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THE WICKER MAN

by David Bartholomew

A detailed examination of the genesis, production and distribution of one of the greatest horror films ever made, including interviews with producer Peter Snell, director Robin Hardy, screenwriter Anthony Shaffer, star Christopher Lee, and composer Paul Giovanni.

LOGAN'S RUN, The Television Series

by Peter S. Perakos

RUBY

by Bill Kelley

SUSPIRIA

by Mick Garris

THE WICKER MAN

by David Bartholomew

CAPSULE COMMENTS

how to stop worrying and avoid the bombs

COMING

some interesting films we find on the horizon

LETTERS

the readers tell us where we went wrong

DAVID CRONENBERG ON RABID

Canadian director and new genre talent explains his bizarre new film.

SENSE OF WONDER

editorial remarks by Frederick S. Clarke

THONGOR IN THE VALLEY OF DEMONS by Mike Childs & Alan Jones

Producer Milton Subotsky talks about the planned Lin Carter fantasy.

WAR OF THE WORLDS REVIVAL

George Pal and cast members assemble for the film's 25th anniversary.

Covers: Christopher Lee as Lord Summerisle painted by Roger Stine
Top: As Sergeant Howie (Edward Woodward) is prepared for the wicker man by Willow (Britt Ekland), Lord Summerisle (Christopher Lee) and Miss Rose (Diane Cilento), he turns toward the onlooking villagers to protest: “I believe in Jesus Christ and the life eternal.” To which Summerisle replies, “That is good, for believing as you do, we bestow upon you a rare gift these days—a martyr’s death. You will sit with the Saints among the Elect.” Bottom: Howie is picked up effortlessly by Oak (Ian Campbell), a massive villager, and placed inside the wicker man. Howie shouts, “There is no Sun God. There is no Goddess of the fields. Your crops failed because your strains failed. Fruit is not meant to grow on these islands. Burning me to death won’t bring back your apples.”
The story behind the production of Anthony Shaffer's occult masterpiece, the CITIZEN KANE of horror films.

*Top:* Lord Summerisle (Christopher Lee) leads his village in a rousing song to celebrate the rebirth of their orchards and the beginning of summer, as Sergeant Howie burns to death inside the wicker man.

*Bottom:* As the last of the wicker man is consumed in flames, the sun sets, casting a melancholy gloom on the pagan islanders.
I: THE FILM

"The whole thing was about apples—

that should have been the logo.

There's nothing more innocent than an apple."

—Paul Giovanni

The colors are deep-hued, resplendent, somewhat fevered. We are gliding too low and fast over islands which seem suddenly to emerge from the sea, as if for the first time. The islands are green and brown and richly foliaged, with gray, rough rocky coasts. The light is just as before a summer thunderstorm. The combination of Bill Eckland and Howie's film, written by playwright Anthony Shaffer, wastes no time. We have come to Summerisle, an isolated island off the harsh Scottish coast, in a sea-plane piloted by Sgt. Howie (Edward Woodward) of the W. Highland Police. This is a ZOMBIE, NIGHT OF THE HUNTER, BURN WITCH BURN, CURSE OF THE DEMON, GANJA AND HESS, and LORD SHANGO. But in none of these is the clash as fully and intelligently articulated as in THE WICKER MAN. Summerisle is a pagan island cut off from the rest of the world, almost from time, symbolized and led by a patrician lord (Christopher Lee). Howie, the policeman, is a Christian, an Anglican, and in a debt, sometimes overwhelming way, he is meant to represent a good bit more. The clash in the larger sense, of ideas and beliefs, is embodied by these two men on a personal level.

Howie comes to the island as an outsider—he even arrives in a plane, which remains, offering the security of escape if things get too rough, bobbing in the choppy harbor—and he remains an outsider throughout his stay. Needing a boat to get ashore, Howie must shoot through his bullhorn and gesture to make himself understood to the group of villagers gathered on the wharf a few hundred feet away. His first attempt at communication sets the pattern for his mission, for even when the physical distance is erased, Howie is still unable to break through to the people in any sense whatsoever. In using the plane, Howie has, in effect, dropped a fully armed (Christian) god-like status, avoiding contact with the earth and water. Standing on his plane, Howie is photographed in isolating one-shots, which are cut against the multi-shot community of villagers, who are right from their initial appearance associated with the land, which plays an important part in their religion. (Later the camera will pan continuously over their faces, cutting Howie from the frame, as they glance at the photograph and decline knowledge of the missing girl.)

Once onshore, Howie immediately establishes himself in a series of roles which while alien to the villagers is comforting to him, since they represent and translate one element of his life on mainland Scotland to the unfamiliar surroundings. Howie is a detective, applying logical investigatory methods, seeking only facts. By his uniform, which he wears throughout the film, he affirms himself not so much as a single man but as an agent of the government, of the police, a superior authority. His distaste and impatience with his quest on the island is evident almost at once. Before very long, we are made aware of his straightlaced, nearly Calvinist beliefs and that he is properly affianced, quite chastely, to a proper girl, one whom he may not necessarily love—we learn later that he is terrified of passion, perhaps because it is so uncertain—but one with whom he feels very sure he will secure the "good" life he has been taught to look for, and the upbringings to secure. Howie clearly implies Howie's entire background and character by closely studying his behavior and takes excellent advantage of Woodward's slightly wooden presence and stiff posture to characterize his beliefs and expectations perfectly.

In Myrtle's viewpoint throughout the film, a stranger experiencing ever more strange things. A boisterous pub assault him with a bawdy song, sung for the innkeeper's daughter (Britt Ekland) but almost entirely at Howie's expense. He flies on a plane, discovers a bacheloral in the nearby green and graveyard, the nude lovers flung among the headstones. On the second night of his stay, in his room, his composure cracking, Eckland nearly seduces him, her sexuality slicing through the very walls of his room, with a strangely erotic, slightly frightening, deep-voiced song and music filtering from the pub below. Howie bravely commutes his discomfort to professionalism: the gathering of clues, although he is soon frustrated there as well, compounded by the more, the observer and audience: the island and culture. Everyone easily declines knowledge of the missing girl, except the young daughter of the postmistress, who says she has seen her and that she has drawn a picture of her, whereupon she proudly points to a watercolor that Howie has been helping her to paint (and staining his hands in the process).
a hare in the fields. He locates the girl's name, which is Rowan, in the ledgers of the schoolteacher (Diane Cilento), but he is so shocked at the pagan "filth being taught here" to the class of young girls that he must leave ("They're all raving mad.") Hardy cleverly uses the school setting, blackboard notes, and dialogue to further explain the beliefs of the island—it is as if we are among the schoolchildren learning lessons—which is basically an ancient pantheistic religion, the sort rediscovered and lionized by the British Romantic poets—principally Wordsworth and Coleridge, perhaps utilizing the old gods of the earth, sun and the elements, and the violent, transcending primacy of nature.

However, it is only when Howie arranges to meet the Lord of Summerisle (Christopher Lee), a titular leader with whom Howie, a man who respects organization and order, is obviously used to dealing, does he attempt to conquer his growing fears and repugnance and muster an intellectual stance, which quickly becomes, through the rest of the film, a (narrative) defense. It is also at this point that THE WICKER MAN turns most interestingly into a personified clash of faiths and precepts, coldly ritualized into dogma in the case of Howie's religion, but very actively evolving activities, in the May Day ceremonies and celebrations. This clash occurs through an ultimate test of personal wills—Howie's and Summerisle's. No longer is it a question of a missing girl, but a battle for a life and a soul, the girl's, to Howie's view, but in reality his own.

The narrative, hopscotch of puzzles and games (e.g. SLEUTH, play and film), has fashioned the screenplay as a conundrum, which astutely maintains a non-Manichean stance. Both sides—Christianity and paganism—seem to win; however, the former is represented by a man slowly falling into confusion. Theoretically one of the most penetrating questions, which confusingly occurs through an ultimate test of personal wills—Howie's and Summerisle's. No longer is it a question of a missing girl, but a battle for a life and a soul, the girl's, to Howie's view, but in reality his own.

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But it was enough to intrigue Shaffer, who is a devout horror film fan. He was able to work it up into a screenplay (the process of adapting another work is, to him, "a mug's game"), and things came to a standstill, which is the normal rate of speed for anything in the movie industry.

For many years through the '60s, Shaffer and writer/director Robin Hardy had worked together as H&K Associates in England, packaging and producing films, plays, and documentaries for British and French television and occasionally commercials.

Early in 1972, the two partners spent a long weekend together and according to Hardy, found themselves avoiding the horror film away from the old standbys, terribly overused, like things based on the Devil as the antithesis of Christianity. We thought finally about doing a film with an original story that in effect has the cast of a superior horror film but which goes right back to people who believed in real magic, sympathetic magic, people who believed that the elements had real power. But we didn't want them all romping around in Early English period costumes or whatever and thought about doing it in a contemporary setting.

"During that weekend, we literally worked out the entire plot: that we wanted an island setting, to bring in microcosmic aspects; that there would be a character who would be the subject of that island's plot, with the endpoint a sacrifice. And that there would be a lure to get him to come there."

Hardy had had a heart attack some time earlier and thus was severely restricted in his physical movements, so the pair agreed that if Hardy would do all the research needed in order to flesh out the details of the culture they would portray, then Shaffer would write the screenplay. The time that Hardy required dovetailed perfectly with Shaffer's pending commitments in the U.S.

After several drafts, the screenplay was finally completed. It then became a question of securing a production deal, the crucial first step that many, many scripts never manage. Shaffer proposed it to Peter Snell, to replace his stalled adaptation. At the same time he offered it to Christopher Lee, who had been anxious to play the part of a Jesuit priest in an earlier Shaffer screenplay called ABSOLUTION (which Shaffer terms "a nasty little goodie") that never found a producer. Lee read it and allowed Snell to take it on. Snell's reaction was so instant and positive that he presented it to the Board of British Lion who were also enthusiastic and said, "All right, we'll do it, provided that the budget be kept low." And that was it," recalls Lee.

Shaffer polished up the screenplay. Hardy was signed on as director. He had never done a theatrical feature film before. As Shaffer puts it, "It didn't seem to me to be any good reason why we should n't make it."

III: RESEARCH AND BACKGROUND

"Let's face it, there are strange communities in this world."

—Christopher Lee

"I had always been interested in comparative religions. One of the first TV jobs I had was producing religious affairs programmes, so I learned a great deal about Christianity, the differences in theology between the whole spectrum of Roman Catholics to Baptists and Unitarians. I was later told I was hired for the series because I was an Agnostic, which was, and is, quite true."

A sharply intelligent man, Robin Hardy began his career with the National Film Board of Canada where he did "tales of documentary films, literally hundreds, over the years. In the late '50s he moved to New York and worked exclusively in television, largely for the "Esso World Theatre" series, where in 1964 he directed "Haunted Passage," a study of the Indian theatre that included a play by Satyajit Ray, and a documentary/survey of Japanese theatre called "The Frozen Moment," which incidentally dealt with ritual and ancient dances and dramas. Work on this anthology series took him all over the world, to Sweden, India, Japan, and France, filming stage productions for broadcast. Later, back in England, Hardy directed, Shaffer produced, and both of them wrote projects under their H&K Associates banner.

Now he was a researcher and spent four months in England studying paganism. "To begin with, we thought of a Hebridean island that could have been made fruitful by an agronomist. It had to have the Gulf Stream phenomenon to fit the story, simply because paganism was closely connected with the crops and sun worship. And I discovered that such island paradises exist. For instance, the Scilly Isles have a strong romantic tradition of the sort we ascribed to Summerisle and are fairly well-known in England. As late as 1920, Lord Leverham, who founded Lever Brothers, bought an island and turned it into a model farm—it's still there. He did it not just to grow palm trees but to see if they could be grown, but more like Lord Summerisle's grandfather; he was an experimental agronomist and tried to develop new strains and succeeded. Those palm trees that we used in the film, for instance, are real.

"As to the pagan culture, everything you see in the film is absolutely authentic. The whole series of ceremonies and details that we show have happened at different times and places in Britain and Western Europe. What we did was to bring them all together in one particular place and time. Summerisle is a real island, although we did not film there. The island lies far north of where we filmed, roughly 12-15 miles off the Scottish coast. We discovered only after the shooting was done that Summerisle did indeed grow and was known for its apples, although today it is nearly barren. In fact, it is the only island in the area to do so. The apple trees there are wild, there are still groups of fishermen returning to their mainland homes stopping off on Summerisle to pick the apples."

"The wicker man itself is quite real. The Druids used the structure to burn their sacrificial victims. Historically, the first mention is in Julius Caesar's "De Bello Civili," in 55 BC, when he noted that Roman prisoners of war were taken by the British tribes and burned as sacrifices. As far as that practice goes, sacrifice is common to every pagan religion in Europe. The Celts were by no means the only pagans: the Romans or the Greeks, or the Celtic British, now the Welsh. It was a completely universal practice."

"Take the scene where the woman puts the frog in the child's throat. Well, that's a classic piece of sympathetic magic. Listen to the poor thing croak, taking all the pain into itself. Even the beetle on the string is not hokey—Salem witches were burned for things like that, using an animal as a surrogate for a person in a spell. The beetle stands in for the person you want to trap."

"Burning the dead man's hand—that's called 'the Hand of Glory,' and only one of many ways to spell a person to sleep. Another was to take earth from a grave and put it one floor directly above the person you want to sleep. Again, sympathetic magic."

"All this sort of transference of ideas is common, like the pregnant women touching the buds of the apple trees to make the apples plentiful—that connects with the 'make the baby king' myth. And the girls jumping over the fires to make themselves fruitful, which is actually a Beltane myth."

"One has to remember that pagan people all over the world saw no connection between the sexual act and pregnancy. And all these things, as we illustrated in the schoolroom scenes, were part and parcel of normal pagan education."

"The use of the hare all the way through the film. It is an excellent image for the belief in the transmuted soul. I suppose it was because of their speed and freedom. All hares run wild; rabbits live in warrens. The hare is actually the Easter Hare. And that's tremendously celebrated all over the world without really knowing why. Take the phrase, 'mad as a March hare,' well that refers to the new season coming in, the activity of Spring."

"There are some Christian holidays that are celebrated where there was previously a pagan feast. Easter is one of them, originally it was a hare feast. Christmas has been put where the Beltane feast was. At Christmas, you set up a Christmas tree because that was what the goddess Hera wanted. Christmas ('O Mince Pie') relates to the Golden Bough. My God, when you decorate your home for Christmas you are using nearly every pagan symbol there is!"

"The Christian harvest celebration, or Thanksgiving, is a continuation of a far older feast, whether the Inca or Egyptian feasts, also done in Europe, like the 'skinning of the goddess.' Haven't you ever wondered why all priests, and not only Roman Catholic ones, wear women's clothes?"

"The film's sexuality is completely natural. It is May Day night. The May Pole is an obvious phallic symbol, and we show a boy climbing to the top and crown it. In the
Oak (Ian Campbell) drags Howie toward a martyr's death, as the solemn processioners follow, humming in unison. Howie is glimpsing the wicker man for the first time as they ascend the top of a hill, and cries out, finally, in realization "Oh Christ, no . . . Christ!"

evening the Summerisle character brings the same boy to the innkeeper's daughter for sexual initiation. On the green, the women are sitting on top of the men; the one girl sobbing on the grave, mourning a lover, is in the same position as the other women who are celebrating a bit more actively with the men.

