. Screenplay by Marcel Beaulieu and Jean Daniel Verghaeghe from a novel by Marcel Beaulieu. Director of photography, Jean Gonnet. Music by Serge Kaufman. Sets by Robert Luchaire. Sound by Jean Pierre Ruh. Edited by Marie Claire Korber. With: Elizabeth Wiener, Marc Eyraud, Marie Anne Duthiel, Andre Julien, Pierre Meyrand.

L'ARAGNEE D'EAU (The Water Spider) is directed by Jean Daniel Verghaeghe on two levels, as a gentle fantasy or as the touching delusions of a sad and lonely individual. The story involves Bernard (Marc Eyraud), a middle-aged man, living a quiet and secluded country life, writing books that no one wants to publish. During a walk along the river one day, he finds a beautiful water spider and takes it home. From that moment on, it becomes the only thing in his life that matters, and transforms itself into an attractive woman with whom he can live a "mad love" for a short while. It eventually escapes its golden cage to return to the river where, followed by Bernard, it turns back into its spider form and swims away. Director Verghaeghe handily maintains the ambiguity between true fantasy and subjective delusion, however his realization of the material doesn't live up to its potential. There are, in particular, two extended takes, tracking shots, done in the form of a figure eight, that are too long to be supportable.

MORGANE ET SES NYMPHES Released by C.F.D.C. 2/71. 90 minutes. In Color. An Oceanic Films/C.F.D.C. Production. Directed by Bruno Gantillon. Screenplay by Bruno Gantillon and Jacques Chamelle. With: Dominique Delpierre, Alfred Baillou, Mireille Saunin, Regine Motte, Ursule Pauly, Michele Perello, Nathalie Chaine.

MORGANE ET SES NYMPHES (Morgane and Her Nymphs) follows the successful pattern of the Rollin films by mixing sexual content with fantasy.

JEAN ROLLIN

The most commercially successful director of French cinefantastique discusses the genre's special problems.

CFQ: Could you tell us something about yourself?

ROLLIN: I am 33, married, and have an eight-year old son. I have been a film director since 1967. Before that I made short films, and worked as an assistant to other filmmakers. In brief, I broke into the business in the usual way.

CFQ: How did you come to make your first feature film, *LE VIOL DU VAMPIRE* (The Vampire's Rape)?

ROLLIN: At the time, I was working for a company making films for the press. We made *LE VIOL DU VAMPIRE* and *LA VAMPIRE NUE* (The Naked Vampire) while I was on holiday, almost without preparation. At first, I enjoyed making this type of film, but it has not turned out as I had hoped. The first one that we made (*LE VIOL DU VAMPIRE*) was to have been a short. We had a friend who owned the rights to an American vampire film that was 60 minutes long. He told me: "If you can find someone to produce thirty minutes of film to go with it, I can release it." In 1967 the most difficult part of filmmaking was finding a distributor; the rest is easy by comparison. Here we had a distributor who needed thirty minutes of sexy scenes for his American film. He gave us the O.K. to do the film only on the condition that it was sexy. I wasn't enthusiastic about making a sex film then, and I still am not. But we made it, and under very trying conditions. Once finished, the producer decided that we could shoot another hour of film with only a small further investment, and so we ended up making a full 90 minute film.

CFQ: Who worked with you on these early films?

ROLLIN: *LE VIOL DU VAMPIRE* was made with friends, excepting Guy Leblond who is a professional. For everybody, including myself, the technicians and the actors, it was a new experience, our first film. That explains the imperfections.

CFQ: In *LE VIOL DU VAMPIRE* there are several strange characters, including the gentleman, the monster, and the queen of the vampires. Who are they, if they are not actors?

ROLLIN: The gentleman and the monster, characters not originally planned, are the film's producers! The queen of the vampires is a friend of mine who is a psychoanalyst. You can also see two well-known French artists in the film: Philippe Druillet and Nicolas Deville.

CFQ: It is obvious, that for your second film, *LA VAMPIRE NUE*, you changed your style: bigger budgets, color...

ROLLIN: For that second film, most of the technicians were professionals. The budget was 350,000 Francs (about \$70,000), in comparison to our budget on the first film of only 25,000 Francs (about \$5000). *LA VAMPIRE NUE* is more pretentious than our first film, and so, naturally, it was more expensive, with color photography, many different sets, and a giant castle. But to keep within budget, we had to work very fast.

Interview with Jean Rollin conducted by Alain Schlockoff, Paris, France, February, 1972, and translated by Jean Claude Morlot.

CFQ: Your biggest detractors have often made the remark that your films are poorly acted. Do you sacrifice directing your performers for speed?

ROLLIN: Yes, but what we gained in filming quickly, we used for more interesting things in the film, for a few ideas that I had. I have particular tastes. I don't like to have good actors in my films. Everyone is free to do what he wants to do, and it creates a certain spontaneity.

CFQ: What was your reason for using violence and eroticism in your cinefantastique? You have said that the eroticism was imposed for commercial reasons.

ROLLIN: It seems to have been imposed on filmmakers in general. In 1967, when we began, there were no French horror films. No producer or distributor in France would take a chance on them. Of course, we can't do like the Americans or the English. They have a tradition, money, studios, actors, everything going for them. We were given a simple ultimatum: if you want your film released, we can release it on the sex circuit. They wouldn't think of attempting a pure horror film. But we did attempt to avoid the pornographic; there are no bed scenes in our film.

CFQ: What are your favorite themes that you emphasize?

ROLLIN: I have none. What I do emphasize is an approach to presenting my subject matter that is slightly surrealistic. For example, in *LE FRISON DES VAMPIRES* (The Vampire's Thrill) we have a vampire woman who appeared a few times in the script. It fascinated me to try to make her appearances in the film as strange as possible: she appears from within a clock striking midnight, and in one scene comes down through the chimney like a Santa Claus. In *VIERGES ET VAMPIRES* (Virgins and Vampires), my last film, we have an occult initiation taking place in a cemetery, in which the initiate listens to a woman playing a piano concerto. That image interested me.

CFQ: That film also has continual images of castles and the sea.

ROLLIN: I have this fetish for the sea and sandy beaches. As for the castles, they are merely another commercial requirement.

I try to make all my films with a very detailed script, but for budgetary reasons they can never be filmed the way that I write them. I often don't know where we'll be shooting when I write a script, but we always manage to find a castle where we can shoot half of it.

CFQ: Could you tell us about your last film, *VIERGES ET VAMPIRES*? Is it your first film to be released in Spain, I believe?

ROLLIN: Yes, in Spain and in Italy, where it is shown in an adulterated version.

CFQ: There are a lot of different titles for it.

