

# VOICE of the THEATRE <sup>15<sup>th</sup></sup>

Journal of the Alex Film Society

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## H.G. WELLS Predicting the Future

by Linda Harris

In the early 20th century Herbert George Wells was a powerful voice in the world of non-fiction. His works on politics, history and science were best sellers, equally praised and criticized. But it was his early novels, called "scientific romances", that became science fiction classics and are the basis of his fame. Not surprisingly, most of these books were made into films...most more than once.

French director/producer, George Méliés, combined Wells' novel, FIRST MEN IN THE MOON and Jules Verne's FROM THE EARTH TO THE MOON, and released *A Trip to the Moon* (*Le voyage dans la Lune*) (1902). This revolutionary film includes the celebrated scene in which a spaceship hits the eye of the man in the moon. Wells' book was given a feature treatment again in 1964 with Ray Harryhausen providing the animated special effects.

THE ISLAND OF DOCTOR MOREAU has been filmed five or six times, most notably in 1932 as *The Island of Lost Souls* with Charles Laughton as the evil doctor creating "manimals" in his island lab. One of his victims was

Bela Lugosi, a year after his triumph as Universal's *Dracula*. Burt Lancaster tried to perfect the formula in 1977 and Marlon Brando was still looking for the right mixture in 1996.

Claude Rains kept Universal's supernatural franchise cooking through 1933 in James Whale's production of *The Invisible Man*. Vincent Price took over the role in *The Invisible Man Returns* (1940) and Jon Hall had two swings as the *Invisible Agent* (1942) and *The Invisible Man's Revenge* (1944). *Abbott and Costello Meet the Invisible Man* in 1951 and at least three television series used the title in the fifties (CBS), seventies (NBC), and the Sci-Fi Channel in 2000.

Wells himself wrote the screenplay for producer Alexander Korda's *Things to Come* (1936), based loosely on Wells' fictional history book, THE SHAPE OF THINGS TO COME, which speculates on future events from 1933 until the year 2106. Starring Raymond Massey and directed by William Cameron Menzies this title gets a big budget production and is a favorite of hardcore sci-fi fans.

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## Fifteen Years...

Welcome to the 15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration of the Alex Film Society. As the founding President, I am still amazed that for over a decade and a half we have presented nearly 90 events, all managed by volunteers whose love of the Alex Theatre, of history and of classic films has enabled the Society to survive.

It has not always been easy. At times there was no money and our Board and members generously opened their wallets. Luckily the close professional relationships of Board members with the studios have made access to prints possible. Publicizing our events has always been a struggle. With little marketing money and no paid staff, getting the word out in one of the most expensive media markets in the world is always a challenge. But, other film lovers in the media have often made room for our announcements at one time or another. The Alex is such a

we have presented  
nearly 90 events, all  
managed by volunteers

draw that we have always thought we need only to get someone in for just one show and they will return. Early on, we had to prove our concept of 'classic films as they were meant to be seen' to Theatre management who saw the Alex as a 'live' theatre, not the vaudeville movie palace of its roots. Needless to say we won that battle and now enjoy a close relationship with the Alex and its staff.

What will the next 15 years bring to the Film Society? The advent of digital projection has begun to put pressure on the availability of pristine 35mm prints that are a cornerstone of our presentations. Last year's fire at Universal Studios has left many older titles from their catalog up in the air. With the main market on video, it is hard for businesses to rationalize the expense of striking new 35mm prints of older titles.

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# H. G. Wells

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Orson Welles was the king of radio drama when he narrated *War of the Worlds* in 1938 and took delight in the mass hysteria he induced. H. G. Wells denounced the broadcast as an “outrage” based on the other Welles nerve to rewrite his novel.

Based on the 1898 novel, George Pal gave us the first film version of *War of the Worlds* in (1953). Steven Spielberg and Tom Cruise battled the Martians again in 2005. The early film version starred Gene Barry and won an Oscar™ for special effects.