"The Green Man, which is our pub name, is one of the oldest pagan images: the tree come to life, the tree turning itself into a man. It is the most common pub sign all over England today.

"What we hoped would fascinate people is not that they would think these things are still going on in Europe, but that they would recognize an awful lot of these things as sort of little echoes from either out of childhood stories and nursery rhymes or things they do at various times of the year.

"But they're not dead. The thing about these beliefs is that people do these things today and not know why they do them. We call them 'superstitions.' There are millions of people who know nothing about the Golden Bough who will . . . touch wood.' Or won't walk under ladders. They all have profoundly important and real origins in pagan belief.

"The procession and ceremonies at the stone circle are based on the Morisco dance-drama, the oldest in English history, that's the whole thing with the Fool, the Betsy or Hobby Horse and the Teaser. A derivation of it, is the Morris dance, the part done by the swordsmen; it's still performed today. The basque people in Spain have elements of it in their culture, so it's widespread.

"Estimates vary, but I understand that there are probably in excess of two or three thousand of these kinds of festivals held every year in Western Europe, all over Britain, from the Caucasus northward. And they're celebrated genuinely. The most important one in Britain is in Paidstow, which is the one we stumbled into, which experience is really where the idea for the film came from. In that one, the girls still jump through the fire. Of course, they're not naked.

"The point is that it is not for nothing that active paganism is for the most part gone. For one thing, it keeps people in the thrall of superstition. Maybe it's not too big a connection to make between the final scene of THE WICKER MAN and the Nuremberg Rallies in Germany. It was no accident that Hitler brought back all those pagan feasts in his rise to power. It's a great, German thing, really, Wagner after all was always going into the Niebelungen and Ring cycles, glorifying all the old German gods. The idea that it is necessary to sacrifice people for the good of other people is never too far from the human consciousness at any one time. You can't simply say that it was something those people did all those years ago and has nothing to do with us today."

That interest runs high in these subjects
is not surprising, especially in Britain, where up until not too long ago films about witchcraft were banned outright. As Tony Shaffer told me, "Once you get some leads, you can trace anything through the London libraries. But you can also put an ad query in the paper, and the lunatics come howling out of the woodwork at you!"

But not quite everything in the film is authentic. Despite the opening title expiring thanks to Lord Summerisle for his cooperation in making the film, the gentleman, in fact, does not exist. Both Hardy and Shaffer only grudgingly admitted it after point-blank questions. The latter began laughing. "Well, it's a trick, I think," Peter Snell first thought of it, to lend some outward 'reality' to this implausible tale. It's a bit glib—I had two minds about using it—but the intention was to say to people who perhaps are not putting too much attention on the film, 'Look, this really happened... And it did the trick.'

IV. THE SCREENPLAY

"I have always believed that the truth can be shown upside down..."

—Anthony Shaffer

"I doubt if anyone will ever write a more remarkable script for a film."

—Christopher Lee

"It seemed to me to be a subject—the Celtic beliefs and how they're represented in this country—that I have never really seen treated properly, with the Hobby Horse, the Seer, the Punch or Fool figure, the Hanged Man, the Green Man, the Golden Bough, or Sacred Oak and the force that intervenes in life, sometimes it demands a sacrifice, sometimes it doesn't. All of it. I thought there was so much there in Celtic mythology that no one has ever laid a glove on, and I thought it was about time someone did."

Anthony Shaffer came out of Cambridge with a law degree in 1950. He practiced in London for three years, then went into journalism, writing ads for Pearl and Dean, the largest of the movie theatre circuits. He also wrote documentaries and a series of Gothic novels in collaboration with his twin brother, Peter. He spent several years in television, part of the time incorporated with Hardy, but also wrote plays and a number of unproduced screenplays, including FOOL AND THE PENGUINS and PLAY WITH A GYPSY, later known (and mentioned above) as ABSOLUTION. In 1970, his first major play "Sleuth" was produced in London and won a Tony award in its New York production later in the same year. He also adapted his play for the Cornickwicz film, adapted his brother's 1967 film "Black Comedy" for the screen, wrote FRENZY for Hitchcock from an Arthur La Bern novel and has had another play, "Murderer," produced in London in 1975, although it didn't catch his earlier success and was not brought to Broadway.

Shaffer's interests are inseparable from his work. As Robin Hardy mentions, "Both Tony and Peter have an absolute fascination with games, with people devising elaborate games at somebody else's expense. They also adore fantasy and horror films and will invariably travel all the way across town to a little fleapit showing something or other."

That obsession is infectious—their mutual friendship with fellow gamester Stephensondheim and Anthony Perkins to write THE LAST OF SHEILA. And the brothers, with each other's presence, are notorious for pulling pranks on others, because they are identical twins.

Hardy seemed best able to define Shaffer's characteristic style of writing: "Tony has a theory that comes into all his work. He really doesn't care what other people want me to see on the audience with surprises, funny delights, intellectual goodies, all sorts of things. It's a Chinese box theory of entertainment: a box inside a box inside a box and so on, with each box slightly different and more surprising than the last." Producer Snell adds, "He's a highly intelligent individual and the kind of writer who cannot write an exchange of dialogue between two characters without attempting to get something across of his own point of view or observation. You can see things in his work, especially in THE WICKER MAN, remembering and thinking very hard about them, as distinct from writing something off as some sort of simple entertainment experience."

Shaffer comments, "I usually take about four months to do a script, but this one came much quicker, especially once the idea was there, about 10½ weeks, I believe. It's this whole business about truth, about perceiving it, even upside down, although that's sometimes done in plays and films most astoundingly, to make a 'mystery.' I always believe the thriller form is grossly underused. It's stuck in the who-dunit thing, or violence and police cars running about the streets or endless parrying."

"I think it really means what it says: a mystery is a mystery, and in order to reveal a mystery, you've got to tell it like one. Otherwise you'd never be able to see what you've said. Years ago I read a play on the Eichmann business called "The Savage Parade." And I wrote a play about a man being captured in Argentina, and during his trial, it was clear that he was the sought-after criminal at all, that it was the man who had captured and brought him in. Then I kept fastening onto each of the rest of the characters in the play as the culprit, until we wound up with one of the judges, who was then hanged. Then, a remark was given to Eichmann or whoever had been captured somewhere else, with the idea that the whole thing would start over. Well, what do we make of that? It is a 'savage parade,' and it continues."

"What we're saying about Summerisle is that the whole of the people there, our 'normal' mores have been reversed, i.e. it's a good thing to burn books or inform on your parents, under these circumstances, then everyone could have been Eichmann. Everybody could have done it. In a sense, everyone one did."

"It's a pompous way of putting it, but you can actually bring a reasonable amount of lecturing and moral philosophy into a dramatic form that is getting too little of it. If the form is acceptable, if there's a surface level or story is jolly good, well, underneath it you can say what you really want to say without being boring about it.

Top: The May Day procession stops at the stone circle, as each member passes through swords clasped in the figure of the Sun, while the crowd chants, "chop, chop, chop." "It's a game of chance," as Summerisle explains. Bottom Left: As the Hobby Horse leads the procession, Ingrid Pitt—Diedre Alling and Britt Ekland—playfully charge at Punch, the Fool, a bewildered Howie in disguise, with noisemakers. Bottom Right: Ingrid Pitt passes through the clasped swords, part of the ancient, traditional Morris dance, of Anglo-Saxon heritage.

"THE WICKER MAN is a horror film, if only because of its horrific ending. There are terms in this world that are grossly misused: 'detective story,' 'thriller,' and a third is 'horror film.' What is a horror film? It's Christopher Lee with those silly teeth in, rushing around through paper-machine corridors chasing nubile ladies. What you see now playing around are the same old boring lepers..."

"Plainly there has to be more to the genre than that. I've always found that the great ones have to be about something. Take, for example, REPULSION. Now that is a great horror film. This woman shouldn't be in her apartment—she should be under medical care. The fact that she is left alone to join up, to cohere, to collide with her fantasies is horror. And in this kind of horror film, you've got to have real human beings."

But there's a second type of horror film, where that's not always possible, perhaps because the proposition is too far advanced to fully believe. These films are about the imagination, about the quality of imagination. A good example are the Edgar Allan Poe stories which have characters who as humains are a bit difficult to take but which are terrifying pieces of work. It's here that I think we should put THE WICKER MAN.

"I really think we should be finding new names for these things, because 'horror' implies second-rate, third-rate. Disaster movies are really horror movies that have found themselves a new name. There is a lot of the Gothic in it. And I think they should be set just slightly out of their own time, now not that you should use a castle or akeep of the 19th century but in some sort of ancient torture chamber. One of the things that works so well in THE WICKER MAN is that we took reasonable trouble to make it perfectly contemporary; the people could wear suits and didn't run around in old cowls or something, which I thought was the horror of the situation. We've all been there, haven't we? But you can find just as much horror on High Street with supermarkets and
Top: Filming a closeup of Howie as he succumbs to the smoke and fire of the burning wicker man. Bottom Left: Hardy (with horn) sets up a shot between Howie (Edward Woodward) and the Harbor Master (Russell Waters), seated in boat. Bottom Right: Woodward and Hardy rehearse a scene, as Howie frantically searches for Rowan Morrison on May Day.

We don't know if Summerisle's sacrifice fails—the apples could come tumbling out of the trees that year, but if they don't, the people will have to have another next year. And they must go back to the community for the victim, and who's the top banana there? The Summerisle chosen by the local minister! That's why I showed that line in there when Howie warns him.

But if the apples do return, whether it was because of the sacrifice or by a natural process—it's not unknown for crops to fail and grow the next year—why not? After all, the continuing story of Summerisle. You have to be left with a certain doubt. This time we leave the people in a very happy state; they've burned this man and they go home as if they've been to a football match. The kids might get their schoolbooks out, everything, as if they've seen nothing. Now that's real horror. However, for them, it's not horrible because they believe in it.

"So our intent was to do an unusual picture in the horror vein, one that hopefully will work on the accumulation of detail. To a certain extent, you are meant to put it together for yourself. I feel you must leave something for your audience to do, you have to.

"However, the problems are apparent. The film business, or what there is left of it in England—it scarcely exists—by people who like to play safe. If you've gone on the stage with something that's made a fortune for all involved, they say, 'Oh, yes let's do the film. We love it.' Same with a book on the best-seller list. It takes no great talent or act of courage from them to produce. But it's a submission to an original, and they'll regard it as, you know... one of those... and put it well down on the list for production, below one that has guaranteed a success by succeeding in another medium. Originals are difficult to get done, and I think it is the fault of the people who sell the films and advertise them."

V: PRODUCTION

"The script was brilliant and unproduceable, except with a budget of like $7 million."

—Paul Giovanni

"The film was made for $750,000."

—Robin Hardy

By May of 1972, a businessman named John Bentley had wrested control of British Lion, and he promptly brought in Peter Snell, an independent producer (his credits include, in the genre: GOODBYE GEMINI, in 1970), while the Canadian Bentley, who had been the line from Canada, to run the company as managing director and head of production. At the time, Shepperton was the studio arm of British Lion, and Bentley tried to sever the two and began to enlist buyers for the studio acreages. Snell, who had believed she had following in the U.S. She's a quite limited actress, and there's that lovely Scandinavian face and accent. However, the point is that she was pretty enough for it. Christopher has qualities and defects, although the latter mainly stems from her having been a one-trick pony in the Dürckhahn canon. He's obviously been trying to get away from all that. He's absolutely sure to work with. He's got presence and brings it
"Celtic beliefs, I have never really seen treated properly. There is so much there in Celtic mythology that no one has ever laid a glove on, and I thought it was about time someone did."

—Anthony Shaffer

out well. He’s got an amazing voice—he’s an opera singer—however, the trouble with him is that he just doesn’t sound like it! He delivers it as if I were paying him, and that is very rare. Diane Cilento was chosen because I thought she is a very good actress who needs to do more work. Robin chose Lindsay Kemp [as the innkeeper], one of the strangest choices, ever. Of course, you need to cast against type, especially the stereotype innkeeper usually stout and jolly, with a Scottish accent, grunting about an apron. Lindsay gives the part a strangeness—he’s one of the freakiest people in the industry. I’m not sure he was the right choice, but he’s not the wrong one either. Woolfson, has a big following by his long-running CALLAN television series, and he was excellent.”

Ingrid Pitt, in a small role as the librarian, was the only performer imposed on the production, and that was for reasons of better securing booking through Rank cinemas (British Lion, as a production and, under Snell, distribution company, controls no theatres). However, that plan miscarried via an incident, quite funny but... delicate, that happened on location during a late evening outdoor shoot, that no one interviewed would give permission to reveal. However, her chief ineffectiveness to the film lies mostly in the incongruity of her strong German accent.

Voices, apart from dubbing, will out, but the endless fascination of film is its potential for trickery. The film’s tiny island of Summerisle is actually a series of 25 different locations, most of them on the Scottish mainland, spanning a distance, north to south, of nearly 190 miles. The difference in terrain, and of course, weather conditions made the task of cinematographer Harry Waxman to match shots quite arduous.

A prime, nearly perfect example of this sort of fakery was Summerisle’s castle, which was “composed” of two different castles, about 40 miles apart. Calzean, near Ayr, on the western coast of Scotland, was used for exteriors; however, the interior was Adam period, or 18th Century, which was contrary to the film’s storyline which had Summerisle’s grandfather, a classic Huxley-esque, Darwin-esque figure, coming to the island in the 1840s. The needed Victorian interior was located in Lord Stair’s castle, near Wigtown. This castle was so massive, with huge rooms, that the crew used only the foyer as Summerisle’s drawing room, the real room was much too large.

The odd landscaping outside the Stair castle was put to good use by Hardy. Lord Stair himself occupied the land for 50 years under the Hanoverian crown. He repaired there complete with his two regiments and his green-bay-hatted guards surrounding the castle with mounds and small pockets to be used for maneuvers to keep the men occupied. The present Lady Stair still lives in the castle and occasionally would drop in to watch the shooting, each time startling the crew because she bears a marked resemblance to Queen Elizabeth. Her most uncomfortable visit, remember Hardy, coming everyone a fright,” came during a film of the fire-jumping dance by the young girls, skimpily dressed in nude body stockings, at the stone circle. (The circle itself was another “cheat” modeled on Stonehenge, the stones were made of styrofoam.)

The film was shot almost completely out of sequence and on real locations, partly due to Hardy’s previous documentary experience, partly to the financial “nonsense” of trying to achieve authenticity in a studio. Hardy says, “For reasons of taste and economy, I never really like using studios if I can possibly avoid it. In some cases we would alter the existing location, put in a false door or something. But basically, it’s all real. What art director could put in all the detail that we were able to find and make it all believable. And absolutely no one could reproduce the extraordinary texture of architecture which is all over the place.” Among the most changed locations were those in Kirkcudbright, southeast of Newton Stewart, where they shot the scenes in the ruined church and teapot shop, when a false stage was built for the scenes with Howie, the post mistress (Irene Sunters) and her little girl.

The Logan Gardens, in Scottish Galway, were used for Summerisle’s “tour” of the mainland. Maintained by the Scottish Botanical Gardens, Logan is only one of a string of four or five similar gardens along the western coast. They are not very large, only ten to fifteen acres each, but the variety of plants and foliage, and those palm trees, are exactly as they appear in the film.