ROLLIN: A lot: *SEX VAMPIRES*, *VIERGES ET VAMPIRES*, etc. As I didn't intend it for the sex circuit, I prefer *REQUIEM POUR UN VAMPIRE* (Requiem For A Vampire). It may be the last one. In its ninety minutes there are only four or five minutes of eroticism, only two scenes really. During the first hour of the film there is no dialogue, only music and sound effects.

CFQ: What is the story?

ROLLIN: Very simple, and very commercial. Two young girls are running away from school on New Year's Eve. It begins with a car chase in which they are dressed as clowns, and they shoot a policeman. They hide in the country where horrible things are in store for them. One falls into a tomb and is buried alive. In the end, they meet two vampire bats, which hypnotize them and bring them to a castle inhabited by vampires.

For the car pursuit we borrowed the car of an old Belgian friend which we somehow misplaced during filming. We made inquiries about it and learned that the police had found it. A Belgian car, with broken windows, blood on the seats, bullet holes, the works (all of which was a result of our filming). The police of the small town in which we were filming thought they had the crime of the century on their hands. They had removed the seats and sent them to Paris to be analyzed and as the car was Belgian, they notified Interpol. Inspectors had arrived from Brussels!

CFQ: What are your opinions concerning the state of cinefantastique in France?

ROLLIN: The more people who can acquire the backing to make cinefantastique, the better it will become. We must find a way to eliminate the erotic element that is imposed upon us. But it is very difficult to make fantasy films here. It is a genre which is despised. The pure fantasy film, without explicit blood and gore, is difficult to achieve successfully. I have tried, but I have failed. The burning question that needs answering is, is there a public for such films? If there is, then we will be able to do the films we want.

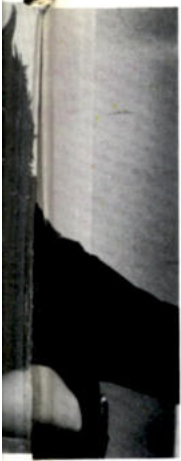
CFQ: What is your current project?

ROLLIN: A coproduction with Belgium called *LES DIABLESSES* (The She Devils). It is not a vampire film, but it is fantasy, about witchcraft and the supernatural. The story is about two girls in a small town who invoke a demon from hell to obtain powers with which to revenge themselves on their enemies.

I also have another project I am working on, to be called *LA ROSE DE FER*. It won't be expensive; there will be none of the usual fright effects, no corpses, no blood, just one set, two actors and the night. If it works, it will be explosive.

Color. Top: Francois Pascal is fascinated by a skull in Rollin's latest film, *LA ROSE DE FER* (1973). Bottom: Michel Delesalle as a vampire in *VIERGES ET VAMPIRES* (1972) which is currently in release in the U.S. through Boxoffice International as *VIRGINS AND THE VAMPIRES*. At left, scenes from each of Rollin's four vampire films. 1) A victim succumbs in *LA VAMPIRE NUE* (1969), Rollin's second vampire film. 2) Marie Pierre Castel is captured and chained by a vampire cult in *VIERGES ET VAMPIRES* (1972), Rollin's fourth and most sophisticated of the vampire series. 3) Dominique and Sandra Julien during an occult ceremony in *LE FRISON DES VAMPIRES* (1971), the third in the series. 4) Catherine Deville finds blood on tap in *LA VIOL DU VAMPIRE* (1968), Rollin's first film and the only one not in color.





PIERRE KAST

An interview with the director of *LES SOLEILS DE L'ILE DE PAQUES*

CFQ: How did you begin your career as a director?

KAST: I began by making short films which were marginally related to fantasy and science fiction. I made a short on the prophecies of Robida, a 19th century painter, called *MONSIEUR ROBIDA, PROPHETE ET EXPLORATEUR DU TEMPS* (Mr. Robida, Prophet and Time Traveller). I made a short called *JE SEME A TOUS VENTS* (I Sow In All Winds) in 1950, which was the story of a Martian's trip to earth. The alien finds our planet destroyed and attempts to piece together and understand our civilization from the ruined pages of a Larousse dictionary, the only remaining artifact of our culture he can find. Unfortunately, the negative of this film is lost. I did a feature in 1957, *UN AMOUR DE POCHE* (A Pocket Love), which was based on an admirable story by Waldemar Kempfert, who is, I believe, the science editor of the "Washington Post." The subject was treated in the film in a mediocre fashion. The film was difficult to produce and ended up playing the subject matter for comedy. I was not satisfied with it.

As you can see, the idea of science fiction film is an idea that intrigues me. I feel it is the best genre to work with in the cinema, but you can't make a film on your own, you need a producer, distributors, and it is very difficult to find them for a science fiction film in France.

I've made other films, but only one pure science fiction film, *LES SOLEILS DE L'ILE DE PAQUES*. In 1965 I did a science fiction short *LA BRULURE DES MILLE SOLEILS* (The Burning of A Thousand Suns).

I have a project now for a feature to be called *LES VAMPIRES DE L'ALFAMA*, situated in the Alfama district of Lisbon during the 18th century. This film will reverse completely the myth of the vampire. It is pro-vampire! The vampires are beautiful, generous, far advanced for their time. They are alchemists, astrologers, fighting to conquer death, and believe that man is not necessarily mortal, but that vampirism is an intermediate stage of existence achieved prior to a final superior state. These vampires, like all others, are hunted and exterminated by the authorities and religious establishment, but for them the cross is not potent, for they are the heirs of an ancient tradition, a clandestine religious sect apart from Christianity. It could be a film made by a vampire to reverse the ordinary roles, as in this film, it is the non-vampires who are stupid, retrograde and corrupted.

CFQ: Doing a film about Easter Island had long been an ambition of yours which was realized in *LES SOLEILS DE L'ILE DE PAQUES*.

KAST: Yes, it's been a passion of mine since the age of 15. I never gave it up and I finally succeeded in making the film I wanted. It was done under very severe economic strictures, with only a limited budget and no distributor in advance. I was forced to form my own production company to find the money to make the film and I and the actors worked on a participation basis.

CFQ: Contrary to my first interpretation of the film, it is not an attempt to rationally explain the mysteries of the island.

KAST: No. If you want to explain the

mystery you can make a documentary, or write a thesis. I was looking for the poetry in the material. There is absolutely no attempt to prove or explain something. The film is not based on traditional dramatic principles, either. I tried to use the narrator not to create a story of suspense or to build a dramatic progression, but to connect the seemingly unrelated episodes of the film into a meaningful whole. It's constructed on the framework of "A Thousand And One Nights," where time is devoted to the details of each individual only to return to the original linking motif.

CFQ: At first I felt the film had a lack of continuity, but I now realize that the events are not meant to occur in the order in which they are presented.

