

Festival of Fantastic Films – 12-14th October 1990

Parkers Hotel, Manchester, UK.

Arrived at Parkers Hotel, Manchester at 19:30 on Friday 12th October 1990 for the first Festival of Fantastic Films.

The festival programme featured many guests, including Guest of Honour Ray Harryhausen, Caroline Munro, Pete Atkins, Stephen Gallagher, Ramsey Campbell, along with talks with film-makers, authors and stars and the opportunity to view several films which you would not be able to see elsewhere.



1 - Original Programme and Auction Lot Listing

Films featured in the programme included *Aliens* (1986), *Attack of the 50ft Woman* (1957), *Black Dragons* (1942), *The Blob* (1958), *Deathrace 2000* (1975), *I Was a Teenage Frankenstein* (1958), *It Came from Outer Space* (1953) – in 3D, *King Kong* (1933), *Mr. Sardonicus* (1961), *Predator* (1987), *Revenge of The Creature* (1955), *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* (1975), *Scanners* (1980) and many more.

Subject to change. **PROGRAMME** Keep an eye on notice board in hotel foyer

	RYAN (2nd floor)	LORYMAR Reception (basement)	BESWICK	KAY (ground floor suites)	LOUNGE
FRIDAY	8.00pm WELCOME				
8.30pm	JUST IMAGINE!	ALIEN			
9.45pm	ISLAND OF LOST SOULS				
11pm	CHIMERA PROMO				
11.45	KING KONG	THE CORPSE GRINDERS			
SATURDAY	1.30am **PREMIERE: TWO EVIL EYES	TO BE ANNOUNCED			
	BREAKFAST	BREAKFAST	BREAKFAST	BREAKFAST	
9.15am	ATTACK OF THE 50' WOMAN	9.30am BATTLE BEYOND THE STARS	FILM COLLECTORS FAIR Opens 10am until 5pm		10.00am SMALL LOUNGE PHILIP RAE MODEL EXHIBITION
10.55am	Steve Archer on WILLIS O'BRIEN.				1.15pm SIGNING SESSIONS RAY HARRYHAUSEN RAMSEY CAMPBELL
11.40am	MIGHTY JOE YOUNG	THE HUNGER <small>Presented by The Vampire Society</small>			
1.40pm	ROCKETSHIP XM	THE DEVIL BAT			
3.00pm	MR SARDONICUS	PREDATOR			
5.00pm	INVASION OF THE SAUCER MEN	5.30pm SCANNERS			5.00pm HAMMER COMPETITION
6.30pm	THE MOVIE AUCTION				
7.30pm	GUEST OF HONOUR RAY HARRYHAUSEN TALKS ABOUT HIS FILMS RYAN SUITE				
9.30pm	20MILLION MILES TO EARTH	THE BLOB			
11.30pm	**PREMIERE: MR VAMPIRE 4	KING OF THE ZOMBIES			11pm HAMMER RETROSPECTIVE & DISCUSSION GROUP
SUNDAY		12.45am RETURN OF THE APEMAN			1am to 3am ANIME
1.30am	ROCKY HORROR PICTURE SHOW	1.50am NEANDERTHAL MAN			3am HAMMER SHOW continued
3.30am	DAY THE WORLD ENDED	NIGHT OF THE DEMON			
5.00am	ALIENS	TEENAGE FRANKENSTEIN			
		6.15am BLACK DRAGONS			
	BREAKFAST	BREAKFAST	BREAKFAST	BREAKFAST	
9.00am	WAR OF THE MONSTERS	HOW TO MAKE A MONSTER	DEALERS ROOM	9am STAR TREK PRESENTED BY USS ENDEVOUR	
10.30am	BLADE RUNNER	AMATEUR FILM COMPETITION	Opens 10am until 5pm	11am BLAKES 7 PRESENTED BY HORIZON	
12.45pm	**PREMIERE: NIGHTLIFE	TO BE ANNOUNCED		1pm RANDAL & HOPKIRK (DECEASED) presented by RAHDAS	
2.30pm	IT CAME FROM OUTER SPACE 3-D	TO BE ANNOUNCED			
4.00pm	REVENGE OF THE CREATURE 3-D	TO BE ANNOUNCED			
5.30pm	*PREMIERE: PICTURE OF A NYMPH	TO BE ANNOUNCED		3PM TODESKING VIDEO PREMIERE	
7.30pm	CLOSING CEREMONY				

2 - Film Listings

Made my way to the bar where I bumped into Pete Atkins and Steve Gallagher. After securing an autograph from Steve (I already had one from Pete, having met him previously at the Leeds Film Festival), I made my way to the Ryan Suite where the opening ceremony was to be held.

