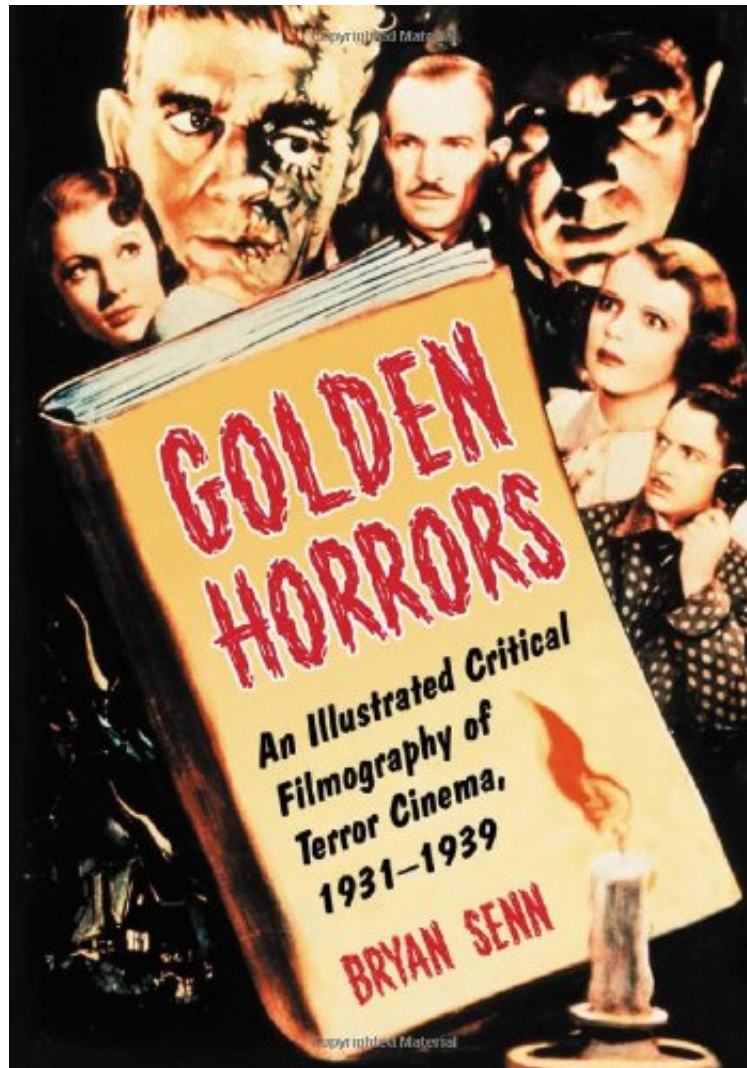


(Library ebook) Golden Horrors: An Illustrated Critical Filmography of Terror Cinema, 1931-1939

Golden Horrors: An Illustrated Critical Filmography of Terror Cinema, 1931-1939

Bryan Senn

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Bryan Senn : Golden Horrors: An Illustrated Critical Filmography of Terror Cinema, 1931-1939 before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Golden Horrors: An Illustrated Critical Filmography of Terror Cinema, 1931-1939:

5 of 7 people found the following review helpful. Crackles on the soundtrack.By Brad BakerA fan of Lugosi or Karloff? Find it in your budget to pick up this masterpiece. Bryan Senn is a young, inspired, well-read cinephile. His specialty is the 1930's. He's very good. He acknowledges his sources and blends them perfectly into this valuable

