

MADAME FALBEAUX'S



CINÉMA MYSTIQUE

From the depths of Hades, it's another edition Cinema Mystique, your guide through the seven rings (or is it eight? I can never remember) of film purgatory. This month, the hallowed high holiday of the Salon, we pull out the scariest of all crappy films: monsters, werewolves, and bats, oh, my. Our overriding theme in this session is the underground, and all that lurk therein. So, light your torches and watch your heads

thrilling cliff-hanger ending. I'll tell you this much... This particular wine cellar comes with it's own wine press. Suppose Lance should happen to stumble into it and while looking up, he sees the descending plate coming down to get him "SLAG."*

Betty Boop returns to the Salon with a

UNDER- GROUND HORRORS REVEALED

From this month's featurette, *The Munsters*, Herman Munster takes to the sewers of Mockingbird Heights in search of the family's pet dragon, Spot.



as we go down below.

For Captain Mephisto, every day is Halloween. If only everyone had a transformation machine that would eliminate the need for embarrassing ourselves at Costume World. In this month's chapter of *Manhunt of Mystery Island*, Lance Reardon, CSI, goes down into Mystery Island's wine cellar in order to get the Captain's fingerprints. What he finds there, of course, is another

cautionary tale about how young, nubile ladies who dare to show their garter belts beneath their much-too-short skirts, should avoid lonely, old hermits in their mountain top retreats. *The Old Man of the Mountain* is the third in a series of three cartoons that the Fleischer brothers built around three songs Cab Calloway recorded for them. The Fleischer's also rotoscoped (a Max Fleischer invention) or traced

continued on back

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Beneath the Surface Edition

OLIVER NORTH (10/7/1943) - You can call it "covert," "clandestine," or "undercover," whatever; Ollie was caught up in the biggest scandal of the Reagan presidency. The Iran-Contra Affair was the main news cycle entertainment of 1987. It just goes to show that no matter how much shredding you do, you can never fully sweep it under the rug.

GUILLERMO DEL TORO (10/9/1964) - This Mexican-born director loves shooting underground. Sometimes it's in the New York subway system for *Mimic*, or in a fantasy underworld like *Pan's Labyrinth*. And we all know where *Hellboy* comes from.

ED WOOD (10/10/1922) - If anyone could be classified as being artistically and economically beneath underground filmmaking, it's Edward D. Wood Jr. Two of his films, *Plan 9 from Outer Space* and *Night of the Ghouls* where both bad enough to raise the dead. Which is exactly what both films were about.

BELA LUGOSI (10/20/1882) - RN: Be'la Ferenc Dezso Blasko. Shown in so many films lying in a coffin, you would think he should be very familiar with the cold, dark nether regions. Once complained to director Ed Wood (above), "This is the most uncomfortable coffin I've ever been in."

QUOTES OF THE MONTH

“They can also tell when a man is Yalloglanchie (Native American version of a werewolf). He takes on a series of strange body habits, like sleeping like a coyote, nose to anus. The house begins to smell like coyote urine.”

— More information than we need to know from *Werewolf*.



“The lightning. It is good for you! Your father was Frankenstein, but your mother was the lightning!”

— Ygor (Bela Lugosi) after the Frankenstein monster (Lon Chaney Jr.) is revived by lightning in *The Ghost of Frankenstein*.

YGOR AND THE GHOST



☞ The rubber headpiece used for the Frankenstein monster make-up was very uncomfortable for Lon Chaney Jr. Once, during shooting, he asked for it to be removed. Angry and frustrated when no one listened, he ripped it off himself, opening a bloody gash in his forehead.

☞ Ygor and the Monster weren't the only characters who came back from the dead in *Ghost of Frankenstein*. Michael Mark and Lionel Belmore, who play the two council members murdered in the previous film (*Son of Frankenstein*) are back as council members in this one, seemingly none the worse for wear.