After a brief welcoming speech from one of the organisers, Dave Trengove, there was a brilliant opening video. A montage of clips from all the films and characters that are mentioned in *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* opening title sequence, played to the soundtrack of the same.

Following the opening ceremony, attendees had a choice of seeing *Alien* in the Lorymar Suite or remaining in the Ryan Suite for *Just Imagine* – A quirky and very humourous look from the 1930's into the

future, which happened to be our past, to the year 1980. It accurately predicted the use of hot air dryers in lavatories amongst other things.

A showing of the censor-banned *Island of Lost Souls*, a telling of the story of *The Island of Dr. Moreaux* by H. G. Wells followed. This, and other banned films could be shown here, as it was considered to be a private or "club" showing which didn't need to adhere to the same rules as mainstream cinemas did. Though, that said, it was usually the local councils throughout the UK that determined whether a film that was considered controversial or banned would be allowed to be shown at theatres within their jurisdiction.

Stephen Gallagher then turned up and conducted a lengthy talk and introduction into his soon-to-be-broadcast television serial, *Chimera*, based on his book of the same name.



3 - Stephen Gallagher

After this, there was a choice of *King Kong* (1933) which had previously omitted footage reinstated or Ted V. Mikels' *The Corpse Grinders* (1971). I regretfully opted for the latter, it being appallingly dire and featuring a lead actress whose clothing changed every other scene - something which amused me and the rest of the audience immensely.

Returning to the Ryan Suite, I tried to stay awake for the first of the weekend's premieres. I caught the last half-hour of *King Kong* which had overrun due to some technical issues with the projector.

As time was now getting on somewhat, approaching 02:30 AM, I decided to forego the premiere of *Two Evil Eyes* (1990) – based on short stories by Edgar Allan Poe and directed by two famous horror directors, George A. Romero and Dario Argento and featuring Adrienne Barbeau and Harvey Keitel - in order to get some badly needed kip.

The next day, Saturday, I looked around the dealer's room and then moved on to see the beautifully shot and delightfully sensual Vampyre Society's presentation of *The Hunger* (1983). This ran opposite the Ray Harryhausen feature, *Mighty Joe Young* (1949).

Following the showing of these films, there was a signing session with Ray Harryhausen and Ramsey Campbell along with a great talk by the amusing and easy-going Pete Atkins of *Hellbound: Hellraiser II* fame.



4 - Pete Atkins shortly before his presentation

There was then a showing of *The Devil Bat* (1940) that proved so popular it was to be repeated on the Sunday.

After getting some grub, and missing *Invasion of the Saucer Men* (1957), I returned to attend the movie auction where several items such as Fay Wray's autobiography and signed photos of Peter Cushing were up for grabs to the highest bidder.

THE FESTIVAL OF FANTASTIC FILMS 1990				
The AUCTION				
Due to the lack of privately entered material at the time of preparing the catalogue, the two auctions have been combined into one.				
In order to differentiate the lots, the column after the lot description will contain a letter P or C.				
P= Private entry C= Item donated for C & TV Fund				
The main beneficiary of the Auction will be the CINEMA & TELEVISION BENEVOLENT FUND.				
Lots will be offered in numerical order and will be knocked down to the highest bidder. Any item not reaching its reserve will be withdrawn.				
A lot having a reserve will be designated by an "R" in the end column of the catalogue.				
Delivery will be immediate, during the sale and all buyers are responsible for their goods from that time on.				
PAYMENT will be cash at time of delivery unless PRIOR ARRANGEMENT for cheques has been made with the auctioneer Mr D Trengove before the sale commences.				
The auctioneer's decision is final				
A commission of 10% will be taken off Private lots as a donation to the Fund ie off the hammer price				
LOT No.	DESCRIPTION	P or C	Donated by	Remarks
1	5 Stills from "Al Capone"	C	D Trengove	
2	Autographed photo of Mr Charles Gray	C	Mr C Gray	US
3	6ft high Mutant Turtle	C		IS
4	Autographed photo of Mr Donald Pleasance	C	Mr Donald Pleasance	
5	Autographed item Mr Peter Cushing	C	Mr Peter Cushing	
6	Advert The Last Crusade	C		25
7	Autographed copy of Autobiography of FAY WRAY	C	Society of Fantastic Films	
8	3 GODZILLA Transparencies	C	Channel 4	
9	3 B/W Godzilla Photos	C	" " "	
10	2 B/W Godzilla Photos	C	" " "	
11	Guest of Honours Surprise	C	Mr Ray Harryhausen	
12	Limited Edition of 8 Story-board pictures from DREAMS by KUROSAWA	C	WARNER BROS	
13	ROCKY HORROR SHOW Souvenir Brochure	C	D Trengove	
14	Poster from Mac & Me and Moontrap	C	S. Scott	
15	Poster from Iron Eagle and Parenthood	C	S Scott	
16	ROCKY HORROR RECORD slight scratch but plays	C	D Trengove	
17	Poster Gorillas in the Mist and American Ninja	C	S Scott	

5 - Auction Listing

I was then due to meet with Pete Atkins for an interview, but couldn't locate him anywhere.