The estate of Wells was so pleased with the final production that they offered director George Pál his choice of any other Wells’ property. Pal chose the 1895 novella THE TIME MACHINE.

Wells had a checkered marital life. In 1891 he married his cousin, but left her in 1894 for one of his students. During his marriages, Wells had liaisons with a number of women, including the American birth-control activist Margaret Sanger and novelist Elizabeth von Arnim. In 1909 he had a daughter, Anna-Jane, with the writer Amber Reeves, and in 1914, a son, Anthony West, by the novelist and feminist Rebecca West, twenty-six years his junior. As early as 1914, Wells predicted the atomic bomb in the novel, THE WORLD SET FREE. He also predicted the use of tanks in warfare and the growth of the airplane as an advanced weapon in battle. He also forecast the development of rockets and predicted both World War I and II.

H.G. Wells died on August 13, 1946 with his housekeeper at his side. He was 79 years old and had accurately predicted the shape of things to come. ■

*AFS Board member Linda Harris is a frequent contributor to the VOT.*



*Charles Laughton, the first Dr. Moreau, 1932; Burt Lancaster in 1977 and Marlon Brando, 1996.*



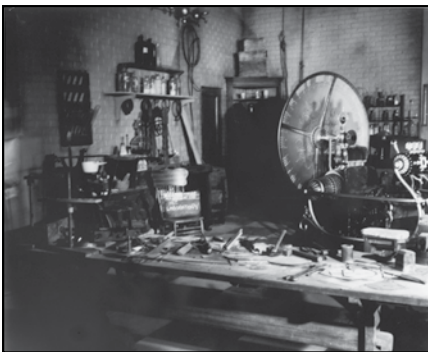
*Gloria Stuart and Claude Rains in Universal's 1933 version of The Invisible Man.*



## sic transit gloria

For over one hundred years, producers of fantasy, horror and science fiction have sold their sometime threadbare product with the names of Edgar Allan Poe, H.G. Wells and Jules Verne. Low budget titles and big budget spectacles with no possible connection to the original material used screamer headlines to advertise Edgar Allan Poe's *The Raven* or H.G. Wells *Empire of the Ants*. For a producer it was a win/win situation. The books were universally recognized and adored and they were conveniently safe from royalties in the Public Domain.

In what has to be considered a sign of the times, New Line Cinema/Walden Media recently remade *Journey to The Center of The Earth 3D* (2008) and nowhere in any of the paid advertising was there any mention of Jules Verne, the best selling French author whose novels have sold tens of millions of copies in hardback and paper, have never been out of print and have been translated into a staggering 148 languages. Can't wait for the video game. ■ Randy Carter



## Rod Taylor

by Dean Briggs

As a young man, Rod Taylor caught a performance by a touring company from the Old Vic from England as it made its way through his hometown of Sydney, Australia. Once Taylor saw Laurence Olivier on stage, he decided that he too wanted to become an actor.

Rodney Sturt Taylor was born in Sydney, New South Wales, Australia on January 11, 1930. In 1954, when Taylor was 24, he moved to the United States to pursue his acting career. Without an alien work permit or social security card, finding work was difficult. During this period he lived in an 8x10 room with no bathroom near Malibu beach.

Dory Schary, head of M-G-M, did a screen test on Taylor for *Somebody Up There Likes Me* (1956), but the part of Rocky Graziano went to a young actor by the name of Paul Newman. Taylor, however, had made an impression on Schary. Once under contract at M-G-M, Taylor began working on films such as *The Catered Affair* (1955), *Giant* (1956), *Raintree County* (1957) and *Separate Tables* (1958).

It was *The Time Machine* (1960), however, that was considered Taylor's breakout role. At the same time that *The Time Machine* hit the big screen, Taylor was starring on television in the series, "*Hong Kong*" (1960). Taylor's next major film project was director Alfred Hitchcock's *The Birds* (1963). He portrayed Irish playwright Sean O'Casey in *Young Cassidy* (1965).