KAST: Exactly. Most films, and most science fiction films, are what I call "passage cinema," we follow a set of characters in a rigorous continuity from point A to point B. My film does not follow this conventional continuity.

CFQ: I still feel there is dramatic evolution in your film.

KAST: No, there are stages. In the first stage, the characters are contacted by the extraterrestrials. They are individuals, apart from one another. In the second stage, the characters meet and pair off two by two, eventually forming among their number of six a higher plane of existence, which is the third stage, a state of being described by author Theodore Sturgeon as a "gestalt," a superior entity composed of the mental entities of the group. This higher being formed by the six members of the group is capable of communicating with the extraterrestrials and leads to the fourth stage, the meeting with the aliens in which the "gestalt" acts as the interlocutor between the earthmen and the aliens. The fifth and last stage shows the space visitors arriving at an understanding of earth for the first time. They have used Easter Island as a reference point in their other travels to earth, at which times in the past they were thought to be gods. Through their interlocutor they come to understand the nature of earth people who are ruled by primitive passions and violence.

At this point in the film I have often been reproached for including a montage of scenes including Vietnam and Paris street-fighting, which has been called ridiculous, and an alibi. For myself, I'd like to see such alibis in other films which try to create in 90 seconds a synthetic vision of the human condition, from Vietnam to the hangings in Sudan. Perhaps it's easy, but it's a device that is not often used in French cinema.

After this brief incursion into the psyche of their interlocutor, the aliens are disgusted and depart, hoping to return again in another 500 years and find improvement.

CFQ: What do you like in the science fiction field?

KAST: Authors Theodore Sturgeon, Van Vogt, Isaac Asimov, Philip Dick, Philip Jose Farmer, and in France, Jean Pierre Andreon and Gerard Klein. There are no films, or only a few like portions of Kubrick's 2001: A SPACE ODYSSEY and THIS ISLAND, EARTH. There are, perhaps, at most, twenty interesting science fiction films. The cinema will gain tremendously if it will annex and make use of the science fiction genre.

The story involves a young girl who innocently visits the castle of Morgane, queen of all the fairies. She is seduced by another woman and escapes the castle in disgust. But, languishing in the monotony of everyday life, she returns to Morgane of her own free will in the end. The fantasy element here is used as little more than a pretext for presenting sapphic scenes, and director Bruno Gantillon fails to make anything more of it.

LA ROSE ECORCHEE Released by C. F.D.C. 9/71. 92 minutes. In Eastmancolor. A Transatlantic (Paris) Production. Written and directed by Claude Mulot. Music by J. P. Dorsay. Director of photography, Roger Fellous. Edited by Monique Kirsenoif. With: Philippe Lemaire, Annie Duperey, Howard Vernon, Elisabeth Tessier, Olivia Robin, Valerie Boigdel.

LA ROSE ECORCHEE (The Blood Rose) is probably the most commercially successful of the recent spate of French *cinéfantastique*, in that it is the only one to have received any distribution in the United States, in limited release as *THE BLOOD ROSE* through Allied Artists in 1970 (reviewed 1:27). The script by Claude Mulot is nothing more than another version of Franju's *LES YEUX SANS VISAGE* with added sadism and eroticism, and stereotyped characters. The film succeeded in France only because of the novelty of a film of this type with French actors.

L'HOMME AU CERVEAU GREFFE Released by C.I.C. 3/72. 90 minutes. In Eastmancolor. Produced by Parc/Universal/U.G.C./Verona/Bavaria Ateliers Films. Screenplay written and directed by Jacques Doniol Valcroze from a novel by Victor Vicas and Alain Frank. Director of photography, Etienne Becker. Sets, Claude Pignot. Music by Brahms. With: Mathieu Carrière, Nicoletta Machiavelli, Michel Duchaussoy, Marianne Egerick, Jean Pierre Aumont, Martine Sarcey, Benoit Allemande, Christian Duroc, Monique Melinand, Pierre Santini, Andre Tainsy, Max Vialle.

L'HOMME AU CERVEAU GREFFE (The Man With the Transplanted Brain) takes the heart transplant one logical step further to the subject of brain transplantation. The film follows a familiar pattern, detailing the reactions of the brain to its new body, as several past films have done, including *CHANGE OF MIND* and even a Hammer *Frankenstein, FRANKENSTEIN MUST BE DESTROYED*. Director Jacques Doniol Valcroze has done nothing to make over-used material exceptional in any way, and the film suffers from this familiarity and lack of inventiveness, although the film does evidence a quality and professionalism often lacking in French *cinéfantastique*, with good photography and excellent color values.

LA VIE AMOUREUSE DE L'HOMME INVISIBLE Released by Eurocine. 6/72. 85 minutes. In Eastmancolor. A Celia Films Production. Produced by P. C. Mezquiriz. Directed by Pierre Chevalier. Screenplay by Pierre Chevalier and John Fortuny. Director of photography, John Fortuny. Music by Camille Sauvage. With: Howard Vernon, Brigitte Carva, Fernando Sancha, Isabelle Del Rio.

LA VIE AMOUREUSE DE L'HOMME INVISIBLE (The Love Life of the Invisible Man) is an unusual case. It was produced at the outset as *ORLOFF ET L'HOMME INVISIBLE* (Orloff And the Invisible Man), a continuation of the series of films starring Howard Vernon as the demented Dr. Orloff, however the distributors retitled it and added sexual scenes to enhance its marketability and profitability in this country. The script has Dr. Orloff, after succeeding in rendering a man in-



Interview conducted by Jean-Claude Morlot, Paris, France, May 10, 1973.



Scenes from recent French *cinéfantastique*, all unreleased in the United States. Top: Dominique Erlanger as Wanda in Jean François Davy's film adaptation of Kurt Steiner's *LE SEUIL DU VIDE* (On the Brink of Emptiness), here trapped in a parallel world of the occult. Davy's film has not received distribution. Middle: Six individuals travel to Easter Island in an attempt to make man's first communication with extra-terrestrial life in Pierre Kast's *LES SOLEILS DE L'ILE DE PAQUES* (The Suns Of Easter Island). Bottom: Richard Leduc and Daniele Gaubert in Robert Beneyoum's *PARIS N'EXISTE PAS* (Paris Does Not Exist), in which a young man mentally transports himself into the past of Paris and falls in love with a young girl.

visible, studying his sexual behavior. Aside from the erotic scenes, the film incorporates the usual genre motifs and is the first French horror film to use a period setting, nineteenth century. The special effects are well done, and the villagers destroy the castle, true to form, in the end, however whatever genre feeling is engendered is somewhat dissipated by the film's rather perverted eroticism.