to me. Interesting pictures and wonderful trivia abound. For example, did you know that, in 1932, Fay Wray was filming "King Kong" during the day, "The Most Dangerous Game" at night, and still going back to Warner Bros. studio for pick-ups on "Dr. X" all at the same time? This remarkable lady is still alive (around age 96). (I met her at a California film festival.) If old horror movies are your bag, are you in luck! 5 of 10 people found the following review helpful. Bela Lugosi Fans - Reader Beware! By Mark Wilkerson The book appears to be an encyclopedia of horror films, however, the reviews include only films released from 1931-1939. It makes no sense why the 1940-1946 horror films are not included, which he calls the "Silver" age of horror. Senn's writing style is like that of a graduate student in film rather than a style that communicates chills and suspense. Senn biases his reviews of the film and actors based upon "academy award" potential rather than the atmosphere and mood. If you are a Bela Lugosi fan, you will be disappointed in the reviews like I was. He tries very hard to be "diplomatic" about Mr. Lugosi, however, none of Mr. Senn's top 10 list of best horror films include Bela Lugosi. Mr. Senn dismisses Lugosi films like "The Corpse Vanishes" because of the absence of 'film school etiquette'. I am a serious fan of the golden age of horror films and consider "The Corpse Vanishes" to be extremely atmospheric and haunting and one of my favorites. Senn has a strong bias towards Boris Karloff because of his "acting" abilities, e.g., the ability to play two parts in one film. I like Boris Karloff very much but have not found any of Karloff's films, with the exception of Frankenstein, that would rival a Lugosi film in terms of mood and atmosphere. Don't base your opinion on whether or not to buy a DVD format of the film based upon Senn's reviews. 9 of 10 people found the following review helpful. THE ULTIMATE RESOURCE ON GOLDEN AGE HORRORS! By Tim Janson It was the era that started the horror film genre in America...the 1930's. It was the age that brought us groundbreaking films and made household names of people like Karloff and Lugosi. Author Bryan Senn gives fans of classic horror films the ultimate resource to these films. Over 500 pages which cover 46 classic films including "Frankenstein", "Dracula", "The Mummy", "White Zombie", "King Kong", "Mark of the Vampire", "The Black Cat", and lesser known films like "Murders in the Zoo", "Devil Doll", and "The Return of Doctor X". Senn doesn't just give a passing glance to these films. Each receives some 8 - 12 pages in the book. He starts with the full film credits, then provides a lengthy plot synopsis before launching into the real meat of each film as Senn provides a critical and knowledgeable analysis of each film's assets and liabilities and production notes. Senn rightfully points out milquetoast actor David Manners being a liability on three classic horror films: "Dracula", "The Mummy", and "The Black Cat", essentially playing the same dull, uninspiring romantic lead in each film. As if Manners' performance and his own utter disdain for the roles were not bad enough, there is the revelation that he earned four times as much for his role in "Dracula" as Bela Lugosi did. The production notes in Golden Horrors are perhaps the most interesting part of each film's coverage. Even a classic horror film like myself discovered lots of new bits of information about these films that I didn't know previously. For example, the Satanist character played by Karloff in the Black Cat was based on real-life Satanist and occultist Aleister Crowley. Senn is right on the money when he says that there has never been a film like "The Black Cat" in terms of its mood and its grisly scenes of corpses floating in glass tubes. One can forget in this era of the shock film that "The Black Cat" was released back in 1934. In "Mark of the Vampire" Bela Lugosi's Count Morla goes about with a bloody wound to the side of his temple. The original script of this Tod Browning film revealed that Morla had an incestuous relationship with his daughter Luna and then murdered her and committed suicide. This was dropped from the film as it would have never made it past the 30's censors, but it goes to show just how dark and ahead of its time the film was, despite the cop-out ending. In discussing "Bride of Frankenstein" we learn that 17 minutes were cut from the preview screenings to the theatrical release. Included in the cuts are Karl (Dwight Frye) murdering his wealthy parents and blaming the monster. Another interesting film that Senn looks at is the underrated "Dracula's Daughter". This was the last horror film made prior to the two year horror film hiatus/ban in 1936. The film was to have starred Lugosi reprising his role as Dracula but that was dropped. When we see Dracula in his casket, we are seeing a wax dummy of Lugosi. Interestingly, Universal still had paid Lugosi \$4000 for the role he never played...far more than he earned when starring in "Dracula" in 1931. Senn covers many more great films of the 1930's including "The Ghoul", "The Old Dark House", "Mad Love", and "Werewolf of London", all aided by over 100 photographs. Nearly as interesting is the appendix of another 71 films that were borderline exclusions into the horror genre. Some of these films were new to me and although many are not available on DVD or VHS, I certainly intend to hunt down those that are. This may be the ultimate resource for fans of Golden Age horrors. You'll spend hours pouring over Senn's meticulous research and certainly learn a great deal about the films you've loved for so many years. Another fantastic offering from McFarland Books! Reviewed by Tim Janson

From the grindhouse oddities to major studio releases, this work details 46 horror films released during the genre's golden era. Each entry includes cast and credits, a plot synopsis, in-depth critical analysis, contemporary reviews, time of release, brief biographies of the principal cast and crew, and a production history. Apart from the 46 main entries, 71 additional borderline horrors are examined and critiqued in an appendix.

From Library Journal Horror film is an increasingly visible topic of research, as demonstrated by these two books, which attempt to balance textual analysis and historical inquiry with different degrees of success. Jancovich (Horror,

Trafalgar Square, 1994) targets the 1950s in his scholarly treatment of titles like *The Thing from Another World*, *The Day the Earth Stood Still*, *It Came from Outer Space*, and *Creature from the Black Lagoon*. Refuting the usual interpretation that such films display Cold War paranoia, he shows how American 1950s horror cinema offered a critique of consumer culture, masculinity, and scientific rationality. His insightful reassessment links 1950s horror cinema to novels and comics and concludes with a section on how films of the period established conventions and themes that would be revisited by Hollywood during the Reagan years. A good addition for most film collections. Senn's filmography of 1930s horror cinema is simultaneously less scholarly than Jancovich and more dubious in its final effect. *Golden Horrors* contains entries for 46 films, with each entry divided into sections on memorable moments, assets, liabilities, reviews, and production notes. Synopses occupy too much space, and Senn's evaluations comprise a bland mix of fannish enthusiasm and low-level film analysis. His samples from contemporary reviews are illuminating but too often limited to *Variety* and the *New York Times*. His production notes are always informative, however. Additional depth would be welcome, especially in one of the appendixes, which supplies more than 50 pages in minuscule type of borderline horrors, rare films, and foreign titles. While Senn (*Fantastic Cinema*, McFarland, 1992) undoubtedly knows his topic, it is doubtful that the publisher packaged his knowledge in a manner that will benefit any library. Neal Baker, Dickinson Coll. Lib., Carlisle, Pa. Copyright 1996 Reed Business Information, Inc. A pleasure to read...an invaluable resource...recommended --ARBA Insightfully considers each film's memorable moments, assets, and liabilities --Choice A valuable and highly recommended addition to all film history and reference book collections --Midwest Book "interesting...worthy of your attention" --John Kenneth Muir, *Reflections on Film/TVA* valuable and highly recommended addition to all film history and reference book collections --Midwest Book About the Author Bryan Senn is the author of *Drums of Terror: Voodoo in the Cinema* and co-author of *Fantastic Cinema Subject Guide* (McFarland, 1992). He lives in the Pacific Northwest.