A good light comedian, he starred with Jane Fonda in *Sunday In New York* (1963), and joined Doris Day in both *Do Not Disturb* (1965) and *The Glass Bottom Boat* (1966).

Director Quentin Tarantino has cast Taylor to play Winston Churchill in his film, *Inglorious Basterds* to be released in the summer of 2009. Tarantino has long been a Taylor fan and specifically asked for Taylor for the part of Churchill.

At 79 years of age, Rod Taylor still apparently loves acting and has had a long career filled with success and the respect of his peers. ■

Board Member Dean Briggs lives in Glendale and frequently contributes to the *Voice of the Theatre*.



Rod Taylor and Debbie Reynolds were the young lovers in M-G-M's *The Catered Affair* (1955).

George Pál's

# The Time Machine



MetroColor – 1960 – 103 minutes  
Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Presents  
A George Pal Production  
Print Courtesy of Warner Bros Distributing Inc.



George Pal .....Producer/Director

David Duncan .....Screenplay  
H.G. Wells .....Novel

Russell Garcia .....Original Music  
Paul C. Vogel.....Director Of Photography  
George Tomasini.....Editor

George Davis & William Ferrari ...Art Directors  
Keogh Gleason & Henry Grace ....Set Decorators

William Tuttle .....Makeup Creator  
Sydney Guilaroff .....Hair Stylist

William Shanks.....Assistant Director

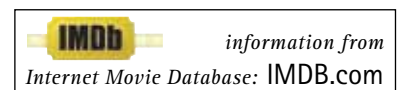
Franklin Milton .....Recording Supervisor  
Van Allen James.....Sound Editor\*  
Wah Chang & Gene Warren .....Special Photographic Effects  
Mentor Huebner.....Production Illustrator\*  
Bill Brace.....Matte Artist\*  
Howard A. Anderson.....Optical Effects\*  
Ralph Rodine.....Assistant Camera\*  
Jim Danforth.....Assistant Animator\*  
David Pal & David Sahlin.....Stop-Motion Animators\*  
Don Sahlin .....Stop-Motion Animator\*  
Charles K. Hagedon.....Color Consultant  
Tim Baar.....Special Photo Effects\*  
George Pal .....Morlock Designer\*

## Cast

Rod Taylor.....H. George Wells  
Alan Young .....David Filby/James Filby  
Yvette Mimieux.....Weena  
Sebastian Cabot.....Dr. Philip Hillyer  
Tom Helmore.....Anthony Bridewell  
Whit Bissell .....Walter Kemp  
Doris Lloyd.....Mrs. Watchett  
Bob Barran .....Eloi Man\*  
Paul Frees .....Talking Rings (voice)\*  
Josephine Powell.....Eloi Girl\*  
James Skelly .....Second Eloi Man\*



\*uncredited





George Pál (Julius György Márczincsák) was born in Hungary 100 years ago. Trained as an architect, he studied illustration in Budapest and eventually moved to Berlin as head of UFA Studios cartoon department. By 1933, George had set up his own company, working to perfect a new approach to stop-frame animation. Pál called the technique Pál-Dolls and later, Puppetoons.

Puppetoons was based on a procedure called replacement animation. The sets were three-dimensional miniatures and the characters were small, articulated dolls. Between each exposed frame of film, the animators would replace all or part of each moving character with another piece, designed to be

the next fragment of the continuous movement of the character. Another frame was exposed, and the next series of replacements would be made, and so on, until the scene was completed. Each character's series of graduated movements was carved out of wood, an incredibly painstaking process but, once carved and painted, the pieces could be used over and over again for repeated action from any camera angle, similar to what computers can do now, with the electronic "puppets" used in today's animated films and special effects.