However, because of the time of year, while the plants were still green, they had no flowers and buds, which led to art director Scamus Flannery’s biggest headache: dressing each individual plant with blossoms. In some of the long shots, this meant hundreds or more plants, especially in the scenes showing the apple trees. This was largely accomplished by carrying around a truck full of trees and plants wired with blossoms which could be attached to existing trees and plants.

The aerial shots near the beginning of the film were shot over islands on the way to Skye, a large island which with Lewis and Harris make up the far northwestern Scottish mainland. Some of these islands do benefit from the attributes of the film’s Summerisle, the warm water and salt conditions, although few inhabited. Many are completely barren because the sheep, which people have grazed there for generation after generation, have destroyed every single tree and shrub. Indeed, as Hardy notes, "The grazing has been so rampant on these lands that it might already by World War II for the government to implement a huge re-forestation program all over Scotland to save the land."

The real Summerisle, which is not on most maps, although viewers of the film might use their atlas to try and find it, lies even further north. But, as Snell cracked, "The real Summerisle is probably today inhabited by two men and a goat."

The scenes showing Howie’s seaplane arriving in the harbor were shot at Pluckton.

Schoolmistress Rose (Diane Cilento) leads the members of her class in a fertility dance; as they jump over the fire, the God of the Flames makes them fruitful.

a small village (also not on most maps) that lies at the mouth of the Carran River.

This village illustrates why Hardy had to use so many different locations. "In Pluckston, once you round the main street, which we show in the film, along the water, there are simply not enough buildings behind it to flesh out a town of large enough size. And in all the towns and villages, we showed where we shot, all the buildings you see are there, so when you turned around, down the road might be some dreadfully modern little house which would spoil the whole effort. Matching up locations, tackling together a homogenous town out of disparate buildings and even pieces of buildings, all sympathetic architecturally, is tricky but something I find quite fun to do. And you really have to, these days, anywhere in Europe, especially if you’re making a period piece or sustaining a mood, because otherwise you find yourself accidentally shooting at a telegraph pole or television camera.”

The most extensive shooting was done near Newton Stewart, including the schoolhouse and inn sequences. Other locations used included Stranraer, north of Logan, the departure point for a ferry to Northern Ireland. The final scenes were shot on a peninsula called the Machars, which is surrounded by beaches, cliffs and sea-swept rocky coasts. The scenes of Howie attempting to escape through the caves were shot at yet another spot, an historical property called Brown’s Cave, near the site where Ninian established the first Christian chapel in 397 (a fact somewhat ironic to the film). The production company had no trouble gaining permission to shoot in all these areas, including the National Trust Properties. Quite to the contrary, laughs Hardy; despite the fact that the authorities were delighted. And I think we did a great job, really, for Scottish tourism."
There has been no mention of the audience. The reason why is (you guessed it!) LOGAN'S RUN is really a terrific show, provided that you're either a producer or a network executive, and not a member of the viewing audience.

In all fairness to the producers, LOGAN'S RUN did make an attempt to clean up some of the inconsistencies of the original, specifically, the question of who really runs the City of Domes. After all, the prime intent of the under thirties was clearly shown to be getting stoned and getting laid. LOGAN'S RUN the movie seemed to indicate that a serious female computer voice was in charge; LOGAN'S RUN the series devised a "Council of Elders," men pushing sixty whose existence is kept secret from the populace. Their explanation for the edict that everyone over thirty must die is that the city has finite resources and can only support a finite population. Fine, but why isn't that population balanced out over all ages so that life might at least have some semblance of normalcy? The appearance of the Council does give greater impetus to Sandman Francis' monomaniacal pursuit of Logan. In the pilot, after meeting the Elders, Francis is led to believe that if he were successful in capturing Logan, he will one day be appointed a position on the Council. But Logan's (Gregory Harrison) reason for becoming a runner is far less convincing. He encounters Jessica (Heather Menzies), and all of thirty seconds later, is apparently persuaded to stun Francis (Randu Powell) unconscious (by bonking him on the head) and flee with Jessica. Could it have been Jessica's impassioned speech ("Logan, you're not like the others...Carousel is a lie...Come with me and find Sanctuary.")? No. Needless to say, the scene was unconvincing, even ridiculous considering the fifth grade Thanksgiving play performances of the actors...

Perhaps some among you, unfortunate enough to watch the premier episode or any succeeding shows, experienced a feeling of (shudder) Deja Vu? Ghosts. Ghosts abound in LOGAN'S RUN. To cite Henriklsen, from the play Ghosts: "[Ghosts] are all kinds of dead ideas and all sorts of old and obsolete beliefs. They are not alive...but they remain...and we can never rid ourselves of them..." LOGAN'S RUN is truly haunted—the ghosts of VOYAGE TO THE BOTTOM OF THE SEA, LOST IN SPACE, LAND OF THE GIANTS, TIME TUNNEL, PLANET OF THE APES, and perhaps most of all by FANTASTIC JOURNEY. This is understandable when one learns that D. C. Fontana (story editor) and Leonard Katzman (producer) held the same positions on FANTASTIC JOURNEY. Picture, if you will, the duo of Katzman and Fontana, fleeing a mortally wounded FANTASTIC JOURNEY, trying to salvage as many story outlines and scripts possible, and finding the "Sanctuary" of LOGAN'S RUN.

However, I am not blaming the deficiencies of LOGAN'S RUN on any individuals, not even executive producers Ivan Goff and Ben Roberts. The two are perhaps best known for their work on MANNIX and CHARLIE'S ANGELS. The following quote from Roberts is most revealing: "We came to MGM on a development deal...We're not science fiction people." Indeed, perhaps the scripts seem original and inventive to Goff and Roberts. The second episode telecast dealt with mind control by aliens intent upon taking our heroes as specimens for their intergalactic zoo; the third with a big game hunter who, lions being few and far between, tries to take Logan and Francis as his prey. Other episodes deal with: a freeze dried psychopath brought to life; an insane asylum run by the insane; a machine which splits Jessica into twins, one good, the other evil; a misguided time traveler. And so it goes.

If the writing is not promising, the list of writers is—William F. Nolan, Harlan Ellison, David Gerrold, John Meredith-Lucas. Why then inferior scriptwriting? Why is it that producers who, working on their own turf, can devise excellent drama, interesting situations, fully dimensioned characters, can fail so utterly when working for the studio system. The latter, I believe, is the real reason why LOGAN'S RUN is a failure, and not a lack of talent at MGM.
SUSPIRIA

...hackneyed in concept, but experimental in form...


Susy Banyon ............ Jessica Harper
Sara ..................... Stefania Casini
Madame Blank ............. Joan Bennett
Tanner .................... Alida Valli
Daniel .................... Flavio Bucci
Psychiatrist .............. Udo Kier
Servant ................... Guiseppe Transocchi

SUSPIRIA, despite its arty aspirations, is a very conventional tale obscured by unorthodox trappings. It is to writer-director Dario Argento’s credit that he has attempted to provide artificial respiration to a story which grew a bit long in the tooth decades ago, but the resultant mishmash of self-indulgence does little to whittle away the layers of cliché.

In attempting to work outside the bounds of orthodox construction, Argento (whose films include BIRD WITH THE CRYSTAL PLUMAGE and DEEP RED) heaps pretension upon pretension, and provides ample evidence as to why there is an orthodox form: because it works. In disavowing the rules of the game, he loses several opportunities to achieve shock, suspense, and audience involvement. While it is generally accepted that you orchestrate suspense, building it in layers up to a climax, Argento chooses to provide his biggest thrill near the opening of the picture. While this scene, in which a lovely girl is attacked by “someone or something unseen,” is filmed with heart-pounding verve and virtuosity—the shot of her face being pulled against and finally through a window is a tense and stunning nail-biter—there is nothing left to rival it. You just don’t open with your best hand.

The story concerns a doe-eyed young pretty, played with sufficient timidity by Jessica Harper (PHANTOM OF THE PARADISE), who enrolls in a secluded German school for dance in which frightening events are taking place. The Freiburg Tanz Akademie is an unbelievably garish, blood red structure of massed proportipn. Director Argento, a former film critic who claims Roger Corman’s Poe series as a major influence, intends the building to take on the role of monster. But while Corman’s manse in HOUSE OF USHER, for example, is intended as a Freudian analogy, equating the house with a woman’s body, with Roderick Usher being consumed by the symbol, Argento deals in a much less complex, more superficial form. One of his major shortcomings as both writer and director lies in the fact that the story is the least of his considerations.

It is a shame that this film is such a failure (in all areas except boxoffice), because Argento shows a few flashes of particular talent and ingenuity. His primary requirement is a healthy dose of self-control; his pictures are characterized, and smothered, by his unyielding self-indulgence.

Taken on its own, the Akademie is a remarkable, if annoying, bit of art direction. From its ghastly red exterior, to its jigsaw corridors and rooms so loudly pointed out that they scream, the Akademie is provided a character that is more eccentric than sinister. However, it is Dario Argento’s smooth direction of Luciano Tovoli’s cinematography which grants the building its life. The fluid camera movements give the picture an interesting, three-dimensional quality. Unfortunately, his experiment in lighting, while noble, is unsuccessful. In trying to set individual moods by lighting different key scenes in varying harsh hues (the ominous hallway is a bright crimson, faces are lit blue or green for fear), the technique becomes so excessive in its obsession with the color wheel that I found myself looking for the aluminum Christmas tree somewhere.

Another good idea killed by over-exertion is the use of Goblin, a sort of pastafarian music (their first film’s original score). Goblin, veterans of film, provide repetitive electronic motifs, complemented by heavy breathing, screams and moans which, by the time the director (who is credited as assisting with the musical composition) is through with it, sounds like the Disney “Chilling Thrilling Sounds of The Haunted House.” Halloween album. The film’s sound is greatly enhanced by the use of stereo, and Goblin’s music is capable, if a bit derivative of Tangerine Dream and Michael Oldfield’s “Tubular Bells.”

SUSPIRIA is perplexing and annoying because it is such a contradiction. It is hackneyed in concept, but experimental in form. Its finest moments are truly promising, but the rest of the film becomes just downright stupid.

The first murder scene of the film is marvelously choreographed and exciting, but, goddamn it, when a girl becomes trapped in loops of wire later in the film, when it is obvious that she could just step out (you can practically hear the director shouting, “Get yourself in deeper, honey—act like you can’t get out!”), or when all of the school occupants are bivouaced in the gym (due to a nicely done maggot infestation), a sheet separating students from faculty, and the wheezing of an old lady becomes the central aspect of this long, throwaway scene, well the effect is an unintended laugh.

I am quite a fan of experimental filmmaking, but its success relies chiefly on a director’s sense of discipline. Dario Argento could spin a masterful tale if he’d only knock off the bullshit.

Ruby Claire ............... Piper Laurie
Vince Kemper ............. Stuart Whitman
Dr. Keller .................. Roger Davis
Leslie Claire .............. Janet Baldwin
Lila June .................. Crystin Sinclaire
Louie ....................... Paul Kent
Barney ...................... Len Lesser
Avery ....................... Jack Perkins
Jess ........................ Edward Donno
Nicky ....................... Sal Vecchio
Jake ....................... Fred Kohler

Sixteen years ago, Curtis Harrington directed NIGHT TIDE, a film that few people saw but which a handful of critics touted as the work of a striking filmmaker who might one day follow in the footsteps of Dreyer or Tourneur. Harrington’s career since then has encompassed such a run of bad luck that the best thing most current critics can say about him is that his films represent a triumph of style over content. After seeing RUBY, his newest film, they are likely to dismiss him altogether. But they would be wrong.

Make no mistake about it: RUBY is a terrible movie. It is wretchedly acted, it is seldom even slightly exciting, and its screenplay could hardly be sloppier (although that last fault cannot be blamed on Harrington, who as usual, joined an already assembled project). With these as its most prominent features, few moviegoers will probably give RUBY a moment of serious thought. Those who do, however, may find the film revealing on a couple of levels.

Harrington’s affection for the great stylists in film (his favorite directors are Hitchcock and Von Sternberg) is reflected in each of his productions (e.g. GAMES, WHAT’S THE MATTER WITH HELEN?), usually in their pacing and physical look. Nonetheless, he remains original; any weakness for mimicry was probably played out in the experimental shorts he made in the forties and fifties. He is today one of the few American directors who can create that marvelous visual artificiality so indigenous to Hollywood studios and thus so beloved by European critics and filmmakers (and American movie buffs). But such talents are wasted on derivative tripe like RUBY, which, if it is to be of any interest at all, depends on a rigid adherence to the stripped-down, bare essentials of exploitation filmmaking. Harrington doesn’t shrink from a vivid depiction of RUBY’s considerable violence—he just treats the intervening passages with more care and thought than they warrant, or can support.

All its arty, soft-focus photography and boring talk about parapsychology can’t disguise the fact that RUBY is just a grade-C horror movie with a plot hook—supernatural revenge—as old and creaky as this sub-genre itself. Harrington has been saddled with uninspired scripts before (as in THE KILLING KIND). Here the setting—a backwoods drive-in theatre, a rundown nightclub, the surrounding swamp—at first seems promising, but the story itself, about a murdered gangster’s ghostly return in the late fifties, quickly grows so idiotic that Harrington has all he can do to keep the characters halfway believable, let alone work on building atmosphere. Unfortunately, the character relationships are muddled in an extremely peculiar way, and simply don’t bear scrutiny.

For a routine potboiler, RUBY is incredibly complicated. The title character, broadly played by Piper Laurie, is the dead gangster’s one-time gun moll, now living in seclusion at the old nightclub with their autistic teenage daughter. Ruby operates the drive-in (inherited from the gangster), which is suddenly doing landslide business because of the Fifties horror movie cycle. The surviving members of the old mob, all now working at the drive-in, begin to turn up dead—hung in the projection booth, wrapped around a tree, impaled to the screen. When the daughter’s already odd behavior grows stranger still, a parapsychologist is called in. He deduces that the girl is being used as a medium through whom the gangster can carry out his vengeance. That may be the director’s dramatic function, but from the viewpoint of the audience, he’s good to have around for another reason: his running commentary is the only thing that makes any sense out of the action (and I’m still trying to figure out whether the gangster or his daughter committed the murders).

Granted, then, that the movie is a mess in almost every conceivable area—unfocused, illogical, desperate to the point of relying on crude comic relief to enliven and pad the narrative. But what it does demonstrate, in an unanticipated way, is what Harrington’s true forte is.

This is something that interested critics and filmgoers have long tried to get a handle on, not just in Harrington’s case, but whenever a director appears who has lacked creative control over his films—but whose skills are vibrant enough to rise, however intermittently, above the most pitiful material. Don Siegel and Phil Karlson, for example, when finally given the chance to express themselves to their own satisfaction, virtually created a new genre, through the concept of the loner pushed too far by the corrupt regimes of society. This and other themes had only been hinted at in their early films, though they were always unquestionably there, waiting to be explored. Harrington, however, not only has yet to be granted similar freedom (NIGHT TIDE is the first and only project he initiated on his own), he

Bill Kelley is a regular contributor, living in Morris Plains, New Jersey. His career interview with director Curtis Harrington, and Retrospect of NIGHT TIDE, will appear in a future issue.

by Bill Kelley
Curtis Harrington, saddled again with an uninspired script.

is also less interested in personality conflicts than in the backgrounds and periods against which they operate. Once satisfied that his characters' credibility is established, Harrington works hardest at stockpiling tension within the setting. In his best films (WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH HELEN?, GAMES and of course NIGHT TIDE), this tactic helps him to pull the rug out from under the audience at the most surprising moment, by coming from an unexpected direction. Obviously, it makes him a bit tougher to read than a director who can be identified by recurring character types.