LA GOULVE Released by InterEcran. 7/72. In Eastmancolor. A Welp Production. Directed by Bepi Fontana and Mario Mercier. Screenplay by Mario Mercier. With: Herve Hendricks, Cesar Torres, Anne Varese, M. A. Sinclair, M. Simon, Manuel Navo.

LA GOULVE, according to its director, Mario Mercier, is the feminine gender for "ghoul." The film attempts to do for witches and the supernatural what Rollin has done for the subject of vampirism, and is part of the French movement le cinema de sorcellerie with its preoccupations of sorcery and witchcraft. The story concerns a young boy who was once the apprentice of an old sorcerer, killed by an uncomprehending and fearful populace. When he grows up, he puts into practice the lessons of his old master, and calls from beneath the earth the creature of the title. While several of the film's ritualistic scenes of occult rites are well done, it is marred by erotic scenes which are in poor taste (a woman caressing herself autoerotically in front of a mirror, for example).

LES SOLEILS DE L'ILE DE PAQUES Released by les Films 13. 8/72. 94 minutes. In Color. An Alexandra Films (Paris) Luis Carlo Barreto (Rio)/Telecinema Helvio Soto (Santiago) Production. Produced, written and directed by Pierre Kast. Directors of photography, Sylvio Caiozzi (Santiago), Jean Collomb (Paris), J. A. Ventura (Rio). Edited by Georges Klotz. Music by Bernard Parmegiani. Special effects by Claude Copin. With: Norma Bengel, Francoise Brion, Alexandra Stewart, Jacques Charrier, Zozimo Bubul, Maurice Garrel, Marcello Romo, Ursula Vian, Carlos Diegues, Rui Guerra.

LES SOLEILS DE L'ILE DE PAQUES (The Suns of Easter Island) is the best of the ambitious French *cinéfantastique* and was screened at Trieste '72 (see 2:3:39). The screenplay by director Pierre Kast postulates that every 500 years extra-terrestrials choose six earth people in an effort to establish communication. A silver circle appears in the hand of each of the chosen who begin to receive a series of mental pictures, always ending with a view of Easter Island. The film is the story of these six individuals and their attempts to reach Easter Island and communicate with the aliens, which are represented by the director as brilliant suns. Director Pierre Kast is fascinated by science fiction and made an earlier fantasy film, *UN AMOUR DE POCHE* (A Pocket Love) in 1957, about a doll which becomes a beautiful wo-

man when dropped into salt water. He had long wanted to do a film concerning Easter Island but it took ten years before financing the film became a possibility. His script, which uses science fiction to explain a real mystery, is ingenious, however his direction is surprisingly straightforward for one who has so consistently expounded revolutionary cinema techniques. Pierre Kast's film, like *LE SEUIL DU VIDE*, lacks distribution in France.

L'ETRANGLEUR Released By Etoile Dist. 9/72. 93 minutes. In Eastmancolor. A Reggane Films/Marianne/Unit Three Production. Produced and directed by Paul Vecchiali. Screenplay by Fabienne Choukroun. Director of photography, Georges Strouve. Edited by Françoise Merville. Music by Roland Vincent. With: Jacques Perrin, Julien Guomar, Eva Simonet, Paul Barge, Nicole Courcel.

L'ETRANGLEUR (The Strangler) is an ambitious psychological horror film from director Paul Vecchiali, which succeeds despite the very familiar ground it covers. The strangler, Emile (Jacques Perrin), chooses as victims only women who are unhappy with life, because as a young boy he witnessed the strangulation of a woman who was crying. In the exploration of the strangler's psychological motivations the film is reminiscent of Michael Powell's underrated *PEEPING TOM* (1960). Director Vecchiali maintains a gloomy, dream-like atmosphere fraught with the expressionism of the bar scene in *THE BLUE ANGEL*, and actor Jacques Perrin provides a very sensitive performance as the disturbed young man. Unfortunately, this film, like other worthwhile French *cinéfantastique*, is seldom seen because of a lack of distributor interest.

TRAITEMENT DE CHOC Released by La Societe Nouvelle De Cinematographie. 1972. In Eastmancolor. A Lira Films-A.J. Films (Paris)/Medusa Distributione (Rome) Production. Produced by Rene Thevenet. Written and directed by Alain Jessua. Director of photography, Jacques Robin. Edited by Georges Bacri, S.I.M.E.P.P. With: Alain Delon, Annie Girardot, Robert Hirsch, Michel Duchaussoy.

TRAITEMENT DE CHOC (Shock Treatment) is written and directed by Alain Jessua, who has done a horror film incorporating the conventions of the genre, but using performers among the most popular in France. As popularity equals money, Jessua hopes that the film's stars will lead to its acceptance with the French public and thus lead to more ambitious genre projects, in particular a version of *Frankenstein* starring Alain Delon. The story of the film revolves around Annie Girardot, who goes to the institute of Dr. Alain Delon to recover from a near nervous breakdown. Delon, it appears, is murdering migrant Portuguese to use in his experiments and treatment of patients. The plot is very ordinary, but Jessua treats it in the style of a horror film and has been compared by the French press to director Roger Corman. Onto the scheme of the horror film Jessua places a discussion of the problems and exploitation of immigrant workers, as well as an examination of the Institute and its patients as a microcosm of society with Delon at its head, a god-like position whose power corrupts him into unforgivable amoral actions.

AU RENDEZ-VOUS DE LA MORT JOYEUSE Released by Les Artistes Associes. 1972. 90 minutes. In Eastmancolor. A Les Productions Artistes Associes (Paris)/Produzioni Europee Associate (Rome) Production. Produced by Robert Velin. Directed by Juan Bunuel. Screenplay by Pierre-Jean Maitigneux and Juan Bunuel. Director of photography, Ghislain Cloquet. Edited

by Eric Simon. Special effects, Pierre Durin. With: Francoise Fabian, Jean-Marc Bory, Michel Creton, Yasmine Dahm, Renato Salvatori.

AU RENDEZ-VOUS DE LA MORT JOYEUSE (A Rendezvous With Happy Death) is the story of the strange relationship of a thirteen year-old girl with a house isolated in the forest. After moving in with her parents strange events begin to occur, inoffensive at first, but eventually becoming so dramatic as to force them to move. A friend of the family, a television director, is interested in the story and goes to the house with his cameraman and sound director. One by one, they are killed by the house. The film is a milestone in French *cinéfantastique*, having been a complete success in a very unsuccessful genre despite being the first work of a new director. Any other reception would have been a pity for such a prestigious name: Bunuel. But Luis has done nothing on this film, it is his son, Juan, who is solely responsible. Often we are disappointed in the work of offspring from prodigious talent, but here this is not the case. A can of paint, a table, a balloon, a boiling pan of water, a refrigerator, a washing machine, all begin to be terrifying when invested with a proper life and movement of their own. At the center of this revolt is the young girl, who acts as a medium. As the adults restrict, repress and punish the young girl, the house takes equal measures against them. So a can of paint spreads itself across the kitchen floor, an ice box attacks an adult and a table devastates the living. The conclusion, contrary to most films of this type, does not come to any logical, rational explanation. That is left for the viewer to wrestle with. Juan Bunuel is fond of cinema fantasy and horror and has long wanted to do a film in the genre with his own convictions. As the father is approaching 73 years of age and still directing (*LE CHARME DISCRET DE LA BOURGEOISIE*), we know that he has a successor deserving his name.

