

Creature From The Black Lagoon



By Ron Bonk

In the early 1950's TV sets were taking over American living rooms and former movie patrons marveled at entertainment right in their own homes. Movie ticket sales steadily declined and studios created gimmicks to lure patrons back to their movie palaces. Twentieth Century Fox introduced CinemaScope™ providing filmgoers with a wide screen picture accompanied by four track stereophonic sound. Paramount developed VistaVision™, which provided theatres with an even bigger, brighter, and clearer projected image. In 1952 *This is Cinerama* debuted in Cinerama, an even wider screen image created by simultaneously projecting three separate strips of film in sync and side by side in an attempt to fill ones entire peripheral vision. Arguably, the shortest-lived gimmick of the time was 3-D or "3 Dimensional" projection which created an illusion of depth for the viewer.

The 3-D technique involved filming two images simultaneously from two separate cameras slightly

offset from each other while running in perfect synchronization. When viewed in such a way that each eye sees its photographed counterpart, the viewer's visual cortex will interpret the pair of images as a single three-dimensional image.

Stereoscopic motion pictures began as early as 1890 when British film pioneer William Friese-Greene patented his own 3-D process. 3-D feature films were introduced to the public in 1922 when *The Power of Love* opened in Los Angeles. These early attempts required the viewer to see the film through anaglyphic glasses: one red lens and one green lens. The two separate original photographic images were printed over each other onto one piece of film for this format.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 7



Wearing red/green glasses, patrons enjoy a 3-D presentation in the 1950's
(image courtesy of Corbis.com)

Halloween Spooktacular!

Rob Zabrecky



Magician Rob Zabrecky has had a longtime obsession with vintage horror films and the vaudeville era; two inspirations which have served him well. His live performances feature an original charm, melding his love of silent film and vintage horror films with magic. His performance credits have included stints at L.A. landmarks such as The Orpheum Theatre, The Silent Movie Theatre and the renowned Magic Castle in Hollywood where he regularly performs. Magic Magazine recently raved, "Zabrecky's magic could easily be the plot line of a Stephen King novel, if Steven King wrote comedy." His inimitable and original work results in a provocative Dadaesque combination of theatre, mentalism and off-beat humor. In his eyes, performance is about setting the stage for unexpected and quite frankly, weird things to happen. Most recently, he can be seen in several episodes of the popular MTV magic/horror show, "Room 401". ■

Bathing Beauties

By Linda Harris



For a generation of American males *Creature From The Black Lagoon* brings to mind one thing... "That White Bathing Suit". Here's some context. As far back as 1907, the swimmer Annette Kellerman from Australia, visited the United States as an "underwater ballerina", a version of synchronized swimming. She was arrested for indecent exposure because her swimsuit showed arms, legs and the neck.

After this event, bathing wear started to shrink, first uncovering the arms and then the legs up to mid-thigh. Collars receded from around the neck down to around the top of the bosom. The development of new fabrics allowed for new varieties of more comfortable and practical swimwear.



Julie rings in 1954

In 1921, Jantzen Apparel of Portland, Oregon launched the first one-piece, elastic suit that was hit at the Bathing Beauty Pageant held in Atlantic City. Because of the figure hugging nature of these garments, bathing suits and the movies seemed to be a perfect couple.

Silent film icon Mack Sennett created his "Bathing Beauties" and inserted them in dozens of one reelers. Gloria Swanson got her start with Sennett's chorus. Later, Esther Williams and Dorothy Lamour starred in films with synchronized swimming and figure hugging costumes (with "bra cups" for that ultimate lift) revealing every body contour.

During World War II, the Swoon suit made its debut. Made from parachute silk, Betty Grable's suit in her famous pin-up was a Swoon suit. We suspect G.I.s really didn't care what that suit was made of.

