

NEWSLETTER

August- September
2004

BENDIGO FILM SOCIETY

Bendigo Film Society Inc.

Member of the Federation of Victorian
Film Societies A14539Z

www.bendigo.latrobe.edu.au/bfs/
bfs@bendigo.latrobe.edu.au
PO Box 567 Vic 3552
ph 5442 2562

Chair: Kevin Vallence
Treasurer: Bev Penwill
Meeuwis Boelen
Amelia Bourke
Hilma Hallam
Allan Hercus
Shirley Reid
Margaret Taylor
Jill Vallence

Newsletter August - September
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Dear Members and Friends...

Do these cold nights makes you want to curl up in front of the fire and watch the telly? If they do, think again. Think about what you'll be missing! If you do, you'll immediately uncurl, snuff out the fire and race off to the Campbell Theatre. And you'll bring friends with you!

August sees us return to Robert Altman with his satiric and eccentric non-Western *Buffalo Bill and the Indians*. Then its 'Whhoo!!' Two Frankenstein movies. Will what horrified audiences in the 1930s still scare you? Or will it make you laugh?

We screen *Torment* on Sept 2nd. (I hope we receive the correct film. My movie guide lists three with the same title! *Shades of Dust*). Its a film '... that seemed pretty powerful at the time.' Ingmar Bergman wrote the script.

The AGM is the short ahead of *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* on Sept 16th. The AGM is a local production featuring a cast of aging super-stars. *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* is, for many people, the best film ever made. Who'll ever forget Nurse Ratchitt? My Guide classifies it as a 'fantasy'. I'd hope so.

You will have noticed that there is an omitted date on your program - Thursday 30th Sept. Looks like another Director's choice coming up. If it's half as good as *The Dinner Game* it'll be twice as good as *Pushpak*.

The Committee has received a lot of excellent ideas for 2005 and the next Newsletter will include the themes for 2005. Thanks for your feedback. Keep it coming. As always, we need renewing and NEW members.

I look forward to seeing you 'at the flicks'.

Kevin Vallence - President

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6 month season \$25
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◆◆ BULLETIN BOARD ◆◆

Welcome to new members:

- John Clancy
- Ron Attrill

Congratulations to Stephen O'Neil and Jan Barkell who are the BFS's newly trained projectionists.

And thanks to Allan Hercus who trained them. If you'd like to learn to be a projectionist, ask Allan (or any Committee member).

James Whale's *Frankenstein* (1931)

Coming Events

* August 5 CATHS

At our next screening Buffalo *Bill & the Indians*) we will be visited by members of the Cinema and Theatre History Society (Vic) CATHS. They will make a brief presentation explaining what their Society is about and then join us to watch the movie.

* September 16 Annual General Meeting

* September 30 Director's Choice

Mystery screening – possibly it will even be a surprise to Kevin!

Bendigo Film Society Inc

Venue: Campbell Theatrette in the Bendigo Library, Hargreaves S

Some of the movies have not been classified; content may challenge offend or not be suitable for children

Membership \$49 yearly, \$39 concession, \$69 partnered. To join, send a cheque or turn up

The Bendigo Film Society reserves the right to substitute film titles should the need arise

Perhaps the longest-lasting and most memorable image of Frankenstein and his Monster was created in 1931, when Universal Pictures released what is now often praised as the definitive horror film: *Frankenstein*. The image of Boris Karloff in the flat-head monster mask with bolts in his neck and in undersized clothes has become part of popular culture and synonymous with the word "Frankenstein".

Frankenstein finally opened on 4 November 1931 at the Mayfair Theatre in New York's Time Square and caused an immediate sensation. It was voted one of **the** films of the year by the New York Times and earned Universal Pictures \$12 million - the production had cost only \$262,000. This made it an even bigger success than *Dracula* one year earlier.

Although on first release the US federal censor didn't demand any cuts, several US states only showed edited versions of *Frankenstein*. In Kansas City the State Board of Censors demanded 32 cuts and in Rhode Island newspapers refused to run advertisements for the movie. In Britain censors cut out the scene where Frankenstein discovers Fritz's hanged body, a scene of the Monster threatening Elizabeth and the murder of Dr. Waldmann. But when *Frankenstein* was re-released in the USA in 1937 Universal were forced to cut the scene in which the Monster kills the little girl Maria - undoubtedly one of the film's key scenes. Movie

fans had to wait until 1985 to see a restored version of the film including all previously trimmed scenes.

The screenplay made considerable changes from the original novel. The most important change involved the character of the Monster. In the novel the Monster is humanised whereas the film tries to dehumanise him, leaving little chance for audience identification with him.

Another significant changes concern the reasons for the Monster's evilness. In Mary Shelley's novel he is the product of his social circumstances. Although in the beginning the Monster means the people no harm, they reject and attack him because of his hideous appearance. When he meets Frankenstein the Monster explains himself, "I was benevolent and good; misery made me a fiend. Make me happy, and I shall again be virtuous." In the film a new episode is added in which Frankenstein's assistant Fritz is supposed to steal a perfect brain but instead takes that of a criminal. By making the Monster's aggressive behaviour a result of an abnormal brain one of the novel's central ideas is completely removed. The Monster's behaviour is not a reaction to its experience but biologically determined. Violence and crime is thus rooted in personal deficiencies and the violent person must be dealt with. The Monster is sub-human and therefore must be killed.

Seeing it in our current context – are there any parallels to contemporary approaches to dealing with "evil"?