Significantly, the milieu of the 1950s in RUBY is altogether bogus and misleading. At best, it is incidental to the film's main purpose: belatedly ripping-off THE EXORCIST. Take away some old hot rods, a running sexual gag about a pony-tailed floozy, and the spectre of Allison Hayes in ATTACK OF THE 50 FOOT WOMAN (the drive-in's feature attraction), and the story could take place anytime. Evidently, Harrington felt he was better off avoiding than trying to embellish such hopeless material (hardly the most inspiring icons of the Fifties), leaving him with only the major characters to fall back on—none of whose relationships make sense.

Harrington is an imaginative, erudite director who has, on past occasions, performed admirably within the rigid confines of low-budget filmmaking. His several made-for-TV genre movies (a phenomenon representing the Hollywood assembly line at its most hectic) are head and shoulders above similar fare by other directors (particularly THE CAT CREATURE, transformed by Harrington and Robert Bloch into a rare evocation of the charm of the 1930s pulp magazine fantasy). So RUBY'S failure is caused not so much by its modest budget or rushed schedule as by its screenplay's inability to be anything but a glossy of grade-C movie cliches, held together by a flimsy plotline. Under such conditions, at least one customarily viable Harrington trademark—the repeated use of the slow dissolve—achieves precisely the opposite of its intended effect: instead of unifying the flow of events, it makes the narrative's irreparably choppy quality that much more apparent. The film's one lyrical touch, an underwater shot of Ruby in the skeletal embrace of her long-dead lover, is also its single glimmer of pure Harrington. Appropriately, it comes at the end of the movie, an ironic reminder of what might have been.

RUBY would be too trivial a film to spend this much time discussing had it been made by a mere hack with an already dreary track record. But Harrington has been toiling in the exploitation underground for too long, and the flashes of talent he projects under the most adverse circumstances clearly show that he deserves better. And his ability to work harmoniously with actors like Dennis Hopper (NIGHT TIDE), Shelley Winters (who recommended him for WHOEVER SLEW AUNTIE ROO? after being directed by him in WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH HELEN?) and especially the unpredictable Robert Blake (Harrington has directed two BARETTA episodes) affirm that his skills are not restricted to plot twists and set design. Harrington's predicament is that he has simply not yet directed the box office smash which would bring better assignments his way.

RUBY, of all things, may change that. It looks every bit like the messy clash of styles that it is (the final cut and crude music were imposed over Harrington's protests, and represent everything he abhors in the horror genre), yet it has been making money steadily throughout the past year. Although the movie might have been fun in a schlocky way had Harrington approached it like campy junk, his refusal to compromise himself probably makes him the only participant to emerge aesthetically unscathed. That factor, and RUBY's financial success, could help to finally make him a "bankable" director.

Since the film industry still regards the horror movie as a mere exploitation commodity, it would be both ironic and fitting for someone of Harrington's refinement to break out by means of a film that is aesthetically his worst work.

LOGAN'S RUN by Peter S. Perakos continued from page 20

sional characters (THE ROGUES) but fail miserably and create sci-fi in LOGAN'S RUN? Why is it that time and time again, a competent producer or writer, having the task to convincingly and appealingly dramatize science fiction, has discovered the goal to be as elusive as finding the Holy Grail?

The questions, it seems, are rhetorical. There may not be answers, but a major part of the problem seems to be producers' continual reliance on "effects" to yield interest, to be the driving force behind the situation. Effects might be the "special" kind, opticals and the like, but more than not, as in the case of LOGAN'S RUN, they are the Holy Trinity of television: Chase (by aliens, mad scientists, psychos); Capture (by mind control, ray weapons, brute force); Escape (outsmart, outfield, outtalk). The Ghosts—all the invalid, insipid, unexciting, unbelievable aspects of sci-fi, have dominion, leaving no opportunity for drama. Drama can never develop when people—the human side of science fiction—are made secondary to the mechanisms of the storyline. People become background, when the background should actually be the science fiction setting in which they are foregrounded. Yet no one, not even Gene Roddenberry, has dared to defy the Holy Trinity where science fiction television is concerned, and in doing so, go beyond the restrictions of the conventional TV format.

Now, a not so rhetorical question: is LOGAN'S RUN entertaining, taken on its own level? The answer is simple: no. LOGAN'S RUN has no real "level:" it's neither an amusing juvenile series like LOST IN SPACE, nor a visual effects tour de force despite its $360,000 per episode budget. One final question: will LOGAN'S RUN survive the Ratings Game? Against ROCKFORD FILES and ABC FRIDAY NIGHT MOVIE, it probably will not. Not to worry, sci-fi fans. Its ghost will remain, roaming the silent, empty corridors of network executives, minds, to be reincarnated as...?
ALLEGRO NON TROPPO [Bruno Bozetto] Specialty Films, 9/77, color and b/w, 85 min. Italian w/subtitles. With: Nestor Garay, Maurizio Michell. "BrunoBozetto,Italy'smostfamousanimator,hasproducedadazzlingstewofcartoonandclassicalmusicthatisasits"title"fuses:fast,butsnotoofast.Themusicis familiar"(Bolero, 'Prelude to the Afternoon Faun,' etc.), the homage/sendup of FANTASIA is blinding, the comedy is compulsive and the entire package is exhilaratingly original in style and form. To live in FANTASIA's shadow will only benefit, since the comparison will undoubtedly pull in the needed audience, who can then see for themselves that in many ways this is a better film: the rich potpourri of cartoon styles call to mind everything from the Wizard of Oz to Blue Meanies to the unavoidably Disney-ish honeyhymn, yet the characters are devoid of the utter sexlessness of the Disney product. The live-action framing device, filmed in muted black and white, is pure slapstick and admirably links the six separate animated sections. The stunning images include an army of marching saurians produced by a mutating globulet of Coca-Cola and a scrawny, wide-eyed pussycat probing the ruins of his former haven, devastated by nuclear war, leading to a comedic quest for a finale after the stage is deserted by the live-action characters. Hysterical and wondrous." Dave Schow

CINDERELLA 2000 [Al Adamson] 5/77, color & scope, 95 min. With: Catherine Erhardt, Jay B. Larson. 'The worst film I've seen in many years, an abominably made, X-rated, 'musical' parody of the fairy tale that doesn't even have interesting femaleness to fall back on to absorb the pain. I am hereby offering a $5 reward to anyone who can make a case for any Al Adamson film as even approaching mediocrity, apart from Bob Lazar's titles." David Bartholomew

CURSE OF THE BLACK WIDOW [Dan Curtis] ABC TV, 9/77, color, 100 min. With: Anthony Franciosa, Donna Mills, Patty Duke Astin, Jane Allsion, Vic Morrow. "Curtis pipes a tune that by now he knows by heart, and hashes up yet another NIGHT STALKER cross without even the veneer or snap of a Darren McGavin to redeem its leaden predictability. Supposedly this is what started out as Harlan Ellison's DARK DESTROYER project, and not a trace remains amid Curtis' rote repetition of camera shots and sequences that hack all the way back to DARK SHADOWS. Explanation for the murderous spider lady is patently silly—an ancient Indian legend—as is the worst monster mockup since THE GIANT SPIDER INVASION. The acting is qualitied and the end 'twist' is so cliched as to be unforgivable—and it can all be blamed on Curtis' obsession for wringing maximum mileage out of one idea. Curtis had a contractual obligation to make one more film for ABC, and this is it. Ads pushed this as 'recalling the horror flicks of the Fifties,' which it does insofar as cheap mindlessness is concerned." Dave Schow

JABBERWOCKY [Terry Gilliam] Cinema 5, 6/77, color, 100 min. With: Michael Palin, Max Wall, Deborah Fallender. "The Jabberwocky terrifies the citizens of a Medieval European city, whose king can only remark 'these peasants are becoming a pain in the ass.' Meanwhile, a country bumpkin (Palin) on his way to the city to find fame and fortune is caught up in a plot to kill the horrible monster and does so, accidentally. Gilliam (sans the onscreen presence of most of the Monty Python group) deals in a frustrating kind of black comedy that never works, despite the honest efforts of a good cast. The few moments of good humor are negated by Gilliam's disgusting reliance on gory action. The jabberwocky creation is, however, a marvel of engineering. It is Tolkien by-way-of-studio tosh, making De Laurentis' monkey suit look comparatively inconsequential. The fantasy is further enhanced by some beautiful Welsh locales and properly gloomy interiors." Jeffrey Frentzen

SPIDER-MAN [E. W. Sackhamer] CBS TV, 9/77, color, 75 min. With: Nicholas Hammond, Thayer David, David White, Michael Pataki. "Horrible miscasting, dull acting, boring plot, glacier slowness, and a total lack of imagination makes this one of the worst film adaptations of a comic book ever. Despite Stan Lee as script consultant, Alvin Boretz' screenplay bears only a rudimentary resemblance to the popular Marvel superhero. The entire film isn't worth a single Spiderman vignette on PBS' THE ELECTRIC COMPANY." Buzz Dixon

THE SPY WHO LOVED ME [Lewis Gilbert] United Artists, 8/77, color & scope, 122 min. With: Roger Moore, Curt Jurgens, Barbara Bach, Richard Kiel, Caroline Munro. "This is the movie AGENT FOR H.A.R.M. would have been if George Oswald had a budget of $13 million. It looks as if it were made by people who never saw a Bond movie but had the series described to them by a very excitable narrator. It's the first 007 film to be boring, an unforgivable sin. The gadgets look like they belong on Saturday morning kid-vid. The Marvin Hamlisch score reminds one how good John Barry is. And throw in monotonous travelog scenes, and probably the most ludicrous villain ever devised for 007. Moore as Bond is flabby and sadistic, completely unappealing. The special effects range from good (the minatures) to lousy (the matte work). Lewis Gilbert previously directed YOU ONLY LIVE TWICE and seems to think he's still working on that film—the tanker fight is virtually a scene for scene remake of the battle in the volcano. Co-author of the script, Christopher Wood, is responsible for a series of low-grade porn films in England. It shows in his work. Gone are the sophistication of earlier Bonds, replacing it is grade-school smut." Buzz Dixon

STARSHEP INVASIONS [Ed Hunt] A Warner Bros Release, 9/77, color, 87 min. With: Christopher Lee, Robert Vaughn. "Originally the producers of this film wanted to get the jump on CLOSE ENCOUNTERS OF THE THIRD KIND by naming their movie ALIEN ENCOUNTERER. The success of STAR WARS however, seems to have prompted the current title. Other similarities to major productions are purely coincidental. This tale of good and evil aliens battling over the fate of the Earth features hubcap, pie plate, and garbage can lid flying saucers, costumes reminiscent of Frederick's of Hollywood, and a Saturday morning cartoon level of sophistication that should be embarrassing to Lee and Vaughn." Frank Jackson
Hollywood’s “Holly Theatre” hosted a unique happening on the evening of September 7th with the 25th Silver Anniversary “Re-Premier” of the Martian Invader classic, H. G. Wells’ THE WAR OF THE WORLDS. Complete with klieg lights, celebrities, and radio and TV coverage, the gala event celebrated Paramount’s nationwide re-issue of the film on a double-bill with WHEN WORLDS COLLIDE.

Reunited at the event for the first time since they worked together on the film in the early fifties were producer George Pal, leading lady Ann Robinson, supporting actor Les Tremayne, and stuntman and former boxing champion “Mushy” Callahan. [See Vol. 5 No. 4 for a complete Retrospect on the film and its making.]

Star Ann Robinson, long absent from the screen and considered “lost” by many cinephiles and film historians, alighted from her chauffeured limousine very much “found” and aglow, still a striking woman now that she is in her forties. She was escorted by her two sons, Jaime and Estefan Bravo. Queried why she had not pursued her promising acting career, just coming to bloom with her first leading role in THE WAR OF THE WORLDS, the redoubled Miss Robinson explained that her marriage to Mexican matador Jaime Bravo in 1957 saw her travelling with him, following the bullfight circuit to Mexico City, Spain and South America, until their divorce in 1967. She and her sons have been living in the Elysian Park section of Los Angeles, of which she is a native, since 1963; and a motion picture career “...is just too difficult when you are trying to raise two children by yourself.”

Producer George Pal continues to be active in science fiction with several film projects in various stages of planning and pre-production: IN THE DAYS OF THE COMET, from a script by Robert Bloch, is being developed as a six-part mini-series at Paramount; Pal recently reacquired the theatrical rights to Philip Wylie’s THE DISAPPEARANCE, which he had previously attempted to film in the late 60s and early 70s; VOYAGE OF THE BERM deals with towing an ice berg from the Antarctic to Australia for irrigation purposes, a “fictional documentary.” TIME MACHINE II, his followup to the popular 1960 film, has generated offers and interest from several companies, including Toho of Japan, though Pal has serious reservations about Toho’s ability in the area of special effects, and has made no production deal as yet; and many others.

Following a cake cutting by Miss Robinson, and a champagne toast, celebrities and the press were admitted to a reserve section of the sold-out screening.


by Robert Villard
David Cronenberg

Writer-director David Cronenberg is to Canada what Roger Corman was, for years, to the United States: the reigning king of schlock horror. And it's a position that Cronenberg cherishes. No sooner was SHIVERS (reviewed as THEY CAME FROM WITHIN, 5:3:22) making critical history—and money—than production began on RABID, another horror film starring ex-porn queen Marilyn Chambers. And in keeping with the theme of SHIVERS, RABID is also about a new strain of disease which takes hold of its victims, turning them into raving crazies. Also, like SHIVERS, RABID reappraised the second highest sales at the Cannes Film Festival this year. A British sale was made long before that on the basis of a few "rushes." The film is currently in release in the U.S. from New World Pictures, Roger Corman's outfit, naturally. And Cronenberg has already nearly finished production on his third horror film, THE BROOD. Says Cronenberg, "I like being Canada's king of horror. It's a role I don't mind playing at all."

Why did you cast Marilyn Chambers? Actually, I had been thinking, ironically enough, of Sissy Spacek but that was long before CARRIE, before the Newsweek cover and before she became associated with Altman. I had seen her in BADLANDS and thought she was terrific. About the same time I was beginning my campaign to bring her to Canada, one of my producers from Cinepix was making overtures to Marilyn's agent. I had always been fascinated with the Marilyn Chambers myth, although I hadn't seen any of her movies. When it was suggested she audition, I was agreeable. I was curious. Also, she wanted to break into movies in a legitimate way and she hadn't made a porn movie for about four or five years.

She was willing to do a low-budget horror film and the only question was: can she do it?

Although my producers told me using a name would make it easier for them, I was under no obligation to use her. But I thought she was good and she was great on the set. A complete professional. She kept all the hassles with the hairdresser right off the set. She was willing to do whatever was necessary to make the film work and didn't complain about the cold and the mud and that kind of thing. She was just a pleasure to work with. The more you make movies, the more you realize, and appreciate, the need for professionalism. For the beginner you keep hearing about the temperamental actors and other things but after working with a cast and crew of professionals, you can't go back to amateurs.

Why did you decide to house the bloodsucker in Chambers' armpit—that seemed a particularly bizarre touch? Where else would you put it? Yes, it is a strange place, but you try thinking of another place that will work and get you passed the censors.