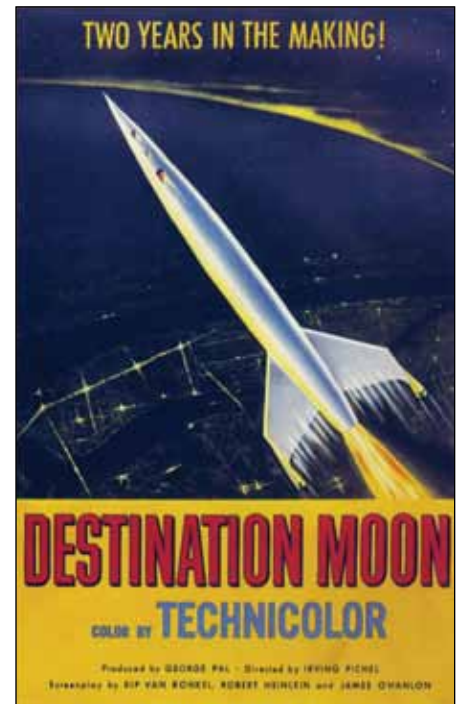
With the Nazi takeover in Germany, George and his wife, Zsoka, moved to Paris and then to the Netherlands, where a new studio was opened, making advertising films for many clients, but especially Philips Radio. These films caught the eye of American audiences and especially the executives

### After making some forty Puppetoons and receiving a special Academy Award™, Pál went to work producing live-action feature films.

at Paramount Studios. By 1940, the Páls were ensconced in Hollywood, and George had a new studio making a series of Puppetoons.

The films were very successful, but most are not seen today likely due to the fact that the series most enduring character was Jasper, a little black child who, by contemporary standards, represents some broad racial stereotyping. The irony is that, of the animation producers at the time, Pál was arguably the least prejudiced and most open to cultural diversity.

After making some forty Puppetoons and receiving a special Academy Award™, Pál went to work producing live-action feature films. *Destination Moon* (1950), *When Worlds Collide* (1951), *War of the Worlds* (1953) and



*Tom Thumb* (1958) were successful productions featuring science fiction or fantasy elements and boasted the most sophisticated, state of the art special effects for their time. Many of the films also featured combinations of his Puppatoon techniques combined with live action.

His most successful feature was 1960's *The Time Machine* featuring Rod Taylor and Yvette Mimieux. The 1964 production of *7 Faces of Dr. Lao* starring Tony Randall remains a cult favorite and for many years he labored unsuccessfully to get a Hobbit project to the screen.

George Pál died in 1980, during pre-production on "The Voyage of the Berg" which was to be his first feature in five years. He left us his unstinting devotion to craftsmanship, his love of storytelling and a body of work, both shorts and features, which still retains all of the charm, magic and optimism that were so much a part of his personality. ■

*AFS Board member Frank Gladstone, an animation professional, is a frequent contributor to the Voice of the Theatre and produces our annual Three Stooges Event.*





Yvette Carmen Mimieux, a beauty contest winner and model, was signed by M-G-M in 1959 at the tender age of 17. With her second film appearance as ethereal 800th century Weena in *The Time Machine* (1960), Mimieux became a star.

Her next film, *Where the Boys Are* (1960), proved she was capable of heavy dramatics via a discreetly handled “gang rape” sequence. It was followed by *The Light in the Piazza* (1962) with Olivia de Havilland. In 1963, Mimieux starred in *Diamond Head* with Charlton Heston and *Toys in the Attic* with Dean Martin.

Mimieux appeared in a 1964 episode of “*Dr. Kildare*” entitled “*Tyger Tyger*” that proved one of the series’ most memorable, and was one of the highest rated shows of the year. Playing an epileptic surfer girl, the role garnered her a Golden Globe™ nod. In 1965,



Mimieux and Chamberlain teamed-up again for the tender, albeit soapy drama, *Joy in the Morning*. Mimieux was widely regarded as a sex symbol during the 1960’s. This perhaps affected her acting



career, in which serious roles became increasingly elusive. She later appeared in numerous television series and made-for-television movies, including *The Legend of Valentino* (1975) playing Rudolph Valentino’s second wife. Mimieux also co-starred in the first PG-rated Walt Disney Productions feature, *The Black Hole* (1979). In 1984 she starred in *Obsessive Love*, a movie of the week about a female stalker, which she co-wrote and co-produced. Her last acting appearance, in 1992, was Jackie Collins’ mini-series, *Lady Boss*.