☞ Chaney played the monster several times. He even doubled Glenn Strange for three shots in *Abbott and Costello Meet Frankenstein* (1948).

Calloway's movements and applied them to the “old man's” dance in the cave.

Now that *The Munsters* TV series is out on DVD, there's no stopping us from finally getting a chance to show one of them at the Salon. *Underground Munster* finds that the family's pet dragon is lost. It's up to Herman (Fred Gwynne) to go down into the sewage system to find him.

One thing to note while you watch *The Munsters*... there's a lot of similarities between the characters of Herman Munster and *Gilligan's Island's* Thurston Howell III (Jim Backus). Fred Gwynne was brought up in a wealthy family and graduated from both Groton and Harvard. In spite of the ramshackle setting of *The Munsters*, Fred brings a lot of upper-class idiot attitude to Herman Munster. This contrast that Fred employs is what makes his portrayal a classic.

Werewolf (aka *Arizona Werewolf*) is one of those direct-to-video wonders that continues to entertain in spite of itself. All you need to know is that director Tony Zindarist (RN: Mohammad Zarrindast) has been described as “The Persian Ed Wood.”

The nominal star of this epic is George Rivero (RN: Jorge Pous Ribe) who in his day was a big star in Mexico. Though he started out as a masked wrestler in the Santo mold, Jorge quickly moved on to bigger things. He had a starring role in the John Wayne/Howard Hawks film *Rio Lobo* (1970). By the time we see him in *Werewolf*, he's 57 years old but still in pretty good shape. Unfortunately, no one could quite decide on a shape of a hairstyle for Jorge, which keeps changing as the film goes along.

Ghost of Frankenstein marks the descent of the franchise from A-list to B-movie status. Boris Karloff was on Broadway at the time starring in a big hit, *Arsenic and Old Lace*, and Boris wasn't anxious to put on the heavy makeup that Lon Chaney Jr. had to endure (see box). So, it fell to Bela Lugosi (as Ygor again) to carry the film. Bela gamely tries, but once the monster is dug out of the sulfur pit, it's evident that even with the same makeup on, Lon Chaney Jr. is no Boris Karloff. Chaney had some memorable roles in his career and was riding high from the success of *Of Mice and Men* (1939) and *The Wolf Man* (1941), but he was not a good choice for the monster. Kinda pudgy looking. At the beginning of the film, look for cult favorite Dwight Frye (Renfield in *Dracula*) who has a few speaking lines as a villager.

Col. Tom

SERIAL

1. **Manhunt of Mystery Island** (1945) - *Chapter 5* - “Mephisto's Mantrap” Doing his best “CSI” impersonation, Lance Reardon attempts to deduce the true identity of Captain Mephisto from his fingerprints. Lance and Claire go back to the wine cellar where Lance escaped the gas trap. One of the island's four owners, Paul Melton, also appears at the cellar. Could he be Mephisto's secret identity? SLAG (Literally!)

CARTOON

2. **The Old Man of the Mountain** (1933) - Betty Boop meets a creepy old hermit who oddly enough dances and sings like Cab Calloway.

FEATURETTE

3. **Underground Munster** (1965) - “Spot,” the Munsters' pet dragon, runs away from home after Herman scolds him for tracking mud through the house. Soon, Herman has to retrieve Spot from the city sewage system, before authorities take drastic action.

FEATURES

4. **Werewolf** (1996) - A group of archeologists dig up the bones of a really strange looking beast. Co-starring Joe “Martin Sheen's kid brother” Estevez who adds another classic to his list of credits. The fact that *Mystery Science Theater 3000* riffed on this film two years after it's release, should be all you need to know about it's quality. We'll be watching it MST3K-free.
5. **The Ghost of Frankenstein** (1942) - Lon Chaney Jr. takes over the monster role in the fourth of the Universal Studios series. This time, the insane Ygor (played by Bela Lugosi) wants to have his brain implanted into the monster's body. This film marks the series descent from “A” movie status down to the “B's.”