Cinéfantastique is alive but not well in France. Numerous young directors are eager to attempt genre works, but producers do not believe in them. In the event that something worthwhile does manage to become produced, like *LES SOLEILS DE L'ILE DE PAQUES* or *L'ETRANGLEUR*, it rarely receives distribution, because distribution in France is monopolized by only a few major companies, and if they turn a film down, it stays in the can. At the recent fantasy film convention in Nanterre (see 2:3:41) director Pierre Kast declared: "We must develop the power to produce and distribute our own films."

French *cinéfantastique* at this time seems sharply divided into two categories: highly intellectual films that have little or no commercial appeal, and highly commercial films that have little or no artistic merit. It is the poorest works which receive publicity and distribution, encouraging more of the same. It is now important for French filmmakers to concentrate on popular *cinéfantastique*. The genre's success with the public is needed to encourage the production and distribution of more ambitious works, as has happened in other countries, notably the United States and England. Intellectual films are not necessarily good films, nor are popular films necessarily bad films. At the moment eroticism is on top, and so the easiest road to genre success would be to combine eroticism well with horror, fantasy or science fiction. Eroticism is not destructive to genre motifs per se, as evidenced by its successful use in Stanley Kubrick's *A CLOCKWORK ORANGE* and to a lesser extent in Vadim's *BARBARELLA* and *BLOOD AND ROSES*. The fact that sex has been poorly used in French films thus far is a reflection on those directors who have used it cheaply.



MIKE RAVEN

A new horror film personality discusses the genre with Chris Knight

Mike Raven (real name Austin Churton Fairman) is perhaps best known in Britain as a former BBC Radio 1 disc jockey whose Rhythm And Blues show enjoyed phenomenal success with the listening public, yet that has been only one of his colorful occupations. Now in his late forties, his life has been full of a variety of jobs including professional conjurer, flamenco guitarist, author, photographer, camera operator, interior decorator and ballet dancer. He is presently enjoying a successful career appearing in horror pictures and has also begun writing and producing them as well. Thus far his film credits include *LUST FOR A VAMPIRE* for Hammer Films, *I, MONSTER* with Peter Cushing and Christopher Lee, *CRUCIBLE OF TERROR* and *DISCIPLE OF DEATH*, serving on the latter as both co-producer and screenwriter as well as star.

I first met Mike several months earlier when I learned of his extensive collection of books on the occult. Now I had the opportunity of talking with him in the relaxing atmosphere of the offices of Miracle Films in London's Wardour Street, surely the heart of British filmmaking activity. The actor presents a somewhat foreboding exterior, six feet three inches in height, dressed all in black (only so that he won't "have any problems matching clothes" he assures me), and with a devilish looking beard, yet he is really charming with a willingness and enthusiasm to discuss films that is catching. He introduced his wife, Mandy, and armed with cups of strong coffee we sat down to discuss his newly found career in horror films.

CFQ: How did you get your first film role in Hammer's *LUST FOR A VAMPIRE*?

RAVEN: A friend at Radio 1 who kept telling me I ought to be in horror pictures introduced me to Jimmy Sangster. Jimmy was preparing *HORROR OF FRANKENSTEIN* at the time and told me that he didn't have anything in the picture for me. I thought this was just a classic case of 'don't call us, we'll call you' and forgot about it. About three or four months later he rang up and said he was doing a different film and thought there was something in it for me. 'The producers are here,' he said, 'quick come round to the flat!'

I went round and Harry Fine and Michael Style, the two producers, were there and within twenty minutes I was settled for the role of Count Karnstein in *LUST FOR A VAMPIRE*.

CFQ: *LUST FOR A VAMPIRE* was the second of three sexually oriented horror films made by Hammer.

RAVEN: That was producer Harry Fine's new approach. He began it with *VAMPIRE LOVERS* and followed it through. In each new film the sex element got stronger. The first had Ingrid Pitt as a lesbian vampire, progressing to some explicit sex scenes in *LUST FOR A VAMPIRE* accompanied by an awful pop song, an idea I thought was disastrous, and ending up with *TWINS OF EVIL* which was nearly a straight sex film with only incidental horror elements. Since then, Hammer has backtracked and changed their minds about the desirability of this approach.

CFQ: When these films were being made, many people felt that Hammer was simply running out of ideas.

RAVEN: I don't think that was the case, because if you are as big a company as Hammer is, then you are sent scripts by the droves. I'm sure they arrive in enormous parcels on Michael Carreras' desk. It's much more a matter of what the company's policy is on the type of films they intend to produce. Speaking as a complete outsider, I feel that Hammer is steering away from the Gothic film. If you look carefully at their output today and compare it to what it was only a few years ago, I think you'll find that where they once peaked at nine horror films per year they are now producing only one or two and supplementing their production schedule with other types of films like their popular success *ON THE BUSES*.

CFQ: Perhaps it was the failure of *COUNTESS DRACULA* that prompted Hammer to widen the scope of their films?

RAVEN: For the record, I enjoyed *COUNTESS DRACULA* more than most films I have seen in the genre for a long, long time. I liked the film. I thought that the atmosphere worked and that the Hungarian background was well sustained. I didn't think, as some did, that Ingrid Pitt was bad in it.

I don't know why the film failed, but there are two possibilities: 1) I don't think the public is as interested in fe-

male heavies, and 2) the film cut short on the horrific elements. It was not a very frightening film. There is no supernatural character, no pact with the devil, no body risen from the grave, and I think the absence of this supernatural element was a basic deficiency. That was in the nature of the original story and no matter who shot it, or who was in it, it would have failed for that reason.