Touche. In both SHIVERS and RABID, a medical experiment runs away to create a virus of viruses being created. Are you making any kind of comment on the limits to which medical science should progress; that is, are we dabbling in areas where we have no business?

No, not at all. Actually you'll notice that the whole aspere about "there are things that must not know" is almost non-existent in either film. To me it's just a premise, it's an entertaining premise which takes the viewer from the real world as quickly as possible into a world of nightmare reality and dream logic which is where I like to function. The idea of science gone haywire is just a link between hard everyday mundane reality and a nightmare world.

The special effects in SHIVERS are blatantly graphic. We see the parasites for long intervals, yet the special effects in RABID are subdued, and we only catch glimpses of the thing living in the armpit of Marilyn Chambers. This was obviously intentional, but why?

They're just two entirely different movies. SHIVERS, I think, if it were to succeed, had to do it on some insane, insane energy that ran from almost the first second to the end. It had to work like an express train. You know an awful lot about what is going on in SHIVERS very quickly and there's not very much left, saved for the end. RABID, on the other hand, was always intended to be a more suspenseful film. There's not really what you would call true suspense in SHIVERS, except for a couple of scenes whereas RABID does involve the viewer in a kind of discovery along with the major character who doesn't understand what is happening to herself. You discover things along with her about what is going on and at the same time it is more of an action film in the sense that you have a city under siege and in the midst of this body two elements to give RABID a quite different tone, even though there are similarities between the films. It's just a matter of conception.

Both films seem to adhere closely to NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD.

Actually, I think there is a greater similarity between SHIVERS and THE INVASION OF THE BODY SNATCHERS and RABID leans more toward NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD. SHIVERS ends with the ghouls triumphant, if you want to put it that way. In fact, SHIVERS has an inversely happy ending, really, in a sense there is a feeling that there is a kind of exuberance uncharacteristic that certainly prevails at the end of RABID. But the similarities between my films and others is not intentional.

NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD also owes a lot to INVASION OF THE BODY SNATCHERS. There's a body of that kind of literature and genre back to the beginning of recorded time. So I think what it is, is that we're tapping the same roots, the same source, the idea that you are the only sane person left in a world full of zombies and ghouls is a common feeling among writers who tend to be more or less the same way. It's not a conscious attempt to copy or build on these other films. In fact, the biggest influence of NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD is that you are consciously trying to avoid comparisons.

She thought the best scenes in RABID don't work the way you had intended, now that you've seen the film with an audience?

Interestingly enough, if you had asked me that before I saw it, I probably could have given you a long list. Now I would say all do what they're supposed to do. It's not a matter of arrogance; it's very straight forward and a practical observation. I watched the audience and they were laughing at things they were supposed to laugh at; they were tense when they were supposed to be tense; they were disgusted when they were supposed to be disgusted. I think, though, we cut a bit too much out of the explanation of why the disease develops the way it does. It was in the original script, we shot it but it was taken out because that scene was better where it was poorly paced. It seemed that the film would not suffer if it was removed. I think it was a mistake. For the sake of ten seconds, and literally ten seconds, the audience would have a much better feeling for what is going on. I find that people generally just don't get it and it's too bad because it was a nice invention. It parallelled the premise of SHIVERS as being a kind of absurd, but vaguely possible, scientific achievement and to me that omission is the biggest flaw in the film. You once had a good horror film "partakes of art." What did you mean?

I made that statement in response to criticism, not only of SHIVERS, but the horror genre in general, criticism which seemed to suggest making horror films is not a legitimate form of art from the field of art. Making horror films means to many that you are not making art. What art is, is a totally subjective thing. You tell me the difference between anyone's favorite art film and someone else's favorite horror film? There isn't any difference. Emotions are involved, your sense of imagery is involved, a sense of yourself as a human being is involved. The mere fact that you are working in the genre does not exclude you from making an artful film.

Lee Rolfe is a staff writer and film reviewer for the Winnipeg Tribune and a contributor to Cinema Canada magazine.
Welcome to the twenty-third issue of CINEFANTASTIQUE (sin-eh-fawn-toss-teek), the magazine with a sense of wonder, devoted to an examination of horror, fantasy and science fiction in the cinema and related media.

This issue heralds the fact that THE WICKER MAN is finally making its way into U.S. distribution, after four undetermined years of sitting on the shelf. David Bartholomew traces the story of the picture's production and subsequent distribution problems in interviews with those involved, including its producer, Peter Snell, its director, Robin Hardy, its writer, Anthony Shaffer, its star, Christopher Lee, its music composer, Paul Giovanni, its new distributor, Stirling Smith of Abraxas Films, and David Blake, the man who originally sold the film in the United States. The tangled story that emerges, of how a film gets buried by the deal-making and executive musical chairs of the film business, is probably not an unusual one, though it may seem quite bizarre to most readers. There are literally hundreds of films that are made, and then never seen. In most cases, their loss is probably a blessing in disguise. What makes the story of THE WICKER MAN so compelling is that it is a great film, and for that reason could not stay buried for long.

THE WICKER MAN is a horror film, but one of unquestionable beauty and intelligence, which does not fit snugly into this or any other genre. Its surface is a thoroughly engaging mystery, topped-off with a chilling, surprise ending, and on this level alone should satisfy audiences. But writer Anthony Shaffer's story of the clash of paganism and Christianity on a remote Scottish isle resonates on many deeper levels. It is basically a warning of the danger of unreasoning faith. Shaffer, who denies being an atheist, portrays the evils resulting from the blind faith commanded by any theism, in the folly of Sgt. Howie and his life-denying Christian superiority, and in the folly of the pagan islanders and their empty gesture of burning him alive. In equating the motivations of Howie and the islanders, Shaffer calls into question fundamental beliefs held by us all, and triggers, even if unconsciously, the troubled unease of recognition, as we watch the pagans gleefully burn a man.

The interviews with the filmmakers explore THE WICKER MAN and all its meanings. I think that you will agree that this is a film you will want to see, that deserves to be seen. It is the finest horror film to come out of England since the classic DEAD OF NIGHT (1945), and a film whose reputation can only grow over the years. It gives me a great deal of pleasure to be among the first to champion the film in the United States, for I think the test of time will show that THE WICKER MAN is the CITIZEN KANE of horror films.

Top: The vampire-like organism protruding from Marilyn Chambers' armpit, in RABID. Middle: The cast and crew: Marilyn Chambers (seated, middle), director David Cronenberg (first at right, behind Chambers), and Byrd Holland, special effects and makeup man (second from left). Bottom: Joe Silver is attacked from behind by his infected wife.
book by Guy N. Smith which I’ve changed into a good movie script by Edward and Valerie Abraham called KING CRAB. I think that we will do that with live crabs intercut with puppet animation.

Where’s your partner, Frank Duggan?

He co-produced a West End play, Brief Lives with Roy Dotrice, and the Raquel Welch film, THE BELIEVED, that was shot in Greece. He came along at a time when I was down emotionally and financially. He’s in real estate and that was the problem. I need someone who would look after the business 100%, as that side doesn’t interest me at all. I want to be free to make pictures, study scripts, etc. With Frank Duggan, Sword and Sorcery did nothing. Grand Prize Productions, a consortium of three American companies, has just bought-out Duggan’s share of the company, and there’s no hard feelings. He’ll get a percentage of the two projects we optioned together.

What was your involvement on THE UNCHAINED MAN, if any?

I was asked to do an anthology based on my stories Beware of the Cat. We changed the idea to three and not five stories and the title became BRRR. The third story was to be a comedy. As you know, I always like to include one of my scripts in a deal. I gave Frank co-producing credit and editorial rights, so I went to Montreal to work on the cast. Vincent Price turned me down. So did Peter Cushing, and when I got hold of Christopher Lee he said to me, which I think you’ll find interesting, he would make good movies, but I’ve now moved out of the low budget picture range. I’m better off in an 8 million dollar flop than in one of your pictures that’s a big success.” It’s true too, you know. A star who moves from a big budget status back to low budget films soon finds they won’t star him in movies such as AIRPORT ’77. That’s the way they think in California and it makes my job much harder. I mean, who do you star? Robert Quarry? Not really! I wish a few more names would find their way into the public and also to backers of our films.

Anyway, I finally got a good cast together. Cushing relinquished when he found out it was one of my pictures—he hadn’t realized—and then came Donald Pleasence, Ray Milland, Samantha Eggar, Susan Penhaligon, Simon Williams and Joan Greenwood. The director, Denis Heroux, was the brother of the co-producer, and he was terrible. He covered the film in master shot, master shot, master shot. Nothing matched—we could only work by our diagrams and numbered. I fired the editor and hired Michael Guay, a great guy—I’m going to use him again. The whole thing was an appalling mess. I worked on the third story and the framework and found later that Heroux had retook possession of what he’d done! It was a miracle we got a final print.

Canada seems to be a place where a lot’s happening at the moment. Do you intend working there again?

I think most definitely now that they are building that new studio with absolutely everything under one roof. It’s located just outside Montreal, and when it’s finished, in October so I’m told, I intend to be the first picture in there. It will probably be called DOMINIQUE, based on a story called “What Beckoning Ghost,” and it’s the nearest thing I’ve found in feeling to DIABOLIQUE, and I’ve had a time letting me tell you. The audience will be guessing all the time. It’s very visual and the action is enclosed in one house. When I sent the script to people I purposely left out the last four pages—and not one person guessed the end. I know it will be a great movie, and there are other possibilities for Canada too, but nothing concrete.

BLOOD CITY was filmed in Canada. What was your involvement there?

It was one of two scripts I left at Amicus, due to my departure. Rosenberg finally paid me the money I was due on, but it took a threat from ACTT (the British film union) to stop the picture to get him to do it. I’m not getting a credit on the film. They finally sent me the rewritten screenplay, and I thought, “Poor Peter Sadsly. It’s impossible to make a good script from a script.” Later I learned it was he who had controlled the rewrite! The other is THE CAT PEOPLE, and that will definitely end up as a lawsuit. It was my idea and I’m supposed to get co-producer credit, but I’m expecting that to be ignored. I finally get my due only in Canada. Why remake the Lewton film? My script expanded on a 65 minute film for a 90 minute feature. Tell us about the final pictures you were involved with at Amicus.

I literally had nothing to do with the last three Amicus films, what with the advent of John Dark. He was brought in mainly to help me out and as you know, we didn’t get on at all.

What directors would you work with again out of the Amicus roster?

I’d use Roy Ward Baker, but such is the state of this industry that he isn’t working at the moment. Freddie Francis is a brilliant cameraman but he insists on re-writing scripts and he’s lousy on doing stories. I remember when he brought Ringo Starr and Nilsson to see TALES FROM THE CRYPT, because he’d been asked to direct what eventually became SON OF DRACULA. When Francis told me he’d asked for a script re-write, I knew the film would never get released properly, and I was right. I saw LEGEND OF THE WEREWOLF and thought it was terrible. Now he’s formed his own production company. Good luck to him, but for me he’ll always be great on images and have no script sense. John Moxey I’d work with again. After HORROR HOTEL he did a war movie that was apparent but very expensive and troublesome experience, so much so that people asked me how I could have worked with him. Now of course he’s a very successful TV movie director. Kevin Connor is too ambitious. His taste is not quite good and it was all about AT THE EARTH’S CORE. You can make a total studio film. We did that with our DAEK films. He didn’t at all. Let’s see if THE PEOPLE THAT TIME FORGOT is any better after four and a half weeks of location shooting. My own film I think we can’t make a monster film with men in rubber suits. They changed my script entirely on that film. The last refuge of a tired imagination is an explosion at the climax and they’ve used it twice so far.

Milton Subotsky

It has been two years since Milton Subotsky left Amicus to form his own company, Sword and Sorcery Productions, with associate Frank Duggan. Their first project, Lin Carter’s THONGOR IN THE VALLEY OF DEMONS, is to begin production in 1978, to be directed by Harley Kokliss, with dimensional animation special effects by Barry Leith (see 6:2:34).

Why has it taken you so long to get around to using dimensional animation?

More and more I’ve wanted to make fantasy films for children. I didn’t want to do it years ago—I do now. I took my kids to see THE GOLDEN VOYAGE OF SINBAD and they were bored stiff. You had to bear with it until the special effects came up. That won’t happen in THONGOR. It’s non-stop action all the way. It will be expensive but worth it. Shooting begins in 1978 at a budget of $3,000,000.

Do you have a star in mind for the role?

I approached Arnold Schwarzenegger, but it seems Ed Pressman got there first. He’s just bought the CONAN character and obviously wants to make some sort of deal with him. He’d probably be too expensive for us anyway. I’m sure I’ll find another muscleman. I want someone who will be THONGOR for the next ten years. The first film will demand sequels and he’ll become an idol of children everywhere. At this point in time, we are only planning THONGOR IN THE VALLEY OF DEMONS, but I know the character will take off and be enormously popular.

What are your other projects?

I’ve got THE MONSTER CLUB by R. Chtswyn-Hayes. Michel Parry is working on it at the moment. It’s going to be an anthology picture, two stories from the book and an additional one, again by Chtwyn-Hayes, called “My Mother Married A Vampire,” a really fun story. I’ve got Night of the Crabs, a rotten

by Mike Childs and Alan Jones
A BOY AND HIS DOG

A BOY AND HIS DOG, which won a Nebula for its writer Harlan Ellison, and a Hugo for its cinematic adapter L. Q. Jones, may soon find its way onto network television, *as a series!* "We've been fiddling around with it for a year," reports Jones. "At NBC, one of the papa-bears liked the picture, and I say that because had it come from a lower level, it probably would have been snuffed out. But his 11-year-old son saw it and adored it, and told his dad it was a super picture and they should have it. So he called for it to take a look. The bottom line really was that TV's not ready for it yet—they were afraid of the violence. But they thought there was a possible series there."

NBC took an option on the project and Ellison went to work on the script for a 90-minute pilot. (Jones had written the film script.) At 113 pages, the first script was submitted in June. "The network looked at it and said, 'It's brilliant! I didn't quite agree with them, for a number of reasons that are known to Harlan and myself. My Blood and Vic are completely different from Harlan's Blood and Vic. That doesn't make him right and me wrong, or vice versa. It's just that I would not have made a picture about Harlan's Vic and Blood."

"Anyway, we sat down with the people at NBC, and they said, 'The problem here is there's too much to put into 90 minutes, so a) we would like it expanded to 120 minutes, and b) we would like a subplot.' So Harlan rewrote the script to 131 pages, and they came back and said: 'We don't like it at all. It won't hold up for two hours. Reduce it to 82 pages.' Now, at first blush, that doesn't sound too bad, but when something is brilliant at 113 pages, and no good whatsoever at 131 pages, why not just reduce it back to the 113 pages of brilliance? But it's their money, and you either do business with them or you don't; and if I want to work with them, it behooves me to adapt to their framework, not the other way around."

Ellison, who was about to leave the country anyway, was disinclined to tackle another rewrite, so Jones did it—"in 8½ days to meet NBC's deadline. "Harlan won't think so, but my script's about the same as his. It develops the same way to the same climax points, and it follows the same steps basically. I just changed the interior of each step. I didn't have time to do anything more extensive.' That version is now awaiting a decision by NBC.

Although the project was initially envisioned as a mid-season fill-in, it is now unlikely that it can be readied before next fall. If NBC goes with it, Jones plans to produce and direct the pilot independent of studio involvement, as he did the film. Then, if A BOY AND HIS DOG goes into a series, he plans to act as executive producer, as well as occasional writer and director.