Jayne Mansfield, the archetypical va-va-voom girl, explained in 1952 that for a woman to look right in a swimsuit she needs "a flat tummy, a firm bosom and a nice derriere. Then you're in business." ■

Evolution of THE GILL MAN

The Creature was the brainchild of producer William Alland, who began in radio with Orson Welles and became, in the 1950's, a Universal producer of sci-fi and program westerns. Recalling a story he was told by a South American movie director of prehistoric beings living somewhere along the Amazon River, Alland came up with the idea of a creature, half-man and half-fish. His creature was a missing link in the evolutionary chain that had survived unchanged by time. Alland chose Jack Arnold,



who had just completed the 3-D movie *It Came From Outer Space* (1953) to direct. Jack Arnold's idea of what the creature might look like was the Oscar® given to Academy Award® winners with gills and fins added to it. Arnold met with Bud Westmore, the man in charge of Universal International's makeup department, and asked him to create a convincing Gill Man outfit. Westmore turned to his co-workers, and it took the talents of Jack Kevan, Chris Mueller, Milicent Patrick and Bob Hickman to come up with the final design. The first



Ben Chapman and Julie share a moment on the boat.

costume they made for test shooting was rejected in favor of the one everyone agreed was perfect.

Next, they needed a script and to find an actor to wear the Creature outfit. Maurice Zimm turned in a 59 page treatment, which was fine-tuned by scriptwriters Arthur Ross and Harry Essex. Glenn Strange, who had portrayed the Frankenstein Monster in the last few Universal horror sequels, was the studio's first choice to play the title role; he turned it down because he thought there would be too much swimming involved. Ben Chapman was told about the part and ended up signing a contract to play the Gill Man. He would play the Creature in all the scenes filmed above water. Ricou Browning has hired to do the stunt work underwater (and in fact did the



Champion swimmer Ricou Browning handled the underwater stunt work.

underwater scenes in all three films.) Tom Hennesy took over in *Revenge Of The Creature* (1955) and Don Megowan was *The Creature Walks Among Us* (1956). But unlike Karloff, Lugosi and Chaney, who became household names for playing the classic monsters of the 1930's and 1940's, the actors who played the Creature went uncredited. Universal International would have us believe that there really was a "Gill Man."

How short was the 3-D craze? When *Revenge Of The Creature*



Don Megowan in The Creature Walks Among Us (1956).

was released in early 1955, *Daily Variety* noted that it was the first 3-D release in a year and wondered why the producers didn't make more use of the effect for the underwater sequences. By the time the third entry in the cycle *The Creature Walks Among Us* was released in 1956 they had abandoned 3-D completely and it went out in a flat version.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 7



Jack Arnold's

CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON



Black and White (in anaglyphic 3-D)

1954 – 79 minutes

Universal International Pictures

Print courtesy of Universal Pictures

Cast

Richard Carlson.....David Reed
Julia Adams.....Kay Lawrence
Richard Denning.....Mark Williams
Antonio Moreno.....Carl Maia
Nestor Paiva.....Lucas
Whit Bissell.....Dr. Thompson
Bernie Gozier.....Zee
Henry Escalante.....Chico

Ricou Browning.....The Gill Man (in water)*
Ben Chapman.....The Gill Man (on land)*

Perry Lopez.....Tomas*
Sydney Mason.....Dr. Matos*
Rodd Redwing.....Louis (foreman)*
Miss Adams' double.....Polly Burson*
Underwater Stunts.....Ginger Stanley*
Fire Stunts.....Al Wyatt Sr.*

Directed by.....Jack Arnold
Story by.....Maurice Zimm
Screenplay by.....Harry Essex, Arthur A. Ross
Produced by.....William Alland

Cinematographer.....William E. Snyder
Special Photography.....Charles S. Welbourne
Director: (Underwater Seq).....James C. Havens
Editor.....Ted J. Kent
Assistant Director.....Fred Frank
Original Music.....Henry Mancini*,
Hans J. Salter*, Herman Stein*
Musical Director.....Joseph Gershenson
Composer (Stock Music).....Robert Emmett Dolan*,
Milton Rosen*