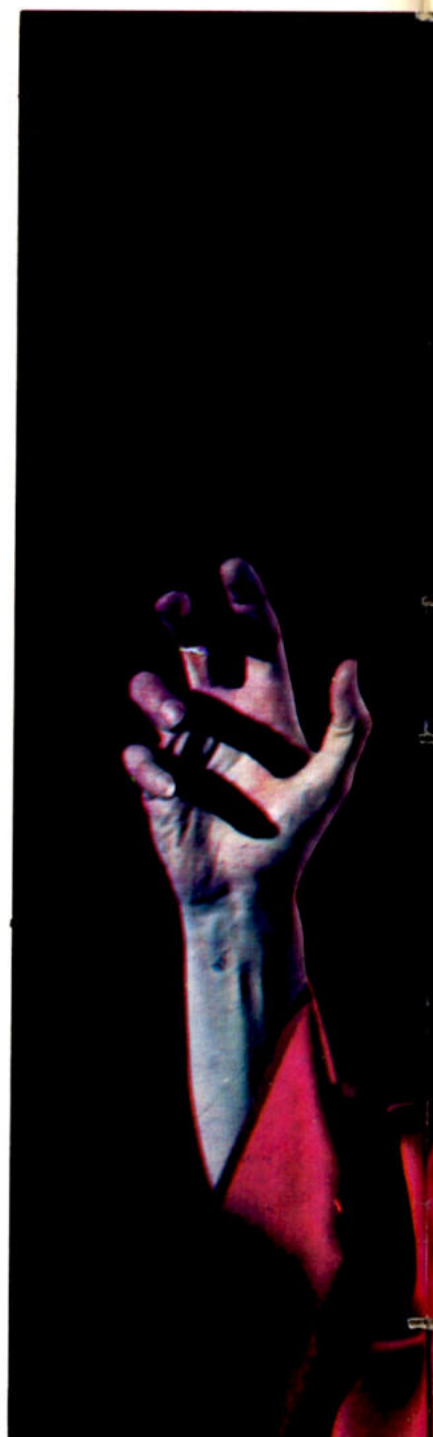
CFQ: Were you happy with the Amicus production of *I, MONSTER*?

RAVEN: Being cast in that film was a very lucky break but it had a curse on it of the worse sort. It took a long time for it to be released after it was completed, and when it finally did come out it had been cut down from 104 minutes to 78 and was playing the bottom half of a double-bill with *FRIGHT!* They had done some extraordinary things with it. I must say I was convulsed to see myself play one scene and to hear my voice saying the words of another scene. They had re-edited it so much that at one point my actions weren't corresponding with the soundtrack. Both I and Peter Cushing, more than Christopher Lee, suffered because our parts collapsed like a pack of cards. In the end there was very little of the original concept remaining.

CFQ: Why was the idea of releasing the film in 3-D abandoned half way into actual production?

RAVEN: The new 3-D process being used required a relative movement in the frame, either the actor must move across the screen or if the actor is stationary the camera must move so that the background moves relative to the actor. It couldn't possibly work on any film because it gives you a splitting headache to watch. One of the reasons that made producer Milton Subotsky change his mind is that everybody watching the rushes day after day was complaining that their heads were absolutely splitting! The process interferes with your visual perception and this can give you a headache just like reading with glasses that don't suit your eyes. I believe that one of the main reasons that convinced him to abandon 3-D was that the audience would not have been happy with it.

The screenplay for *I, MONSTER* was not very cinematic. I had this incredibly long speech as Enfield which



Left: Mike Raven's first horror film as Count Karnstein in Hammer Films' *LUST FOR A VAMPIRE* (1970). Middle: On the set of *I, MONSTER* for Amicus Productions with his wife, Mandy, and his two daughters. Right: Talking to interviewer Chris Knight in the Wardour Street offices of Miracle Films (Photo by Peter Nicholson).



PHOTO BY PETER NICHOLSON



was shot in only two takes, which together lasted for five minutes of screen time. Peter Cushing was walking along with me the whole time, but all he had to say was 'Oh,' 'Really,' and cough once, while I yakked for five minutes! I bothered to go home and dust down my copy of Stevenson and found that the speech had been lifted almost word for word. The device of allowing the character Enfield tell the story doesn't bother you when you read it and he goes on for a thousand words, but transfer that to the screen and it simply goes on for too long.

CFQ: Did your earlier horror films get you the role in *CRUCIBLE OF TERROR*?

RAVEN: Strangely enough, no. Tom Parkinson, who is now my partner, was trying to set up the production of the film which is about a nutty sculptor whose method is to pour molten bronze on naked female bodies, and so Tom wanted somebody who looked like a nutty sculptor. He was standing in the middle of Wardour Street scratching his head when a bloke who had worked with me on a documentary film told him that I looked like a nutty sculptor. Parkinson rang me up and I said yes, all the time thinking that the offer had been made on the strength of my roles in *LUST FOR A VAMPIRE* and *I, MONSTER*. In fact, he had no idea I'd ever been in either.

CFQ: You wrote and helped produce *DISCIPLE OF DEATH* yourself.

RAVEN: By the end of *CRUCIBLE OF TERROR* I found that I got on very well with Tom and we both wanted very much to have a shot at filmmaking without the terrible degree of front office hassles that are always involved. There was the slight matter that no one had any money, but I did own a story that I had written for Hammer which had been passed over for filming when the studio changed hands from Sir James to his son Michael. Jimmy Sangster had been set to direct it and we even had a starting date set at Pine-wood for September 28, 1972, but when Michael took over at the beginning of 1972 he changed all the scheduled productions and the idea was shelved. So I thought, it's my story anyway, we'll do that and believe it or not within a remarkably short time we had managed to set up the film and for better or worse produced it as a joint effort.

CFQ: Did you encounter any difficulties in producing *DISCIPLE OF DEATH* with Tom Parkinson?

RAVEN: Since I was largely responsible for the screenplay, not very much of a problem from the writing point of view. The whole film is made as a joint effort. Tom and I share all the functions of the film and we both interfere in what each other is doing all the time. This is a strange way to make a film, but since Tom and I agree about what

we are trying to accomplish it doesn't produce half the problems I've seen on the floor working for big companies.

Since he and I raised all the money we had no front office walking down on to the set and tapping people on the shoulder and telling them what to do. We were, in fact, only responsible to ourselves.

We did have one technical problem which happens to every filmmaker, and which happened to an alarming extent to Stanley Kubrick on *A CLOCKWORK ORANGE*. We kept getting scratches on our film. This is something you just can't prevent, and we were insured for it naturally, but Kubrick had endless trouble with some shots. They reshot a ton of stuff, not because it was unsatisfactory, but because there was sand in the gate which cut huge tramlines down the film. We had to reshoot about four days work due to scratches which was unavoidable.

CFQ: Do you prefer black and white or color photography for horror subjects?

RAVEN: If it was not for the difficulty of actually selling the pictures to Wardour Street and the distributors, I had toyed with the idea of shooting *DISCIPLE OF DEATH* in very grainy black and white. We were under so much pressure from people saying nonsense, you've got to sell the film to live and no one will take it if it's not color, so that idea was forgotten. I feel the tendency in horror films for sharp, clear color photography goes too far. You get to the point where you can see down to every speck of dust on the studio floor. I feel the photography should be as murky as possible.

