

[PDF] Life Is But A Scream! The True Story Of The Rebirth Of Famous Monsters Of Filmland

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Books Details:

Title: Life Is But A Scream! The Tru

Author: Ray Ferry

Released: 2000-09-01

Language:

Pages: 440

ISBN: 0970009828

ISBN13: 978-0970009821

ASIN: 0970009828



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Description:

About the Author RAY FERRY, Editor/Publisher of FAMOUS MONSTERS OF FILMLAND Magazine, is one of the leading authorities and aficionados of what he terms "the films of Classic Horrorwood." He began his love affair with the genre in 1960 as an 8-year-old charter reader of a popular 1960s era pulp magazine titled Famous Monsters of Filmland, which was the "bible" of the monster craze of the time, influencing the careers of a whole generation of then adolescent readers. Today Ferry is the editor and publisher of that very same magazine that so influenced him in his

youth.

Having worked for some 20 years as a professional photographer before applying his energies to FM, Ferry has a unique appreciation of and respect for the craftsmanship of the horror classics. Since reviving the magazine from the realm of the literary "undead" in 1993, Ferry has devoted his efforts to introducing the era of the classic fright films to a new generation who have been weaned on a diet of blood and gore in modern films. An outspoken voice concerning graphic violence in film and its desensitizing effect on young minds, Ferry's retro-horror approach has resulted in reestablishing Famous Monsters of Filmland, as the leading publication of its kind. By merging the magazine's original 1960s flavor with a 1990s edge, he has bridged the gap of several generations and created an entertaining and educational forum, with both adult and child readers sharing the innocent fun of the Halloween spirit all year long.

Ferry has worked with many diverse talents in the fantasy film genre with whom he shares a love of the classics including author Ray Bradbury, Academy Award Winning Animator Ray Harryhausen (both of whom were among the most influential personalities of his youth); legendary comics Phyllis Diller (MAD MONSTER PARTY), Mel Brooks (YOUNG FRANKENSTEIN) and Gary Owens; renowned performers Gloria Stuart (THE OLD DARK HOUSE), Adam West (TV's Batman), Frank Gorshin (Batman TV's Riddler), Cassandra Peterson (TV's ELVIRA), Al Lewis (THE MUNSTERS), and world renowned mentalist and occult authority The Amazing Kreskin, among others.

Ferry believes the old horror films will never be equaled. His credo is "there's no ghoul like an old ghoul."

Excerpt. © Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved. INTRODUCTION to Chapter One:

It was a little after 5:00 P.M. on Friday, May 28, 1993. I stood in the dark backstage in the ballroom at the Hyatt Regency in Crystal City, Virginia waiting to stroll out onto the stage to kick off the festivities unveiling the first new issue of Famous Monsters magazine in 11 years and I hadn't the faintest idea of what I was going to say to the assembly. There were about eight hundred fans packed inside the ballroom growing impatient, waiting for the evening's festivities to begin. They had all gathered that Memorial Day weekend at my "invitation" to be part of a monster "happening"--the 35th Anniversary Famous Monsters of Filmland World Convention. Many of them had spent thousands of dollars of their hard-earned money and made extraordinary sacrifices for many months to afford the chance to be there. Now, after 15 months of planning and preparation, the moment of truth had arrived. The show was ready to start and I had no idea of what I was going to say to them.

I nervously looked out from behind the curtain and it was obvious everyone was getting a bit impatient. There, in the front row, sat many of my childhood idols--Ray Harryhausen, John Agar, Richard Matheson-- and many of my contemporaries-- John Landis, Joe Dante, Jim Danforth--people whose respect I had worked feverishly to obtain and who now sat there in the uncomfortably warm ballroom staring at an empty stage. I hadn't slept in over 48 hours and I was still in the same clothes I had on for 2 days. I wished it were Sunday and all over. Finally my name was announced over the loud speaker and--with deep apprehension--I took the longest walk of my life up those four small stairs and out into the spotlight.

The audience gave me a polite round of applause which is what I expected since first, they knew nothing about me other than seeing my name as the event producer, and second, they hadn't seen anything so far that they should be applauding about. I lifted the microphone to my mouth and said the first thing that popped into my head: "For most of us here Famous Monsters is something that we could never get away from. We read it in the '60s and then six or seven years later most of us dropped FM when we discovered something more interesting than monsters--girls. Now 35 years

later we want to go back to monsters because they're a lot easier to understand." The audience laughed and gave me an enthusiastic hand. I thought maybe this wouldn't be so bad after all, so I continued: "We're going to issue little bottles of dye with this new issue of FM so those of you who want the issue to be really authentic can yellow the pages faster," and again they replied with joy and enthusiasm. The most dangerous thing that can happen to someone like me is to have a mike in my hand and feel like I'm on a roll. I thought, Okay--they came here for a show--let's give `em a show.

I asked for the house lights to be brought up and turned to my idols in the front row. "Can we have all our celebrity guests up here on stage for this unveiling?" I remember watching Ray Harryhausen start looking around him evidently trying to identify just which "celebrities" I was talking about. I waved to him and reluctantly he got up and came toward the stage. One by one the others took the cue and followed him. As they came on stage, I announced them: "John Landis...Joe Dante... Richard Matheson...Gloria Stuart...Bobbie Bresee...Noel Neill..." The applause was getting louder and louder and I began to yell to be heard over the din. "Frank Kelly Freas, who did the FM convention poster and is also the cover artist for the new FM!...the Tall Man, Angus Scrimm...Robert Bloch..." As the noise became nearly deafening, I noticed a spry, stout figure dressed in white tennis shorts, a white windbreaker and sneakers who had come seemingly from nowhere stroll onto the stage. "Ray Bradbury!," I yelled. The audience seemed in a frenzy. Flashbulbs were popping everywhere. As I looked across the stage at all these legends gathered together at one time, the full impact of what I had started finally hit me. My throat was tightening. Finally I managed to blurt out the last of my roster of guests. "And finally . . . The Ackermonster!" Out came Forry, beaming from ear to ear, gliding slowly toward the center stage like some Roman gladiator basking in the glory of a Coliseum triumph.

As the applause rose in volume to sound like the white noise static one hears from a radio that is not properly tuned to a station, I looked out to the audience and saw my delirious peers--30, 40 and 50-year-old fans--young kids--readers from the first issues--all with beaming smiles on their faces, many with tears in their eyes. At that precise moment everyone who had ever held an affection for FM, every fan who was ever moved by Karloff or Lugosi or Chaney or Price, every fan of the phenomenon of the 1960s monster mania was represented in that room. I stood, almost invisibly, to the far side of the stage as the moment permeated my soul.

How I happened to find myself in the center of that hurricane seemed at once unnatural--and yet predestined to be...

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