Art Directors.....Hilyard Brown,
Bernard Herzbrun
Set Decorators.....Russell A. Gausman,
Ray Jeffers

Creature Designer.....Milicent Patrick*

Make Up By.....Bud Westmore
Additional Make Up.....Robert Hickman*,
Jack Kevan* Chris Mueller*
Hair Stylist.....Joan St. Oegger

Wardrobe: Miss Adams.....Rosemary Odell
Sound.....Leslie I. Carey, Joe Lapis



*Richard Denning, Julie Adams, Antonio Moreno,
Richard Carlson, Whit Bissell and Nestor Paiva
find photographic evidence of the Creature.*

* Uncredited

IMDb
amazon.com credits from
Internet Movie Database: IMDB.com

Richard Denning (Dr. Mark Williams)



Denning and Barbara Britton in "Mr. & Mrs. North". Britton also starred in *Bwana Devil*, the 1952 film that launched the 3-D craze.

started at Paramount in 1937 playing best friends and good guys. He would portray George Cooper, the husband of Lucille Ball, on CBS Radio's "My Favorite Husband"

(1948-1951). The series was such a success that CBS executives offered Ball a TV deal with Denning, but she refused, insisting on husband Desi Arnaz as her TV husband. Denning starred in his own TV series "Mr. and Mrs. North" (1952-54) also based on a long running radio program. He married Universal starlet Evelyn Ankers known as "Queen of the Screamers" and retired to Hawaii in the mid '60's where he portrayed the Governor in the long running CBS series HAWAII 5-0.

Richard Carlson (Dr. David Reed) has a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame (6333 Hollywood Blvd.) and starred in *It Came From Outer Space* (1953)



Carlson romps with Hedy Lamarr in M-G-M's *White Cargo* (1942).

another 3-D classic from Universal Pictures. He was featured in M-G-M's blockbuster African adventure *King*

Solomon's Mines (1950), one of the first postwar features filmed extensively on location in Africa. He was featured as Herbert Philbrick in the early syndicated television hit "I Led Three Lives" (1953-56), based on the best selling book of the same title. Carlson portrayed a pipe-smoking Boston advertising agent who goes underground to infiltrate the local Communist Party. Produced at the height of the Red Scare it proved wildly successful and ran well in to the 1960's. Carlson was a regular on Frank Capra's educational science films of the 50's (*Hemo the Magnificent*) and became a director with feature and television credits.

Julie (Julia) Adams (Kay) hit the



Julie Adams portrayed Paula Denning on CBS long running soap, *Capitol*.

ground running and has never stopped. She appeared in *The Dalton Gang* (1949), a low budget Western for Lippert Pictures. She did six more westerns for Lippert before being signed by Universal Studios where the publicity department claimed that her legs won an award as "the most perfectly symmetrical in the world" and that they were insured for \$125,000 dollars. In 1960 she married Ray Danton, (of 1961's *The Rise and Fall of Legs Diamond* fame), and has guest starred on every TV series from "The Man From U.N.C.L.E." to the recent ABC series "Lost". Adams is quoted as saying: "No matter what you do, you can act your heart out, but people will always say... "Oh, Julie Adams - *Creature from the Black Lagoon*."

Antonio Moreno (Dr. Carl Maia) really deserves his star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame (6651 Hollywood Blvd.). His first screen credit was in 1912 and he was still