CFQ: Since you haven't appeared in any films other than horror pictures, aren't you afraid of being typecast?

RAVEN: No, just the opposite. I'm not actually attempting to do anything else. You see, I am a horror fan and I don't think I'd be interested in even a marvellous part in a modern dress domestic drama or anything like that. I'm interested not only in horror films but also the literature from which they sprang. Beginning with the start of Gothic novels in 1765 with *Castle of Otranto* to about 1820 with *Melmoth the Wanderer*, you have the Gothic period in literature which gives rise to almost all of the basic screenplays of the genre, and these interest me apart from films. This, coupled with the fact that since childhood I've been collecting books and making a study of what some people would call the occult sciences explains my particular interest in horror films. I don't want to work in any other type of picture, even if some one wanted to have me.

Mike Raven's latest picture, *DISCIPLE OF DEATH* has been acquired for release in the U.S.A. by Avco Embassy.

Color: Raven as the sinister "Stranger" from *DISCIPLE OF DEATH*, his latest horror film which he wrote and co-produced. Left: With Virginia Wetherall from the same film. Right: As the insane sculptor in *CRUCIBLE OF TERROR* (1972).





COMING

THE DAY OF THE DOLPHIN is near to release from Avco Embassy. The on-again, off-again Mike Nichols film finally began lensing in the Bahamas in December 1972 with George C. Scott and Fritz Weaver starred, from a script by Nichols collaborator Buck Henry (2:2:46)...

DR. FRANKENSTEIN is a mammoth 4 hour television being filmed by Universal in England for NBC. Director Jack Smight wound filming of the Christopher Isherwood script June 22 at Pinewood, for producer Hunt Stromberg. Cast includes James Mason, Agnes Moorehead, David McCallum and Michael Sarrazin as a handsome monster. NBC is undecided whether to telecast in one, two or four installments...

DRACULA is a CBS two-hour movie being produced by Dan Curtis in England from a script by Richard Matheson and starring Jack Palance in the title role. Lensing began April 30th for Fall telecast...

THE INFERNO is proposed to be a \$7,500,000 version of Dante's "La Divina Commedia," to be made by producer Alfredo Bini and director Franco Zeffirelli with Russian, Yugoslav, French and West German participation. More than \$1 Million will be spent on special effects by the same team that did Kubrick's 2001. Dimitri Shostakovich is to score film with Russian choreographer Moiseyev doing the "Dance of the Demons" sequence. Richard Burton has been approached to star as Dante...

THE ISLAND is on the production slate of Michael ("Hair") Butler, to be adapted from Aldous Huxley's novel about a futuristic utopia by the author's widow, Laura Huxley. Filming in the Pacific is for 1975...

ROSEMARY'S BABY II is planned by producer William Castle, back at Paramount with a long-term exclusive production contract. Castle picked up the original novel while in galleys for \$150,000 and the resulting film earned \$15 Million in domestic rentals. Sequel is being written by W. D. Richter and slated to lens at year's end...

THE TERMINAL MAN has lensed for Warner Bros without the participation of author Michael Crichton as either writer or director. Michael Hodges is producing and directing with George Segal starred (2:2:46)...

Top: Peter Cushing holds an old adversary at bay from **THE SATANIC RITES OF DRACULA**, the new title for Hammer's forthcoming Dracula film for Warner Bros release. 2nd: Sinbad confronts the six-armed automaton in Ray Harryhausen's coproduction with Chas H. Schneer, **THE GOLDEN VOYAGE OF SINBAD**, to be given a class Christmas release by Columbia. This could be the runaway success that the animation genre so badly needs to survive and flourish. 3rd: Boris Karloff in **THE INCREDIBLE INVASION**, one of the last of his Mexican horror films in limited release by Columbia. Bottom: Table-top models and set from **FLESH GORDON** (see 2:1:18), the porno sci-fi satire from producer Bill Osco's Grafitti Productions. The film has encountered what may be insurmountable production difficulties and obstacles.

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some very chilling moments, including a very unexpected ending. Video-taped in marvelous color, featuring above-average acting, script, mood and special effects. (Rating: +++)

PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY (Dan Curtis Productions) allows another foray into classic horror, with Oscar Wilde's tale of a handsome Englishman who retains his youth while his portrait ages in sin and years. John Tomerlin wrote this two part drama, with Robert Cobert music (his **DARK SHADOWS** score), and direction by Glenn Jordan, starring Nigel Davenport, Charles Alderman, Fionnuala Flanagan, Linda Kelsey, John Karlen and introducing Shane Briant as Dorian Gray. Typical of Curtis, the video-taped film involved more set-drama than inventive horror, despite a tremendously evil performance by Nigel Davenport and Briant's view of submerged malevolence. Reginald Allen's sets were truly fine. (Rating: +)

GARGOYLES (CBS, 5/1/73) is a horror fantasy about half-human, half-reptile creatures planning to destroy mankind. An anthropologist (Cornel Wilde) and his photographer daughter (Jennifer Salt), enroute from California to New Mexico to research a book on demonology are menaced by creatures resembling the gargoyles of ancient legend. The gargoyle leader (Bernie Casey) kidnaps the girl and holds her captive in his cavern colony, where thousands of gargoyle eggs are about to hatch. Meanwhile, Wilde, lawmen, and cycle riders attempt to rescue her and at the same time prevent an imminent gargoyle population explosion. Director B. W. L. Norton, makeup artist Ellis Berman and costumer Ross Wheat received Emmy's for their work on the show. Despite beginning with a fine Gothic story, foolish scripting and direction sour it into an illogical concept. The gargoyle suits and makeup are stunning, with none being completely the same (11 on view at one time!), and gargoyle leader Casey achieves a fine, evil effect by talking through a snare drum. (Rating: +)

An interesting report from Bruce Robbins of Montreal tells of genre activity on Canadian TV as well: "Purple Playhouse" is a weekly series presenting some hoary old plays in their original style. The first one, **SWEENEY TODD, OR THE DEMON BARBER OF FLEET STREET**, starred Barry Morse as the crazed barber who did in his enemies (off stage) and supplied some unusual filling for his meat pies sold next door (again, this is referred to indirectly and quickly). I found the idea cute, but quickly boring, and saw no further episodes until **DRACULA**. Robertson Davis introduced this episode stressing that it was more faithful to Stoker's novel than any of '16 Dracula movies' made to date (true), and that the Dracula story is particularly suited for stage adaptations. This may be true in some theoretical sense, but this video-taped version presented special-effects more appropriate for a recorded version than live stage performance. The vampires fade away like ghosts to evade capture, they are invisible to mirrors, Dracula climbs walls like a spider (done, certainly, a la **BATMAN**, but it certainly didn't look it), and the final staking scene features gushing blood. Dracula isn't decapitated. He keeps his head so he can die spouting a typical Victorian soliloquy showing, as Barry Morse did in **SWEENEY TODD**, that he really wasn't such a bad guy after all. **DRACULA** was a fine evocation of Victorian standards, but it didn't work for me—I kept watching the special effects. "Purple Playhouse" is a typical CBC series that is a mite too intellectual for Canadian audiences as well as for any possible foreign markets." Canadian actor Norman Welsh played Dracula, with Nehemiah Persoff top-lined as Dr. Van Helsing. The tape was directed by Jack Nixon Browne and adapted by Rod Coneybeare.