Then came the highlight of the whole weekend. Guest of Honour, Ray Harryhausen, famous for his imaginative stop-motion special effects which are showcased in fantasy films depicting Greek Mythological and Arabian Nights stories, wowed the audience with a video presentation of his work ranging from *Mighty Joe Young* (1949), *The Beast from 20,000 Fathoms* (1953), *The 7th Voyage of Sinbad* (1958), *Jason and the Argonauts* (1963) and *One Million Years B.C.* (1966) amongst others.



6 - Guest of Honour, Ray Harryhausen

Born in Los Angeles, Harryhausen's life was forever changed when he saw *King Kong* (1933). So in awe of the effects, Harryhausen researched the film's effects learning everything about Willis H. O'Brien and stop-motion photography.

Harryhausen tried to make a stop-motion epic, titled "*Evolution*", but the time required to make it resulted in it being cut short. The footage he had completed - of a lumbering apatosaurus attacked by an allosaurus - made for an excellent demo reel. As a result, Harryhausen's first film job came with George Pal, working on Pal's Puppetoon shorts for Paramount. A stint in the army utilised Harryhausen's animation skills for training films. After World War II, Harryhausen made a series of shorts, which helped him land a job with Willis H. O'Brien and Marcel Delgado on *Mighty Joe Young* (1949). Although O'Brien received credit for it, 85% of the actual animation was done by Harryhausen.

Harryhausen's real breakthrough, however, came when he was hired by Warner Brothers to do the special effects for *The Beast from 20,000 Fathoms* (1953). The film's \$200,000 budget meant that Harryhausen would be forced to improvise to get the quality effects he wanted. To that end he learnt a technique called "split-screen" (rear projection on overlapping miniature screens) to insert dinosaurs and other fantastic beasts into real-world backgrounds. The result was one of the most influential sci-fi films of the 1950s.

Harryhausen then joined Columbia, teaming up with producer Charles H. Schneer. Harryhausen did the effects work for *The 7th Voyage of Sinbad* (1958), his first split-screen film shot entirely in colour.

Harryhausen worked alone and, as a result, the filming of his stop-motion animation sequences could take as long as two years. The most famous example of the kind of patience required being the incredible and exciting skeleton sword fight sequence in *Jason and the Argonauts* (1963) (his most popular film) in which Harryhausen often shot no more than 13 frames of film (one-half second of elapsed time) per day.

The 1960s were Harryhausen's best years, among the highlights being his reunions with dinosaurs in Hammer Films' *One Million Years B.C.* (1966) and *The Valley of Gwangi* (1969). His pace slowed in the 1970s, but he produced three of his masterworks during that period: *The Golden Voyage of Sinbad* (1973) (featuring Caroline Munro who was sat in the front row and caused quite a stir and flurry of people with cameras when referenced to); *Sinbad and the Eye of the Tiger* (1977) and *Clash of the Titans* (1981).

It was not until 1992 that Harryhausen finally achieved film immortality with an honorary Oscar, a long-overdue tribute to the one name that personifies visual effects magic.

Following the video presentation of his work, there was a thoroughly entertaining question and answer session where Ray showed off some of his remarkable and intricately detailed models.



7 - Ray Harryhausen showing off one of his models



8 - Ray Harryhausen's models



9 - Ray Harryhausen's models in detail



10 - Ray Harryhausen presenting original concept art



11- Ray Harryhausen presenting original concept art

I then left the festival, again, to get some food which meant I missed *The Blob* (1958) or *20 Million Miles to Earth* (1957).

'Don't the festival organisers ever eat?' I wondered.

I finally met up with Pete Atkins in the bar of the Parkers Hotel and interviewed him to get insight into how he came to be screenwriter on *Hellbound: Hellraiser II* and what he was looking forward to at the festival in an exclusive interview.