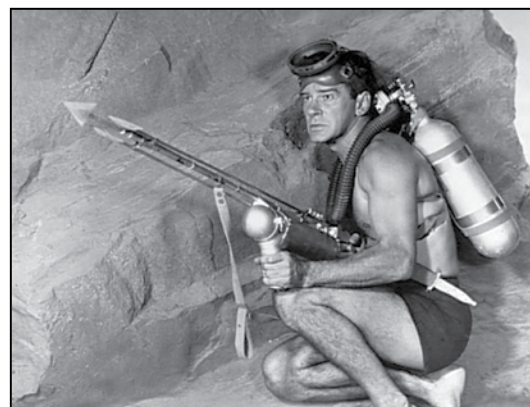


Antonio Moreno

working in 1956 for John Ford in *The Searchers*. During the silent era he was a hard working Latin lover who starred with every single marquee actress of the era. He romanced Gloria Swanson in *The American Wife* (1922), Pola Negri in *The Spanish Dancer* (1923), Greta Garbo in *The Temptress* (1926) and Clara Bow in *It* (1927). Other female stars who fell for his charms include: Bebe Daniels, Billie Dove, Renee Adoree, Estelle Taylor, Coleen Moore, Dorothy Gish, Marion Davies, Constance Talmadge (and for good measure her sister Norma Talmadge) and Mary Miles Minter in *Trail of the Lonesome Pine* (1923). This is just a partial list and although many of these names have long since faded from memory, please note that Norma Talmadge was making \$10,000 per week in 1923. ■



Photo Gallery



3-D Cont'd from page 1

In the 1930's Edwin H. Land refined the 3-D technique when he introduced his Polaroid filters. This new process required the original separate photographic images, commonly referred to as the right and left eye, be projected from two separate film projectors in perfect synchronization. This type of projection also required a special silver screen to properly reflect the projected images. Rather than the previous red and green lenses, audiences viewed the images through Polarized lenses which were usually light gray in color.



With the release of Arch Oboler's *Bwana Devil* on November 26, 1952, the 3-D gimmick really caught fire. The film's tag line promised "A lion in your lap!" and "A lady in your arms!" and audiences were enthusiastic with the results. The next year Vincent Price starred in *House of Wax* (which many consider to be the best photographed 3-D feature of all time.) The film was such a commercial hit that in 1954 Price was cast in two more 3-D productions, *The Mad Magician* and *Dangerous Mission*, earning him the nickname "The King of 3-D."

The 3-D fad was such a craze that it seems everyone wanted to take a turn at it. Grace Kelly effectively defended herself with a pair of scissors in Alfred Hitchcock's *Dial 'M' For Murder* (1954). M-G-M

presented Howard Keel and Kathryn Grayson in its only 3-D musical *Kiss Me Kate* (1953). Columbia got The Three Stooges into the act in 1953 with their short subjects *Spooks!* and *Pardon My Backfire*. Even Donald Duck and Bugs Bunny had the opportunities to star in 3-D animated cartoons. And the low-budget sci-fi film *Robot Monster* (1953) proved that a film didn't need a huge budget to be shot in 3-D. The film was produced on a shoestring budget in two weeks and is one of the fad's most memorable titles.

In its heyday from 1952 to 1955, there were forty one 3-D features released by Hollywood's eight major studios. Columbia was the leader of the format distributing a total of nine films. Universal, Warner Brothers and RKO each ranked second releasing six 3-D titles apiece. Paramount and United Artists each produced five 3-D films while Fox and M-G-M each distributed two. At the time numerous other

films were shot in the 3-D process but when the novelty was over they were distributed as standard "flat" releases. There have been several attempts to revive the format since, such as *Jaws 3-D* in 1983, but, like hula-hoops and coonskin caps, this fad of the fifties eventually faded away. ■

GILL MAN, CONT'D from 3

Producer Alland was on board for all three films and Jack Arnold again helmed the follow up *Revenge Of The Creature* before giving long time Universal Assistant Director John Sherwood a directing assignment for *The Creature Walks Among Us*. John Agar and Lori Nelson were top billed in the second film with Universal contract player Clint Eastwood on board as a lab technician. Jeff Morrow and Rex Reason were the principles by the time the final installment walked into the sunset. ■

Including Short Subjects

Phantom of the Horse Opera

Woody Woodpecker Cartoon, Technicolor – 1961 – 6 minutes
Print courtesy of Universal Studios

Produced by.....Walter Lantz
Directed byPaul J. Smith
Story byDalton Sandifer
Animation byLes Kline, Ray Abrams
Sets byRay Huffine, Art Landy
Voices.....Dal McKennon, Grace Stafford (Woody)
Music.....Clarence Wheeler
Prod. Manager.....William E. Garity



Woody pursues a bank robber into a ghost town where the bandit tries to frighten him off by posing as a ghost.