Aside from her acting career, she is an anthropologist and a real estate investor. Married to film director/choreographer Stanley Donen from 1972 to 1985, she is currently married to businessman Howard Ruby. ■

## Fifteen Years...

### CONT'D FROM PAGE 1

Attracting an audience has always been a challenge and the economy isn't helping, especially when the title we are screening is available on DVD at the local grocery store for a \$1 rental. The Society struggles to mail an annual calendar as the cost of postage and printing relentlessly climb. Costs at the Alex continue to increase as they too struggle.

We have carefully controlled both our membership prices and ticket prices to allow the widest audience an opportunity to visit the Alex and enjoy a film.

But in the end the Board of Directors are zealots (who else would do this for free?) and we are determined to continue screening the best classic films along with a cartoon, shorts and captivating guest speakers. What else would we do?

*Brian Ellis*

**Alex Film Society Board of Directors**  
*Randy Carter, President; Brian Ellis, V.P.; Ronald Bonk, Treasurer; Pam Ellis, Secretary Dean Briggs, Frank Gladstone, Andrea Humberger, Linda Harris, Daryl Maxwell, Beth Werling*

**Past Board Members**  
*Kathleen Brown, Jim & Pam Elyea, Lisa Hogan, Mitch Krayton, Connie Humberger, Dan & Barbara Leimeter, Dottie Sharkey, Craig Yaussi*

**In Memoriam**  
*George Crittenden, Bob Miller*

**Sponsors**  
 Many partners help us present events. We'd like to thank the following businesses for their support:  
 Damon's Restaurant; California Pizza Kitchen; Massage Envy; Pattyes Closet; Montrose; Eddie Brandt Saturday Matinee; Brand Bookstore; Woodland's Café; Fox Home Video Classics; Regent Releasing Art House Video; Warner Brothers Home Video Classics; Genius and the Weinstein Company Classic Home Video; Turner Classic Books; First Look Studios Home Video Art House; Image Entertainment Classic Home Video; Vicki Greenleaf and Associates Marketing; Hollywood Book and Poster; Comedy III Entertainment; Alex Theatre; Porto's Bakery

## Including Short Subjects

# Rhythm in the Ranks

## Hearst Metrotone News of the Day 1956

*Rhythm in the Ranks* – A George Pal Puppetoon released by Paramount Pictures – Technicolor – 1941 – 7 minutes

George Pal's forth Puppetoon for Paramount Pictures and his first to receive an Academy Award™ Nomination. Eventually the Puppetoons would be nominated seven times and Pal would receive a special Oscar™ "For the development of novel methods and techniques in the production of short subjects..."

The film was released on December 26, 1941, only a few weeks after Pearl Harbor and the United States' entrance into World War II. Even though its approach is whimsical, its wartime theme probably made the short resonate even more with audiences. George and his family had recently fled Europe for the U.S. and he had very emotional ties to the calamity overseas.

Puppetoons employed a replacement animation technique often requiring several thousand individual sculptures, each in a slightly more advanced position, to achieve the illusion of movement. While creation of these graduated sets of sculptures was labor intensive in the extreme, the separate pieces allowed repeatable actions and camera compositions not achievable with any other method at the time.

*Rhythm in the Ranks* has been preserved by the Academy Film Archive and the UCLA Film & Television Archive. Print courtesy of the Academy Film Archive.