LETTERS

EC's "Wish You Were Here" (filmed by Amicus as written in TALES FROM THE CRYPT) is a homage to Jacob's "The Monkey's Paw," not plagiarism as Chris Knight labels it. In fact, the whole premise is that the character hopes desperately to not make the same mistake as the characters in "The Monkey's Paw," using her last two wishes to fashion an equally terrifying but totally different kind of "living dead."

BHOB STEWART
18 Lee St., Cambridge MA 02139

I must gasp in horror again as Dale Winogura criticizes DR. PHIBES RISES AGAIN. He liked neither it or the film's predecessor, THE ABOMINABLE DR. PHIBES, both of which I felt were classics. Both were superbly mounted in the highest degree of camp. Their bizarre morbidly rivaled any Fellini or Ken Russell film. Phibes is a character to rival the greats of horror, alongside Frankenstein and Dracula. I congratulate AIP, I congratulate Vincent Price, and I congratulate director Robert Fuest for their truly original achievement.

SAM L. IRVIN, JR.
12 Horizon Hill, Asheville NC 28804

Although INVASION OF THE BODY SNATCHERS is a subtle film which avoided gross and spectacular effects, it is still a highly visual film and much of its power arises because of this. One scene comes to mind where the two main protagonists hide themselves under the boards in the cave. The camera is shooting down on them, and as they place the last board over themselves, the camera dollies back slightly and tilts up. This simple and not readily noticeable movement creates an unnerving tension as "we" wait for the pod-people hunting party.

Shortly following this scene is the one in which the music occurs, when Kevin McCarthy leaves the cave to investigate its source. In the interview, the music is mentioned as a misleading device, but I feel it is much more than this. It serves as a perfect counterpoint to the tension of the situation of extreme apprehension and mind-racking anxiety. It might arouse curiosity,

but to a greater extent the music acts as a relief. Its softness and beauty seem to encourage a weakening, a giving up, of the fatigued couples' hold on life. It teases at their waning strength. It is as if the music were beckoning them to join all the others who had changed. Therefore, underneath the music's beauty is an alluring danger. But, because it is almost indefinable, one doesn't exactly know how to respond to it, thus creating additional tension.

RICHARD A. STRAIN
10 1/2 W State St., Athens OH 45701

I think you people have fallen in love with your own writing. All the articles and interviews are much too long. The interview on DARK STAR could have been cut by as much as 50%. Likewise the interview with George A. Romero. You should have published either Stuart M. Kaminsky's article, or the Don Siegel interview, but not both. The news on Charlemagne Productions could have been summed up in half a page.

There were too few reviews and what few there were got to be redundant. I prefer long reviews over short ones, but try and not repeat yourself. The other regular features were much, much too short.

David Bartholomew seems amazed that there should be references to other Vonnegut books in BETWEEN TIME AND TIMBUKTU. Doesn't he know the teleplay's title is a take-off on the chapter "Between Timid and Timbuktu" from the first "big" Vonnegut novel, The Sirens of Titan? I'm surprised. Vonnegut fills his stories with cross references. Ghod, didn't he realize that Stony Stevenson was the name of Unk's dead friend in The Sirens of Titan!

To show you I'm not all destructive, you're doing an excellent job cropping your photos.

BUZZ DIXON
905 Weston St., Raleigh NC 27610

I particularly liked the article on THE OTHER, a movie that should have done better than coming in 25th out of the 25 money-making movies of 1972. David Bartholomew did a good job in reviewing it, as did Mark Stevens in his discussion on Jerry Goldsmith's music. Goldsmith adds to THE OTHER what John Barry did for the Bond films and Ennio Morricone for the Italian westerns. But most of all the front cover (that incredible fetus in the bottle which was what caught my eye when I first saw it on the newstand) sets this issue as well as the magazine apart from all others devoted to film.

BRIAN KELLY
60 Doonan St., Medford MA 02155

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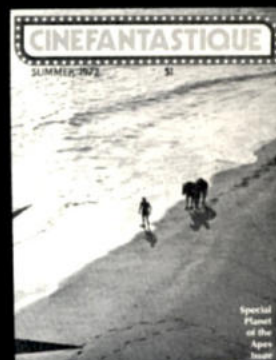
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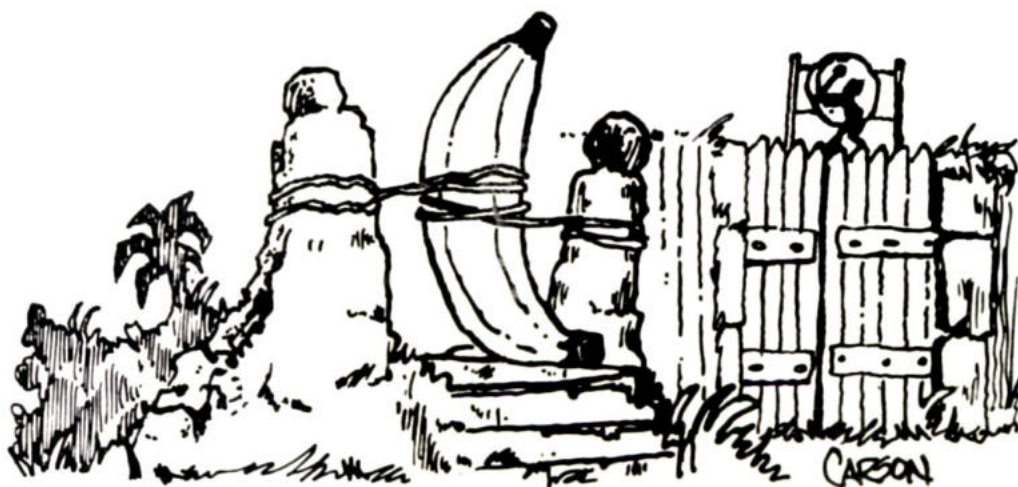


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