Research on short subjects courtesy of the Cine-Loa Archives.

Society News

VAUDEVILLE RETURNS TO THE ALEX STAGE



Once again an enthusiastic audience enjoyed an evening of live music, comedy and wonder capped off by the on-screen antics of Laurel and Hardy and the Three Stooges at our 8th annual Vaudeville Extravaganza.



Period music performed by the Night Blooming Jazzmen and Lisa Cassulo, the beautiful card girl, were highlights.

Randy Carter, President

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

mail with check to: **ALEX FILM SOCIETY**
P. O. Box 4807, Glendale, CA 91222-0807

Name(s)

(please print)

Org/Business

Address

City

Zip+4

Home Phone

Day Phone

E-Mail

☐ I (WE) CAN VOLUNTEER, Please call.

☐ Enclosed is my (our) donation of \$

(discount admissions good for every screening)

☐ Patron \$100

(Eight discount passes)

☐ Family/dual \$40

(Four discount passes)

☐ Individual \$25

(Two discount passes)

☐ Senior/Student \$15

(One pass) Senior over 60,
F/T student graduation date:

Please list your two favorite films:

www.AlexFilmSociety.org

Tickets: 818.243.2539

Saturday, November 24, 2007 at 2 pm & 8 pm

10TH ANNUAL THREE STOOGES® BIG SCREEN EVENT!

Stooges fans of all ages make our popular "Stooge-Fest" part of their Thanksgiving tradition. We screen pristine 35mm prints of classic Three Stooges® short subjects, on the Big Screen as you have never seen before. Bound to create fervor and dissension everywhere, our Blue Ribbon Panel of Stoogeologists has met, discussed, argued, drank and disagreed in order to select our definitive list of the "Best of The Best". This years shorts include:

Micro-Phonies (1945); **A Plumbing We Will Go** (1940); **Hoi Polloi** (1935)

Pop Goes the Easel (1935) and **Punchy Cowpunchers** (1950)

When the Thanksgiving Turkey is gone, the ball games boring, and adventure is in the air, come to our 10th Annual Three Stooges Big Screen Event! Always something wacky! Columbia Pictures (various)



Saturday, February 2, 2008 at 2 pm & 8 pm

The most beloved Pulitzer Prize book now comes vividly alive on the screen!

TO KILL A MOCKINGBIRD

Atticus Finch (Gregory Peck), 'Bo' Radley (Robert Duvall) and Scout (Mary Badham) come to life in the Oscar® winning adaptation of this classic American novel. Universal (1962)



Saturday, April 26, 2008 at 2 pm & 8 pm

Biggest musical under the sun, presented in glorious Technicolor!

ANNIE GET YOUR GUN

Betty Hutton and Howard Keel star in the story of the great sharpshooter, Annie Oakley, who rises to fame while dealing with her love/professional rival, Frank Butler. Features some of Irving Berlin's greatest songs including "There's No Business Like Show Business" and "Anything You Can Do I Can Do Better". M-G-M (1950)



VOICE of the THEATRE

Published by and for members of the Alex Film Society
P. O. Box 4807 • Glendale, CA 91222 • 818.754.8250

ClassicFilms@AlexFilmSociety.org

\$3 (mailed free with membership)

editor

randy carter

design/layout

brian ellis

distribution

andrea humberger

printer

alco printing, glendale

©2007 AFS, all rights reserved