Not much thought has been given toward casting the human roles, but Tiger, continued page 31
The Harryhausen feature [Vol 6 No 2] was most welcome, but it should be pointed out that the matte flaws referred to in the captions are only visible in the stills, not in the film itself. [The stills to which you refer are frame blowups, taken from the film itself.] Also, I must disagree with Mark Wolf about the travelling mattes of the miniature Zenobia being "quite good". I found their erratic outlines distracting. I was also annoyed by the ruffling hair of the baboon, a step backward beyond MIGHTY JOE YOUNG to the original KING KONG.

My own particular complaint about the script of SINBAD AND THE EYE OF THE TIGER is that too many intriguing ideas—Zenobia's bird foot, Melanthius' primitive laser—are introduced and then abandoned without any development. I also had anticipated a boxing match between Minoton and Trog; now that would have been a hommage to Willis O'Brien.

But I also believe that your writers failed to appreciate that the creatures in the film are more carefully utilized than usual. Imagine the temptation to make the troglodyte, the wasp and Minoton all 50 feet high. It also took restraint to have less than seven ghouls and to use them only as a first reel teaser. This trend toward refinement in the conception of the creatures (which began with the homunculus and figurehead of GOLDEN VOYAGE OF SINBAD) seems bound to continue unappreciated among critics who seem to dislike adventure-fantasy films in the first place.

DAVID J. BALSON
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I'm somewhat annoyed to see Harryhausen get the cover treatment again [Vol 6 No 2]. Judging from his latest film, SINBAD AND THE EYE OF THE TIGER, he certainly doesn't merit current heavy exposure from your magazine. Considering the relatively large budget and time expended I was expecting something a bit more imaginative and more carefully crafted, to say nothing of the acting, directing and writing which are abysmal.

I recognize that R.H. is the resident master par excellence of model animation but there is a limit to what even you should promote. This will only encourage him to keep turning out mediocre work. He could do stupendous work on a budget, fairly decent fantasy films if he was willing to come down a bit and share his knowledge with a team of technicians, but he thinks he must work essentially alone or he'll lose artistic integrity. Instead he keeps wasting himself on badly written, infantile comic strips which do nothing but make money. Then there's something not quite straight in that kind of logic. I hope he realizes that soon, before he completely degrades himself in even worse tripes. With the acceptance of STAR WARS the time is right for him to take on a new, bigger challenge.

GARY KIMBER
139 Highview Ave, Scarborough, Canada

CFQ LETTERS
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A BOY AND HIS DOG
continued from page 29
who won the Patsy Award for best animal actor in the feature, is at the top of Jones' list for Blood. "But Tiger is nearly twelve years old now. We're going to try to use him, but we'll probably have to back him up with three or four dogs to do the fights and jumping and stuff that we don't want him to take a chance with — just save him for the real acting."

Don Shay

ANIMATED FANTASY FILMS

PETE'S DRAGON (top), from Walt Disney Productions, will be released by Buena Vista at Christmastime. The musical fantasy combining live action with animation follows the adventures of Pete (Sean Marshall), and his sometimes visible dragon Elliott. The film is directed by one-time Hammer veteran Don Chaffey.

SPACE CRUISER YAMATO (middle) is currently the top-grossing film in Japan, released by Academy Co. Ltd. Patterned after her battleship namesake by producer Yoshinobu Nishizaki and director Toshio Masuda, the space cruiser must return in 363 days from a journey of 296,000 light years, on a mission of grave importance. U.S. rights are owned by Modern Programs Inc., but no distribution plans have yet been announced.

THE HOBBIT (bottom) will be telecast this Fall on NBC, possibly for the Thanksgiving holiday. Produced by Rankin/Bass Productions in Japan, the 90 minute special will be followed by an animated version of Tolkien's third volume of The Lord of the Rings trilogy, The Return of the King. The rights to the first two volumes of the trilogy are owned by United Artists, and are currently in production as a theatrical feature by animator Ralph Bakshi (5:4:27).

STAR TREK'S TV REVIVAL

R. W. Goodwin and Harold Livingston are producing the new TV series for executive producer Gene Roddenberry, and Paramount officials report the new STAR TREK may be the most expensive television series ever aired. Sets have been under construction since late August, and plans are to begin shooting a two-hour opener in November, to be followed by one-hour weekly segments.

William Shatner will return in the starring role of Capt. James T. Kirk. Also returning will be DeForest Kelley as Dr. Leonard "Bones" McCoy, James Doohan as Chief Engineer Scott, and Nichelle Nichols as Lt. Uhura. The only major hold-out is Leonard Nimoy, who for years has tried to escape association with his pointed-ear alter ego, Spock. Nimoy has been well-received on the stage in recent years, and over the Labor Day weekend told an assemblage of STAR TREK conventioners in New York that he would not return to the show. Only time will tell if his decision is firm, or whether he is holding out for stiffer terms. The producers will find it hard to replace him.

The new STAR TREK is scheduled to be aired beginning in April. It is likely that to meet this deadline stock visual effects from the old series will be used.

Don Shay
continued from page 18

Lord Summerisle (Christopher Lee) explains to a still uncomprehending Howie, his role as the "perfect sacrifice" to insure the rebirth of their failing crops.

The sun was just about to go, and we said, "We've lost this one, we'll do it tomorrow." And Lee came over and said, "Why Let's do more. Let's do it now. And I said, 'But you haven't even seen the poem yet.' So he says, 'Well you go set up the shot and let me take a look at it.' You know, he has this photographic memory, which is just extraordinary. And he came back a few minutes later, and I told him off, literally, spoke the poem, and then just walked out of the garden to get ready for dinner.

Despite the union requirement, no extras were taken on location, although many of the young girls in the schoolroom and circle dance sequences were pupils Hops brought down from his ballet school. Wherever needed, people were recruited from the villages for the crowd scenes, which is exactly the authenticity Hardy strove for throughout the film. These included the procession marchers as well as the townsfolk at the May Pole—all of whom were locals.

And they loved the filming for the most part, except that the huge crowd gathered for the wicker man scenes became upset because they thought the crew were actually going to burn the animals. Hardy composed a little speech explaining that there was no question of doing that, that they would be taken down in time the same way as they were put up, with a cherry picker. "They regarded the film as a fantasy, but occasionally they would get very involved, because many of these things were part of their folklore, especially the songs."

The film's ending was lengthened considerably from the screenplay. As Giovannini relates it, "Woodward had some ideas of his own, and Hardy was ready to go along with him. He was burning, and they let him do it. And also Tony put in all that language from the Bible that Woodward yells as a warning to Summerisle and the people. It's the hardest thing in the world to deal with something invented by someone else in the film like this. He should have been burned as quickly as possible, maybe gagged on his way to the top!"

Snell, who all during the filming came under no pressure from his Board of Directors in London, believed the production had incredibly good luck, usually gaining the sun when they needed it the most. The crew worked admirably, considering they were probably asked to do a bit more than normal by the fact that it was Hardy's first feature. By the same token, Hardy cites Snell as an "ideal" producer or a producer who everyone completely, was quite supportive and strictly non-interfering on the creative side of the filming.

Scotland has no labs, so the dailies were flown to Glasgow and down to London for processing then back for viewing. Doing about three a day. An attempt was made to examine this and recite the Whitman poem, which was about the lack of shame in animals, how they avoid this fearful mishap of psychological problems and possessiveness that humans do, because in animals, sex is done and that's it, that's how life is for them. We were about to shoot it, and

VI: LORD SUMMERISLE

It's the best part I've ever had. Unquestionably.

—Christopher Lee

"Christopher is a much more talented actor than he's ever allowed to be."

—Anthony Shaffer

Almost from the beginning, before the screenplay was fully written, there was no doubt in anyone's mind that Christopher Lee should play Lord Summerisle.

"A benevolent tyrant, I think, would describe Lord Summerisle, if only in surface terms. He's the leader of a community, a total autocrat, but a good one, until he is crossed. Then he becomes very dangerous as do his people. He has a tremendous hold on these people. But the only way he will maintain that hold is if the crops burgeon every year. If they do not, the townspeople will listen to Howie, 'I have learned to love Nature and to appease it, if necessary.' It's a line I rather throw away on purpose. If something goes wrong they look for sacrifices. This is primitive earth worship; it's been going on for thousands of years in countries all over the world. Summerisle is a simple pagan— if you can call that simple. He is both king and priest in one. But very dangerous. He's a man, too, of impeccable charm and manners and good taste, an authority, articulate, in many ways a very modern person. And you can find a bit of that in everyone.

"The character appealed to me because it was so well written. And I know that Tony had me in mind when he wrote it. He knows me and my career. You can say that Summerisle is an amalgam of many roles I have played on screen. Figures of power, of mystery, of authority, of presence. There is quite a lot of my natural delivery in the way Summerisle's dialogue was written. My delivery of the lines in the film is exactly how I speak. In fact, the three of us—Tony, Robin, and I—were very much in similar little ways. So there's probably a bit of all three of us in there. I have been called upon to play acceptably straight characters—agreeable, courteous, amusing—add to that the suggestion that the character is not quite what he seems, and I have played them many times. Also in the changes of mood. The fact that Summerisle is dangerous when crossed perfectly applies to me: Christopher Lee does not forget a wrong done to him, so I'm dangerous when crossed, too. That's not a very Christian attitude, perhaps, but it's a very human one.

"Summerisle believes in the forces of nature, which I do too, to a certain extent. So Summerisle was modeled externally on me in many ways, but all the rest of it they gave to the professional actor as a fictitious character to play. It's a very important role."

"While being genuine, the character had to carry the sense that something was not quite right in that village, and you can't quite put your finger on it. Something is going to happen, but it was so cleverly written, that everyone was charming and . . . normal, even Summerisle, although he's really quite bizarre. It's the abnormal that
lurks behind the normal which makes a film like this work so successfully. It's what you don't see rather than what you do, what is suggested rather than shown in detail.

"The power of the unseen...there are communities today that are not what they seem. Look at Freemasonry, although I'm neither condemning it nor comparing it to a pagan religion, but it's a secret society, in a benevolent sense, with a highly organized set of beliefs and practices, and it has considerable power, at least to its members. THE WICKER MAN is not an attack on contemporary religion but a comment on it, its strengths as well as its weaknesses, its fallability, that it can be punished and won't always get on top. Even the Christian religion is based on the execution and sacrifice of one man. In that respect, there's no difference at all. Christ was sacrificed to appease the organized Establishment and was condemned as a criminal, which is not the case with Howe. If anything, it was the Establishment that Shaffer attacked in his script. Summerisle embodies the pagan beliefs—he is responsible, the third generation of the founding of it, for being on the island. Part of the mysterious effect of the film is based up with this fact and in the various scenes and descriptions of pagan ritual that actually take place in the film."

Hardy conceived the role as a romantic figure and felt that Lee's fans would expect all sorts of things to happen and be surprised when they didn't. They attempted to kind of ambivalence as to the actual content of villainy in Summerisle. Lee's familiar screen persona bursts through more than once during the course of the film. How villainous was he supposed to be? Hardy begs the question. "A similar question might be asked, was Hitler really anti-Semitic or did he simply use it?" But the analogy seems wildly out of place. The character, whether he's playing a game with the people (and if so, why?) or is genuine, as the screenplay implies, is simply what the viewer will make of it. And if so, will it depend, like a Kuleshov experiment, on the degree of each viewer's familiarity with Lee's screen career? While it seems a remarkably practical move on the part of this pagan soul ("...but not an unlightened one, I hope," as he tells Howe), no one interviewed professed to know just why Christopher Lee chose to wear his favorite sneakers for the May Day procession...

VII: THE MUSIC

"It's haunting, and an unorthodox way to do it, but the music is probably alien to anything you have ever heard on film before."

—Peter Snell

The sense of the songs, and how they should be used in the film, came in part from Hardy's original research, basically from the work of a man named Sharpe, who was the British hardy, again "very much like the character described as Summerisle's grandfather—one of those eager-beaver Victorians." During the mid-19th century, he attempted to research and codify all of the songs in England. His work was original because the songs were part of a vast oral tradition going back hundreds and thousands of years and were never written down. Many of the songs used in the film were more indigenous to England than to Scotland, although their transposition does not really betray their nearly common heritage.

While writing the screenplay, Shaffer indicated in which scenes songs were to be used and in some cases jotted down verses from various anthologies of lyrics appropriate to the Spring pagan festivals to serve as samples of what was needed. No one, however, quite realized how important the music was to be. Without a film or how large a part it would play in it.

The composer who was chosen was Paul Giovanni, whom Tony Shaffer met through his brother Peter. Tony had seen a production of "12th Night" in Washington, D.C., that Giovanni had worked on and performed in, which used an experimental folk-rock score. Giovanni was sounded out then, shown the script, which he liked, and promised that if the film ever came to production, he'd be the man to write the music.

Giovanni is multi-talented; he's a playwright, actor, director, singer and musician. He was born in Atlantic City, which in some cases could be a detriment, but he began to work acting and directing in regional and summer stock theatre and came to New York with the cast of "The Fantastick" in 1962. He left for an offer from Joe Chaikin and his Open Theatre and performed in that group's most prominent political theatre piece "Viet Rock." When the collective began to fall apart, Giovanni began singing and composing and formed a folk-rock group called Sideshow, which toured and recorded for Atlantic. It lasted four years. ("Just as we began to get interesting, the group fell apart. Too many drugs and hierarchies, plus the discipline of rehearsing every night and doing concerts."

It was my final lesson in democracy: it doesn't work.)

Giovanni then went back to the theatre, alternating acting and directing, of which he prefers the latter.

"It was one of those things where British Lions Film felt with the screenplay for a time, couldn't make up its minds, then—bang—they're ready to go in two weeks—typical movie scene. Suddenly, I had about six weeks to research, prepare, compose and record the soundtrack, which all had to be done before the first day's shooting."

Throughout his career, Giovanni has always loved folk music and was fully aware that the roots of American folk music, as sung by no-frills people like Pete Seeger, lay in English and Scottish music, with basically the same songs re-appearing in different centuries and countries with a different set of images to reflect the differing cultures and locales.

Because most of the music is in the oral tradition, scholars have found songs in isolated Apalachian Mountain regions, in the eastern U.S., that are rare origins than what was ever written down in England a few centuries before. By the same token, linguistic experts have found in the same areas surviving speech patterns that date to Elizabethan England.

Hardy cites an example of how deep the heritage runs in the song "Oranges and Lemons (Say The Bells of St. Clemsons)"

Top: Reading the wicker man for burning, various animals, secondary sacrifices, placed inside using a cherry picker, and were saved from the actual flames by the same device. Bottom Left: Sergeant Howie (Edward Woodward), newly arrived in Summerisle, in a scene not in either version. Bottom Right: Few figures to the right is director Robin Hardy (hand to mouth). Note floral dressing on steps and prop, blossoming cherry tree far left.

and what is now the nursery rhyme "Ring-a-ring a Posey," both of which date from the plague times in London, "where all the church bells rang against the bubonic plague. Of course. The first symptom of it is that you get a strong smell of rosses—I don't know why. And you also get a horrible red or scar scar, or e.g. rings."

Now the tunes of those come from old pagan songs several centuries before those times.