Produced and Directed by ..... George Pál  
Voices ..... Billy Bletcher (Gr. Plank)



HEARST METROTONE NEWS / NEWS OF THE DAY – Highlights of 1956 – black and white

Hearst started production of sound newsreels in partnership with Fox in September 1929, simultaneously producing both HEARST METROTONE NEWS and FOX MOVIE TONE NEWS. In October of 1934, the Fox-Hearst partnership was dissolved, and Hearst continued production of sound newsreels through the Hearst Metrotone News Corporation. In November 1936, bowing to increased public criticism of William Randolph Hearst, the name of the series was changed to NEWS OF THE DAY. The series was released twice weekly by M-G-M and nearly all of the issues up to 1967 survive today. These issues, along with unreleased footage accumulated during their production, make up the majority of the 27 million feet of film in UCLA's Hearst Metrotone News collection.

Newsreel print courtesy of the UCLA Film & Television Archive

The Alex Film Society relies on membership support and tax deductible donations to present our classic film events. Our volunteer Board, and members make it possible. Please join us as members and donors. Information can be found on page 8 of this program.

**Saturday, July 25 at 2 pm and 8 pm only!**

*Rodgers & Hammersteins' Broadway Stage Success Comes to the Screen!*

**THE KING AND I**

Super Star Mary Martin suggested Yul Brynner for the part of the King in Rodgers and Hammerstein's 1951 adaptation of "Anna and the King of Siam". For the lavish widescreen film version in 1956, Deborah Kerr portrayed the English tutor in the blockbuster hit that garnered nine Oscar™ Nominations. Among its five wins was Best Actor for the man who created the part. Hit songs from the show include "Shall We Dance", "Getting To Know You" and "I Whistle a Happy Tune". Presented in glorious De Luxe color and CinemaScope 55. (20th Century Fox, 1956) Running time 2 1/2 hours.



**Saturday, September 19, 2009 at 8 pm only**

*A Hurricane of Fun and Frolic for Everyone!*



**10th Annual VAUDEVILLE EXTRAVAGANZA**

For the 10th time, the grand tradition of Vaudeville returns the Alex Theatre to its roots when we present multiple live acts of period music, magic and mayhem. A classic comedy film (and always a cartoon) caps off the evening. Come see what it's all about! Runs 2 1/2 hours. with intermission.

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

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- I (WE) CAN VOLUNTEER, Please call.
- Enclosed is my (our) donation of \$ \_\_\_\_\_

(discount admissions good for every screening)

- Patron \$100**  
 (Eight discount passes)
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 (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: \_\_\_\_\_

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Alex Film Society • P. O. Box 4807 • Glendale, CA 91222



In association with the Library of Congress, the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County and Glendale Arts, AFS presents a screening of the restored silent classic, Sparrows, Mary Pickford's 1926 dramatic story of abused orphans. The 35mm print will be accompanied by a live organ performance and is the only Los Angeles screening scheduled. Also included at the event will be rare outtakes, other short subjects and unique memorabilia display. Join us for a rare opportunity to see 'America's Sweetheart' on the big screen of the Alex. More information will be available on our web site at [www.alexfilmsociety.org](http://www.alexfilmsociety.org)(United Artist, 1926)



**Mary Pickford in SPARROWS**

*Library of Congress, Natural History Museum of Los Angeles, and Glendale Arts present*  
**Sunday, July 12, 2009 at 2 pm only**

Producer/Director George Pal scored a major hit with his 1953 version of H. G. Wells science fiction novel War Of The Worlds. Pal used the best selling British author again in 1960 for the enormously popular M-G-M production of The Time Machine. Rugged Australian actor Rod Taylor became a major star as the time traveler and Yvette Mimieux established herself as a 60's icon with her portrayal of the golden haired Weena. The production won an Academy Award™ for it's Special Effects and stop action animation sequences. (M-G-M, 1960)

**Special Display: Artifacts from Bob Burns' Basement!**

**THE TIME MACHINE**

*Join us for a world of amazing adventure in the year 800,000!*  
**Apr 25!**  
**at 2 pm & 8 pm only**