I returned to see the second premier of the festival, an unheard-of film called *Mr. Vampire Saga* (1988). This proved to be a highly entertaining piece of oriental slapstick which was very enjoyable right up until the film snapped – due to a bad splice apparently – four minutes before the end of the first reel. The prospect of having to wait ten minutes, whilst repairs were made to the print and then to watch four minutes of the film before being delayed a further ten minutes whilst the reel was changed did not delight so I abandoned the rest of the movie at half-past midnight and retired to bed.

On the final day, Sunday, I returned to watch and cast my vote at the rather disappointing amateur film competition. The entries were so plotless or dire that, given a choice, I would have not allowed there to be a winner at all!

After this, I ran upstairs to the Ryan Suite and managed to catch the last ten minutes of *Blade Runner* (1982). It looked magnificent and so much more impressive on a huge wide screen that that which I'd gotten used to watching on a small television at home.

I then settled down to watch the third of the premieres, *Nightlife* (1989), a vampire made-for-television movie featuring Ben Cross as "Vlad" and Maryam d'Abo (of James Bond fame) as the female lead, Angelique. My notes – which seem at odds to the film's description on IMDB – state the film was "a typical American teenage stalk and slash movie."

Unfortunately, this was another of the premieres that was to have technical difficulties. Thirty minutes into the film the drive shaft on the projector broke and the film had to be abandoned. To try and make up to the audience, the two 3D movies, *It Came from Outer Space* (1953) and *Revenge of the Creature* (1955) that were scheduled for later in the day were brought forward.

Due to the lack of a 35mm projector, the fourth premiere, *Picture of a Nymph* (1987) had to be scrapped.

I made my way down to the ground floor where there was a Japanese animation film showing, the title of which I have no knowledge though Anime was listed in the programme, which rounded things

off nicely in time for the closing ceremony. The organisers apologised for the problems and cancellation of films and listened to people's comments.

It was the general consensus that the festival had tried to show too many films. As noted, I myself had to miss at least two just to get some food during the day. One of the organisers, Harry Nadler, who sadly died in 2002, said that the volume of films was decided upon to avoid people leaving and saying there wasn't enough on and that they hadn't seen much. Other gripes were that the Lorymar Suite was too cold and that elsewhere the heat, particularly in the Ryan Suite, made spending any more than an hour in those rooms an endurance test. It was agreed this was a problem which may have attributed to the many faults with projectors and film prints.

Finally, the overall quality of the premieres was remarked upon as "disappointing". I was told by one of the festival organisers, Tony Edwards, that this was because Malcolm Dalglish, the person responsible for booking premieres for the festival, was running another festival called Black Sunday 4 and had let the Festival of Fantastic Films down quite considerably, presumably because he took the cream of available films, *Darkman* (1990) and *Flatliners* (1990), to his own festival.

Overall, it was an enjoyable weekend that allowed myself and other movie fans the opportunity to see films that we wouldn't be able to see anywhere else.



12- Original ticket

At the time of writing this original piece, the second festival was already being organised and it was hoped the venue would be more comfortable and the problems – particularly with projectors and films – would be non-existent.

The festival has now been running for twenty-seven years and is currently (or for 2017, it's 28th festival at least) being held at the Manchester Conference Centre, a purpose-built conference centre and hotel, as Parkers Hotel is no longer a hotel having been converted into several apartments.

There are now three programme streams containing a terrific range of movie-related events that include guest interviews, discussions, panels, special events, presentations, auctions, an art show and poster exhibition, a dealer room, themed dinner parties and of course an amazing number of movies with old and new running alongside each other throughout the festival.

For more details of the festival, visit: <http://fantastic-films.com/festival/>

To see more pictures from the festival, visit David E. Gates' blog at: www.davidegates.com/festival

David E. Gates has published a number of books and short-stories. He recently won the SILVER prize in the AuthorsDB 2016 Cover Contest for [The Ghost of Clothes](#) and won best HORROR Novel Logline for 2016 for [The Roots of Evil](#). David's latest horror novel, [The Wretched](#), set in his home town of Portsmouth, is already receiving great reviews.

He has previously won first prize (Gold) for his first horror novel, [The Roots of Evil](#) and third prize (Bronze) for his incredible true story, [Access Denied](#) in the 2015 AuthorsDB Cover Contest, and has made a film about the battlefield memorials in Ypres, Belgium called **Ypres – The Battlefield Tours** (available at www.shelleyshow.co.uk).

David has previously written film reviews for Starburst and Samhain magazines and interviewed the likes of Clive Barker, Terry Pratchett, James Herbert, Pete Atkins and many others. He has also written many poems and short stories, a full-length motion picture screenplay, the screenplay to a short film and in his spare time hosts a rock radio show.

David's books are available from all good online bookstores.