"In my research," says Giovanni, "I discovered that as far back as the 10th century, people in England were importing things from all over the world. And not just from the Holy Roman Empire. There's very little written about that. They had drums and instruments from Africa, some of which we used in the film. They were probably brought by a few progressive people who weren't afraid to sail in every direction. You think that trade began with the Renaissance, but when you go back to Celtic times you find engravings, metalwork, jewelry—"it's all in their own style but the tools used had to have come from other countries. Now, take a song like 'Silver Dagger,' which Joan Baez recorded in Appalachia, very American, but you'll find the same thing in England in 1650, with a different set of images. So whoever settled in those mountains took the song, which they remembered, but changed it over the years until it conveyed a completely American idea. The roots of those songs in England come from Celtic lyrics which you can trace through the Oxford Anthology of English Poetry back to the 11th or 12th centuries and some all the way back to the 7th."

"England has a much stronger folk popularity than we do. They have superb modern groups like Fairport Convention and Pentangle that sing straight folk songs. On an average weekend, folk groups like the Corry Brothers, left: Filming popular, all over England and more so in Scotland—and Scotland still does not have a real rock sound—gathering to sing straight folk music, songs about the Battle of Culloden, things like that."

Onired in July, 1972, Giovanni took a long look at the final screenplay and decided to throw out most of Shaffer's "sample" lyrics, because he felt they were impossible to "set" effectively. He knew that if Shaffer's ideas were not treated seriously, or if the music was "wrong," the whole film would become ludicrous. He also realized what all they feared collectively, that if they put in too much singing and dance-
"To give the film a bizarre ending, that they should be singing a happy song while Howie is dying, we worked the May Day procession tune in brass and fit it in harmonically with the 'summer ich iccum in' lyric so that the instruments and voices blend on the two different pieces."

—Paul Giovanni

ing, despite carrying through the fact that a pagan society was full of music, the film would turn into a musical. "I felt right from the beginning that what I was doing was not stylistically in keeping with the screenplay. But a scene seemed to like it so much that I stuck to it and decided to develop the songs more fully than the four or five lines accorded to each in the screenplay. You can't develop a song or an atmosphere in that short a time."

Apart from the time element, Giovanni had another problem: he hadn't the slightest idea how to go about scoring a film. "I couldn't get anyone to tell me how. I called around and talked to a couple of people and finally arranged a session with Marc Wilkinson, who I sort of knew. He worked at the BBC and had scored a number of films, a few of them horror, you may remember Pier Haggard's BLOOD ON SATAN'S CLAW. And he told me to work it all out the way I wanted in a studio, just to make sure it would fit in with the shooting script, because everything would be pre-recorded and nothing should be changed after that. Then during shooting we would play the tracks on a Wollensack, and the actors would learn to lip-sync what was there."

In the songs and lyrics, whenever possible and if not too obscure, Giovanni used original phrasings and wrote the music as pieces that, so it would not be unnatural, a small village band could have orchestrated via tradition for themselves and accordingly, be able to play. There was an attempt not to commit traditional mood music, that the music did not create artificial tension apart from the images or telegraph upcoming action, as most film scores do."

"With a conducting student from the Royal Academy, I auditioned about five or six musicians. I picked only people who were very musical, who could sing as well as play instruments. I didn't want anyone to sound 'trained,' although most of them were music students from the London Conservatory. We also picked the instrumentation to be as authentic as possible. There are a lot of process work involved in them, like a Celtic harp which I found in a museum which lent it to us. But basically it was a sound that a town band could come up with."

"We initially recorded, of course, at Shepperton, but the studio seemed to be dying, and they weren't too interested. I don't think the studio people liked us too much—we were all young and punky-looking, and I was an American—and they thought we didn't know what we were doing. They were used to Richard Rodney Bennett and all those kind of people."

"I arranged for the brass section of the London Symphony to come in and record the May Day procession and the burning music—all brass pieces. When they showed up, the studio people didn't know what to think... But the sound was so bad—technically—that we eventually had to re-record some of it at DeLane Lea. Actually, the bad recording seemed to be our favorite, because that music sounded too good for the band that was supposed to be playing it onscreen. I'm not a classical musician, but the conducting student helped me bone up on scoring for brass—what instruments could hit what range. We especially wanted to get piercing kind of sounds and spent a lot of time on it."

"We were, by agreement, committed to a non-electronic score, everything acoustic. But we wound up with one piece of straight rock, under the chase through the woods. I think it was a mistake; it sounds bad and is not in keeping with the rest of it. I'd like to take it out. There's a little bit of an electric guitar in the sequence where the villagers all play tricks on Howie, and the hide-and-seek with the Hobby Horse, but we play a lot of Scottish jigs against it, and it works a lot better."

"The opening musical sounds, before the first song "Cornrigs and Barleyrigs," is a piece of Gaelic mouth music, very similar to scat singing. "Cornrigs," sung by St. John van Warning, here sounds the closest to the conventional popular song. "The entire lyric is by Robert Burns, one of his 'Songs,' and the sound was deliberate in that I was trying to make a song to show that the community was contemporary, in the 1970's, apart from their religious practices. I've set a lot of Shakespeare to music, and I always try to set it just the way it was written. A lot of the old poets are wonderful in that respect; their work has hooks in them and repeats, almost a real rock layout."

"The Landlord's Daughter" is a sort of manufactured song in the film. It introduces most explicitly the kind of sexual imagery that is at the root of all the music in the film and corresponds to the fertility rites and beliefs of the island's religion. It is a pub song that reveals all the attributes and illusions of the girl who served as the sound was, who in Roman times was called the 'Public Harlot.' I wrote that based on an 18th century song which was a bit weirder. Our song is a little bit more incise in its specific kind of filth..."

"Here is where the fact that Giovanni had chosen performing musicians/singers paid off, for they were all carried on location to perform in the actual filming, so that if the camera passed over them, it would look as if they were really playing and singing. In this case they were, and the number as heard on the soundtrack was recorded live in the pub."

"Gently Johnny" is the best song in the film and along with the female vocal and music used under Ekland's nude dance, best represents the fusion with the songs and themes—a complete fusion—that in these two cases, works to a strange, masterfully hypnotic effect. "Gently Johnny" uses three old lyrics combined into one and slightly edited. There are about seven old ballads that use the idea of a 'gigolo' as it was called then. The idea for the other song was completely original with me—there is no indication of what it was to be in the script except a couple lines of absolute filth. The main thing is in the rhythm, and we used all of the old twangy instruments in there. That is not Brit singing but a little English

**Top:** Lord Summerisle (Christopher Lee), dances at the end of the May Day procession, dressed as the Woman/King; he is followed by the Hobby Horse, worn by Oak (Ian Campbell), and by Punch, the Fool, actually Sergeant Howie (Edward Woodward), taking the place of innkeeper Alder MacGregor. **Bottom:** As Howie and the villagers sing inside the wide-room, the villagers, led by the librarian (Ingrid Pitt), schoolmistress Rose (Diane Cilento) and Lord Summerisle, sing a joyous song to celebrate the beginning of the summer and the rebirth of their orchards.

girl I found in London who deliberately tried to intone it and accent it to sound like Brit."

The procession march is wholly original. "What I did was to take a very old song—in this case it was 'Willy of Wansbury,' 14th century—take the melody and form it into a piece for a brass band. I wanted a waltz, in three, so that it could be slower and stranger and that the whole procession could sound like that; the bagpipe music, also used over the anton..."
VIII: AFTERMATH

"An unfinished film is in a transitional state, and during it, everybody who worked on it wants to control it. And you see the most idiotic power plays, on a small scale, that you've ever seen. And nobody seemed to stand up and [take charge]."

—Paul Giovanni

The shooting was completed, and the actors and crew dismissed, and the project moved back to Shepperton for editing. Present, for a time at least, were Hardy, Snell, Peter Shaffer, sitting in for his brother who left to attend to another commitment, editor Eric Boyd Perkins, and Giovanni, who was asked to stay on because of the complicated nature of the music. However, the office politics at British Lion had begun to get hot. According to Giovanni, "When the film was finished, I was supposed to be done, with the $700,000 that had been shot. It turned out to be 8 or 9 months' work. Then they asked me to stay on for the editing and mixing of the sound, which was an additional three months. An unfinished film is in a transitional state, and during it, everybody who worked on it wants to control it. The most idiotic power plays, on a small scale, that you've ever seen. And nobody seemed to stand up and say, 'No, it's going to be like this.' I think the editor really undermined it a lot, even at this stage. He seemed to keep losing things, saying they hadn't been shot, but we knew that they damn well had. There were things in there that Perkins hated—I mean, he used to get red in the face and say, 'That's disgusting!' This, in 1973! He was a real David Lean-type, moaning over CR. ZIVAGO. That's the kind of movie he wanted to make. THE WICKER MAN was an original and he never understood what it was about or how it should work, as an accumulation of details. He was a real jerk-off, a very dull man.

Somehow, a version of the film was completed in a record-breaking time of 102 minutes. Both Hardy and Snell were satisfied, although Christopher Lee was not and complained that even at this length, much of what had been shot was not there. "I thought that so much magnificent dialogue and meaningful story elements had been removed. I think probably 20 to 25 minutes had gone even at that point. We had shot the entire screenplay, word for word, scene for scene, and that should have been the film, apart from the inevitable minor editing, the tightening, that happens to all pictures, and the technicals, may not be realistic about it, as an artist performing in it, but that was not anywhere near the film that should have been shown. It actually changed the potential of it, the intelligibility of it."

But much worse would happen, for in the Spring of 1973, in a move that caught everyone by surprise, British Lion was once again sold, and Hardy, Snell, everyone connected with the film's production, were locked out of the studio. And the film, Top: The landlord, Alder MacGregor (Lindsey Kemp), and the landlord's daughter, Willow (Britt Ekland). Bottom Left: As Howie frenetically searches the village for the missing girl, he barges in on the librarian (Ingrid Pitt), who seems unconcerned, as she reads herself for the May Day celebrations. Bottom Right: To the astonishment of Donald Eccles, photographer of each year's harvest festival, and the town's chemist, in his shop not your regular drugstore.

with Deely operating out of Los Angeles of the new EMI Films. In effect, from that date, British Lion has ceased to exist.

In the Spring of 1973, for while both Snell and Deely were still together at British Lion; Snell, whose contract ran until June or July, on his way out, but with properties to protect, and Deely/Spikins on their way in. The dating of the events that followed is fuzzy. Everyone interviewed came up with slightly different versions, and there are conflicting reports on which source to check. Unfortunately, the man who could have helped, Michael Deely, who comes out of this tale as a villain, skirted our attempts to talk with him, whether because he was too busy—he is overseeing the billboards in the U.S. for HUNTER (THE DRIVER, CONVOY, THE DEER HUNTER)—or unwilling to go on record about THE WICKER MAN, is unknown.

What is known is that Deely thoroughly hated the film, probably did not understand it, thought it had no market value whatsoever, and refused to release it, even in England.

While Snell lingered on at the studio, he attempted to promote THE WICKER MAN as much as possible, to try and get Deely interested in it. He submitted the film to the British selection board for the Cannes Film Festival, but when it was not chosen to represent Britain in official competition, he took it into the market section and came up with a classic stunt. On a flat bed truck, they logged down the one remaining wicker man from the Lions and according to Hardy, "set it up right in front of the Carlton Hotel. And everyone saw it, you could not help but see it, from anywhere in Cannes, since it was almost as tall as the hotel. It was a terrific promotion." From its screenings at Cannes, the film was sold to a number of foreign territories. However, at this point, it was not the same film that Hardy and Snell had completed.

From Deely's point of view, it was a matter of commercial realities. In his view, the question was, says Snell, "Was this a picture that was going to make a profit? Did it have a future of its appeal to the American market, and that answer was no." What he did was to send a copy of the film in its original 102-minute form to Roger Corman in Hollywood for his opinion as to what should or could be done to make it play for American audiences, which was a shrewd move, since if Corman liked it, and worked on it, he would likely pick up American/Canadian rights.

Following Corman's subsequent report and the fine of cuts, Deely cut and re-edited the film to a length of about 87 minutes. Eliminated were all of the Scottish mainland scenes establishing Howie as a "card-carrying" Christian. Most harmful of all, "Gently Johnny" was dropped.
"British Lion approached it by saying, 'Oh, goodbye, it's about human sacrifice.' And they suddenly shoved it out on the circuits. If you live, like they do, on a steady diet of things like THERE'S A GIRL IN MY SOUP or ON THE BUSES or CARRY ON FARTING or whatever those things are called, inevitably, you cannot see further than that after a time."

— Anthony Shaffer

along with Lee's poetic monologue over the snail footage, and by cutting some minor scenes and shortening others, Howie's two-night stay on the island was converted into one.

As Hardy would later put it, "There was no consultation with any of us. This was the way the film was going to be, and tough titty!—that was it."

During production and initial editing, the filmmakers had never specifically tailored the film for the wider public or attempted any commercial appeal. The thought probably did not even occur to them, especially since the screenplay had been approved as written by British Lion. Both Hardy and Shaffer always believed that there would be no problem with British audiences taking to this film. All films had problems, but never did they feel it would be so fascinating. Particularly the young, who are always interested in the unknown, the strange, the bizarre. The film could take place anywhere; it happens to take place in Scotland. But it's an international story.

The fact that it can be talked about, argued about, thought about, well, that's good! A bit of controversy. There's nothing worse, or more boring, than 100% agreement on anything.

The entire area of adaptability to American audiences and the end-all of film production is problematical. The film was also completed well before THE EXORCIST smash, and the rash of Anti-Catholic movies which have ridden in on its coattails, all mostly successfully, from which angle THE WICKER MAN could have been exploited (if crassly). Indeed, to his benefit, Deely took on the production of THE MAN WHO FELL TO EARTH, which film must appear even more strange to American eyes (despite its being filmed here), and indeed, the picture had many problems being sold to a U.S. distributor, but you've got behind it was DON'T LOOK NOW (also a Nick Roeg film), a British/Italian joint effort produced by Peter Katz, which Snell had bought for British release through the domestic distribution system he had set up at British Lion. It became, on its British run, begun late in October, 1973, the company's biggest hit, perhaps its only financial success. Later, Deely would claim that he had arranged the film's purchase for British Lion, taking all the credit from Snell.

Then, unexpectedly, late in December, 1973, THE WICKER MAN appeared on the lower half of a double bill with DON'T LOOK NOW, on the latter's sub-runs. There was no announcement, no publicity, no screenings for the critics.

The reaction was immediate on the part of the filmmakers, all of whom suddenly saw the shortened version of the film for the first time.

Christopher Lee: "Well, the film was just butchered, it was just outrageous. It was in a form that some of the scenes, some of the scenes were lost; scenes that were in sequence in the story were moved around so that it became difficult to understand, particularly for audiences coming into it cold, who were still enthralled. If you consider the script A to Z, in all its various forms, the final Safe-O copy popped in before D-E-F, and so on. I'm sure the public was confused by it, because the story of a film like this, that works on so many levels, must be simple so that you can follow what's going on.

Then I didn't realize I had never done before in my entire life and will never presume to do again: I rang up all the film critics whom I knew and asked them if they would go and see this film, as a favor to me. I told them that if necessary I will pay for their seats, but please go. Even if they didn't like it, they could say so, but I wanted to hear the public reaction, and that was the published opinion of 85-90% of them was that it was the most original and remarkable British film to have been made in years. And it was an immediate success."

Paul Giovanni: "It was treated like a jerk-off. Whatever you think of the long version, the short one is laughable, very nearly silly. It was treated like a vaudeville show in the changing around of sequences. It is especially ludicrous, grotesque, even, to have Eklund's dance come in so soon—it makes no sense. Maybe because I worked on the original mix, the sound levels were now way off."

Tony Shaffer especially was shocked. He, too, called a "few mates" to go and see it. "There's a difference between trying to cut for plot and trying to make a journey worthwhile. We're not allowed at any time to look out of the window and see what the society is all about. If you design a film, as we did, so that the benefits and joys of a pagan society are explained, while its particular rites may not be too good a time, you need to make people believe in it; you can't just bound through it as if it were a 60-minute television play. You simply don't get the flavor of it; you no longer use your imagination. When you take all these things, you don't merely make a slimmer picture but a less interesting one. British Lion approached it by saying, 'Oh, goodie, it's about human sacrifice.' And they suddenly shoved it out on the circuits."

Shaffer also relates it to the current state of the British industry and its peculiarities. "I realize that when managing directors change seats, the incoming one is not wholly devoted to the product of his predecessor. You find yourself with a total change of policy. Whether it was inspired by jealousy or because they wanted to do something else, I don't know. Sometimes it is easier to lose money rather than make it. It is disappointing especially in light of how little is produced in this country. Especially when you show it to people and it gets good, you'll want to make it again. Hell, I don't understand that. Especially when you see some of the crap getting first-run releases here. If you live, like the poor fellows at British Lion, on a steady diet of things like THERE'S A GIRL IN MY SOUP or ON THE BUSES or CARRY ON FARTING or whatever those things are called, inevitably, you cannot see further than that after a time. It's a vicious circle." Possibly the film had only been released to qualify as a British film and thus become eligible for Eady subsidy money. But the press sought the film out; a few ventured in print to wonder why it had been given such treatment, and it eventual-
"Warner Bros took over [THE WICKER MAN and National General's] entire catalogue mainly because they very badly wanted First Artists. They looked at the rest of the films and said, 'Do what you can with them'—so it didn't surprise me when they later chose not to distribute it. You know, Warners could really care less what happened to it."

—David Blake

(continued)

ly collected positive or mixed notices in Monthly Film Bulletin (1/74), Time Out, London Times (12/16/73), London Evening News (2/28/74), The Financial Times (12/15/73), and CinematV Today, a trade periodical (12/15/73). And even from Scotland, the Edinburgh Evening News (1/9/74). The film played a long while in London, on double bills, and was successful wherever it was shown, and eventually moved into a single billing at the Odeon Haymarket, in London's West End. But despite representatives remaining unimpressed, and the film did not get out of London and into the provinces.

In April, 1974—no one is quite sure how and why—the film was entered in the Third Festival of Fantastic Films in Paris, where it won the Grand Prize on April 30th. British Lion was not pleased; the company in question, Hardy claims, since he was called "with a bitter complaint" demanding of him if he had "smuggled the film into France." Probably British Lion was upset because it was during this time that they were attempting to peddle the U.S. rights, with David Blake, their representative based here, showing the film to American distributors.

"I screened it for all the major distributors," said Blake. "We tried to interest them first, naturally, because they are more cash-happy than the minors. We screened it very quickly; they seemed impressed with it and were complimentary to it in conversation, but we got no offers.

"You should remember that only a very few indie films ever make sense to major distributors, unless they have the chance to go to the distributor. They have had no hand in their production, and they're just not interested in anything with less potential; they don't need that risk. And THE WICKER MAN just did not have that spark.

"Remember, too, that at that time we were after a large cash guarantee, of at least $1 million. We had had success in the past with selling British Lion product for advances that large.

"We then showed it to the minors, even though we knew that they could not make much money upfront. I sat with Roger Corman while he watched it, but he felt it was too long and would only take it if he could fool around with it."

Corman eventually offered a bid of $50,000, and probably would have gotten behind it solidly in terms of promotion, time and money, but British Lion was out to recover as much money upfront against the film's cost as they could.

"Finally," continues Blake, "we made a deal with Charles Boasberg at National General. At the time they had been handling THE GETAWAY with great success. But just about then, when CBS decided to shut down Cinema Center Films, the National General product source dried up. After National General was owned by American Financial, and they didn't really want to be in the film business at all, so that was that. We had had a good deal with National General—I won't tell you for publication the actual figure but it was over $200,000 in points and advertising. They also then involved a tax shelter group to the tune of $150,000.

"Four days after the deal was signed, National General went bankrupt. I believe Charlie [Boasberg] let the deal go through so he could buy some films in order to try and keep National General going. After all, they had Norman Levy as head of distribution and were turning a healthy profit at the time.

"Anyway, Leo Greenfield and Ted Ashley at Warner Bros took over their entire catalogue mainly because they very badly wanted First Artists. They looked at the rest of the films and said, 'Do what you can with them'—so it didn't surprise me when they later chose not to distribute it. Then they got caught in breach of performance—some of the tax shelter people [Larry Gordon and his Beachhead Properties]. You know, Warners could really care less what happened to it."

Such was the fate of a number of other genre films that Warner Bros had acquired, by one means or another. Warner Bros took one look at THE WICKER MAN, test-marketed it in a few areas, reportedly several drive-ins, with no advance publicity except what Hardy described as "an unbelievable poster." The May 15, 1974, Variety published a highly favorable review (although their listed running time of 97 minutes is erroneous). Thus far, it is the only review to appear in this country.

Unencouraged, near the end of 1974, Warner Bros then played off THE WICKER MAN in a few additional areas, including San Diego and Atlanta, to satisfy the tax shelter requirements (that the film must play commercially somewhere in the U.S. apart from sneak previews within the year of its release). Warner Bros promptly shelved it and took the tax loss.

That was the last anyone heard of THE WICKER MAN for several years. The filmmakers involved chalked it up to experience and moved on to other projects. The principals, such was their faith in the project, had never been paid for their work. Snell, Lee and Shaffer had worked for nothing, taking deferred salaries and gross points. Giovanni had been paid a small sum, but about a year later, in 1975, he attempted to check into royalties due him for the next film, and was convinced that he was earning to make a fortune from the music, from a soundtrack album, and he also thought that 'Gently Johnny' could if exploited become a popular hit. I told him 'Look, I've spent four years in the business, and that's just not a hit song, even 'Corny' rights right off the bat.'

Anyway, when you write a score in Europe, you sell it outright, and you are supposed to get a fee—something like a nickel—each time the thing goes through the projector.

"Now I never received one royalty check, even when the movie was selling out in London and Japan. So I got a lawyer to contact the Performing Rights Society, but he got nowhere with them. And it wasn't big enough financially—a matter of a few thousand dollars—to get the lawyer really hyped up and go over and search it out. And to sue, I would have had to pay the expenses. So that was that. I was screwed. I had been promised a soundtrack album, but of course, you usually don't expect all those kinds of promises to be kept."

Hardy had been paid a fee ($14,000) for directing, but it meant a lot more to him. THE WICKER MAN had been his first time out directing a feature, so to a certain extent, his future film career was on the line.

In the Fall of 1976, Hardy came to New York to work on a pair of screenplays and decided to try and locate the film. Through his lawyer, Bob Lasky, who specializes in the film business, he began to dig around and traced its path from British Lion to National General to Warner Bros and finally learned that it had reverted to the tax shelter group, which Lasky began to nag. They came to terms, getting all the parties to agree, which was no small task. "I assume," says Hardy, "because of the tax shelter, the chances have been questioned on their tax write-off by the IRS, that there hadn't been a proper effort to release it. [When queried, no one at Larry Gordon's Beachhead Properties office returned my call.] Anyway, they held an auction, and out of three or four distributors who were interested, including A. Stirling Gold, a group called Abraxas put in the highest bid."

Stirling Smith, the man who principally runs Abraxas, is more of a film buff than the usual businessmen one now finds in film distribution—often decried and hosted a weeknightly film program seen in six Southern states, originating from New Orleans. Abraxas has been in operation about 2½ years, up to now, mainly as an investor conduit for the acquisition of domestic rights to films that are unable to secure a U.S. distributor or films that have been shelved by the majors. Some of the films Smith has attempted to raise funds for are F FOR FAKE, SOLARIS, THE SPIRIT OF THE BEEHIVE, and Herzog's AGRICULTURAL coupling with other distributors and commercial release.

Smith has had two set-backs, first in co-producing Noel Black's MARIANNE, now tied up in litigation and resting in a lab, and second, in the unsuccessful resurrection of a Christopher Lee vehicle NOTHING BUT THE NIGHT through International Films. Smith wants to specialize in fantasy, horror, and off-beat films and is prepared, through Abraxas, to give careful attention to the films he handles, aware that while the potential of each is limited, there is potential there, and that Abraxas paid $175,000 for the B movie rights for THE WICKER MAN was in the form of continued page 46.
Summerisle: I trust the sight of the young people refreshes you. Howie: No, my Lord, it does not. Summerisle: Oh, I'm sorry. One should always be open to the regenerative influences. My how they love their divinity lessons! Howie: But they're naked! Summerisle: Naturally. It's much too dangerous to jump through the fire with your clothes on. Howie: (scornful) What kind of religion can they be learning, jumping over bonfires? Summerisle: Parthenogenesis, literally as Miss Rose would doubtless explain in her assiduous way, reproduction without sexual union. Howie: What nonsense is this? Fake biology, fake
religion! Have they never heard of Jesus? Summerisle: Himself the son of a virgin impregnated, I believe, by a ghost. Do sit down, shocks are so much better absorbed with the knees bent. Oh yes, sergeant. Even Christians believe in parthenogenesis. As for those children out there—they’re leaping through the flames in the hope that the God of fire may make them fruitful. And really, you know, you can hardly blame them. After all what girl would not prefer the child of a God to that of some acne-scarred Artisan.
"Looking back on the whole thing, to see the films that have been successful since, and quite successful, THE WICKER MAN was marginally well ahead of its time."

—David Blake

a $20,000 cash guarantee.

Heartened by this turn in his long, frustrating struggle (now five years after the film was made), Hardy decided to take it a step further, and in cooperation with Smith, attempted to locate the negatives. It was some time—amounting to about fifteen minutes—that Deeleys had removed, so that Abraxas could have the full 102-minute version. In doing so, he uncovered perhaps the strangest story of the entire saga.

They assumed, logically, that British Lion held the missing negative footage. So Hardy began making calls. British Lion told him that they could not locate the footage. Hardy notified Snell and Shaffer in London, who also made inquiries and were turned away.

The story is picked up by Snell. "What was happening was that they couldn't find it. And not being able to deliver the negative trims was embarrassing. British Lion twice asked the film editor to go down into the vaults and look, and he called me each time saying, 'Either these guys have moved it somewhere else, or we're only going through the motions.' British Lion kept being ambiguous as hell about it, so I made a trip down there and what I found was this: the picture was cut down to 87+ minutes. That negative was fixed and sent up to the vaults from the laboratory. And that was it. That was THE WICKER MAN! To all extents and purposes, I don't think there was ever any question in Deeleys's mind that it would ever be re-lengthened. So all those negative trims were pushed back into Shepperton's vaults.

I spent a lot of time there, looking around. I finally looked at the records and found that the trims, along with a lot of positives, had been destroyed. The person who was managing the vaults at the time was told to clear out a certain number of them, inadvertently destroying the negatives of three pictures—not the originals, which were also at Humphries—and the trims of THE WICKER MAN, thinking they were destroying positives only. It came to a matter of 386 cans of film. They wanted to get rid of it as closely as possible, so it went into the foundations of a motorway that was being built right next to the studio.

"Now that was interpreted by Robin and others as a conspiracy, but I don't think so. It was, frankly, British Lion just looking the other way, although they finally admitted it had been destroyed. People don't destroy negatives, but it happened. I can't believe it's a conspiracy; it's too petty and mean."

But perhaps Snell is just being reticent since he is working on projects with Deeleys. So is Shaffer, who would not speculate on the matter, who is currently writing the new Christie picture, MURDER ON THE NILE, for EMI. (A recent EMI ad in Variety described him as "the celebrated Anthony Shaffer."). But others felt differently. Lee said, "I've never heard of that in all my years in the film industry. Every studio keeps the negatives and trims of every film it makes, good, bad, indifferent, old and new. Outside of cases like the natural disintegration of nitrate stock, how do you destroy 386 cans of film quote by mistake unquote. That's in the realm of fantasy. Something very unlikely would have to happen to destroy the "mutilated movie" and destroy it, keeping girlfriend Britt Ekland's nude scenes from reaching American audiences. This is either a canny move or a dumb one on Stewart's part. Gi- vanni dismisses it as "rock star glamour but tremendous publicity for the film. I can believe he's serious. I mean, her tits have been in nearly all her movies since THE NIGHT THEY RAIDED MINSKY'S!"

If we're lucky, American audiences will soon be able to judge the film for themselves. This backhanded story is only about that one film. I dread to think how many other "unseen" films might have similar tales, if less absurd and lengthy. (Beachhead Properties, for instance, is rumored to control the domestic rights to nearly 200 films!) The story is still evolving. In April, 1977, Abraxas screened the film for the New York theatre owners. Of them, Walter Reade offered a site for late May, but due to 1) the extraordinary expense of opening a film properly in New York; 2) the necessary lab work is not yet completed; and 3) the film had yet to be endorsed by the drug lobby, it might be ironed out by Hardy (i.e. perhaps not all of the cut footage will go back in), it was agreed not to go with the Reade house at that time.

In mid-July, Robin Hardy was contacted through his agent by the New York City Police who asked about the film and wanted to see a copy of the script. At the time, the police were in the throes of the "Son of Sam" murders and were clashing at straws for clues to the murderer's identity. Now, one of the nicknames the killer used in his second letter to columnist Jimmy Breslin was "The Wicked King Wicker." Oddly enough, the police did not ask to see the film, but Hardy says, when he was asked to describe the plot, that "they coaxed a bit when I told them that at the end it was an emotional hit and a cheap death." Once David Berkowitz, the alleged killer, was captured, it was discovered that a street adjacent to the apartment building where he lived was named Wicker Street.

Abraxas has now set their official U.S. premiere of THE WICKER MAN for October 28, at the Senate Mall theatre in New Orleans. The two-week, Halloween booking at the flagship house of the southeastern Gulf States theatre chain will be kicked off with a special personal appearance by Christopher Lee, who is taking time out from the scheduling filming CARMEN VANS in Iran to come in for the film's opening. At this point, the version to be screened is still the 87-minute "cut" version, but plans are still being considered to restore the film's missing footage, if only for its eventual sale to American television, to say nothing of the time is usually desirable to accommodate a two-hour time slot.

David Blake, the man who sold THE WICKER MAN to National General Pictures for American distribution, noted: "The only successful thing to sell was the films that have been successful since, and quite successful, THE WICKER MAN was marginally well ahead of its time."
"We never say the word 'dead' here. You see, we believe that after the human life is over, the soul lives on—in trees, in animals, in fire, in water—so that Rowan Morrison for example has simply rejoined the life force in another form."

—Miss Rose to Sgt. Howie in THE WICKER MAN

Top: Villagers, costumed as animals for their May Day celebration, watch secretly as Sgt. Howie frantically searches the village for missing Rowan Morrison.
Bottom: As Sgt. Howie (Edward Woodward) rests after his fruitless search a 'Hand of Glory' is put in his room to make him sleep for days.