

Arts & Entertainment

Film Festival revives 'crud'

By Dave Meile
Staff Reporter

"This is KTTV....if anyone can hear us please send help. We're being attacked by the Slime People!"
Robert Hutton in "The Slime People" (1963)

When I first heard about this new weekly series of bad flicks, the "Canned Film Festival," I almost fell outta my Lazy Boy. Now all the years my pals and I festored in front of the "Plug in drug" watching trash will not have been in vain. For years we've suffered, now it's everyone else's turn.

Every Saturday night at midnight, KOLN-KGIN Channels 10/11 will broadcast cinematic bilge: "Santa Claus Conquers the Martians," "Robot Monster," "Las Vegas Hillbillies," "Bride of the Monster," and so on. For those who want a jump on everyone else, KETV Channel 7 is showing the "Canned Film" fest on Thursdays at 11:30 p.m. Either way, us bad film fans are much maligned and it's about time we were recognized even if it took (gulp) corporate America, the Dr. Pepper folks, to have the guts to do it.

The bad film craze can be traced to 1977, with the publishing of "The 50 Worst Films of All-Time" by Harry and Michael Medved. The brothers followed with "The Golden Turkey Awards," "The Hollywood Hall of Shame," and "The Son of Golden Turkey Awards." Haughty intellectual film critic types all pounced on these works, dubbing them "ignorant" and "juvenile" — a great reason to read them.

For those with arty pretensions, bad film fandom simply reeks of anti-intellectualism. We loathe heavy analysis, because, let's face it fellow Robot Monsters, a film like the "Slime People" doesn't leave much room to intellectualize. The accent of these films is "camp" and our standard phrase can be credited to writer Susan Sontag who said: "It's good because it's awful."

These are reels of celluloid which start with good and bad intentions, and fail miserably. They all have a charming naivete. These filmmakers didn't know they were making crud.

There is a glorious mood of sentimentality that accompanies bad film fanatics. One of my pals relishes the memory of when he was twelve-years-old, devouring a box of Screaming Yellow Zonkers and watching the caveman opus "Eegah" (1962). I recall, with tears in my eyes, the night 15 of us crammed into a small room, munched corn dogs, and guffawed through "Zontar, The Thing From Venus."

For the most part the "Canned Film Festival" has done well in choosing hilarious stinkers. This is the whole point. Without ludicrous ideas, poor direction, and a healthy dose of histrionics, bad films fall prey to the most horrifying fate of all: boring badness. These films have something for everyone: wrestling, gorillas in space hel-

rets, future T.V. stars, the midget cowboy, the "has-been," and the "never-was."

Sure there could've been choices from other genres (bikers, rock n' roll) but who's complaining? These might not even be the worst films ever made, but it's up to you, the extremely patient viewer, to decide for yourself. Just don't be too surprised if fellow patrons skulk to the dungeon of living adjectives and hurl out "ludicrous," "awkward," "banal," and, last but not most importantly, "entertaining."

June 28th - midnight - "Doctor of Doom" (1962-Mexico)

A bad, Mexican, mad-doctor, feminist film.

Professor Wright, when he's not doing bad Ronald Coleman impressions, creates a Charles Bronson lookalike ape guy who eats raw spare ribs. Soon Gloria Venus and the Golden Ruby, the hero wrestlers, show up and defeat Gomar (the ape guy) and evil Doctor of Doom.

Watch for the great bad dubbing and the most militantly feminist scene: a big male wrestler enters the women wrestler's gym; he demands their barbell. After an exchange of put-downs, ten women wrestlers kick him in the Speedo and smother him in a massive pile-on.

"The Slime People" (1963)

Director-star-has-been Robert Hutton arrives in L.A. only to find that goopy-baggy costumed slime people have built a wall of fog around the city, and the fog has hardened!

He hides out with Professor Galbraith and his bad-acting daughters. When the professor gets really scientific he says stuff like "Sodium Chloride." I hate it when films get so technical!

Eventually Hutton and a young Marine engage in some vicious "hand to slime" combat complete with pole vaults and flying slime kicks. Fog permeates the whole film so be prepared to squint a lot. Incidentally, the word "slime" is said twenty times.

"They Saved Hitler's Brain" (1963)

This is a bare-faced lie, they don't save his brain, they save his head, and they thoughtfully put it in an old, empty water cooler where it occasionally gripes at other Nazis.

Look for the poorly constructed swastika and the Nazis who slide down the hall like grade schoolers. This film was originally released as "Madmen of Mandoras" (1963), then parts were filmed later in '66 or so and it was sold to television as "They Saved Hitler's Brain."

In the early days of Lincoln Cablevision Channel 9, they showed it every day for a week!

In one scene, after the hero Phil Day has heard how they've saved the aforementioned head he says "It's like a bad joke!" Need I say more?



Brian Mary/Daily Nebraskan

REVIEW BOARD

The Beat Farmers "Van Go" MCA

The latest fad among the local terminally trendy, artsy-fartsy set is to bite their pink, manicured thumbs, and flip their frilly little hankies in a great big collective pooh-pooh at cowpunk.

It's easy to see how cowpunk might offend the more delicate sensibilities. This mutant, bastard child of the two absolute lowest of musical forms: Punk mates with hick, Sid Vicious ravishes Loretta Lynn.

Now mutant bastards ain't pretty, they ain't charming, and they don't smell sweet, but one thing for sure, they're tough. All you synthesized sissies, ambient spaceheads, paisley-brained pseudo-hippies, and especially the feeble, ancient and inbred aristocracy of the rock mainstream, better hide your pitiful heads on the day that cowpunk decides it's time to leave the cave it was spawned in and come to town.

And that day may be now, because The Beat Farmers' "Van Go" wants nothing more than to stride right down the center aisle of the First Commercial Church of the Holy Trend during Sunday morning meeting, throw off its rags, and holler out in Country Dick Montana's stentorian bass "I am not an animal, I am a human being!"

This is my first Beat Farmers' record. My friends tell me that their older stuff is a lot rougher and wilder. That's OK, though, because "Van Go" is intended to be a revolution, not a riot. The Farmers are out to kick some mainstream butt, but they don't want break any furniture because they expect to be moving in themselves pretty soon.

This is a no frills rock 'n' roll outfit devoid of gimmicks, cuteness, and that missionary attitude that makes so many otherwise excellent roots rock bands so tedious in the final analysis.

The Beat Farmers' down-home attitude is real, not faked, but that doesn't mean they're dumb hicks. These boys are plenty bright, and they've got a nice and nasty sense of humor that brightens up track after track.

For instance, drummer and special missions vocalist Country Dick laments having a truck drivin' woman on "Big Ugly Wheels," the best truck driving song since "Phantom 309":

"She wants me to be true to her, / She comes home once a month, / Her mustache caked with vomit, / And teeth marks on her butt."

Or when Jerry Raney, the Farmers' usual vocalist describes the newest thing in Christian family entertainment:

"Well we'll ask the Lord to forgive us for all our sins / And we'll look at the latest in gold-plated firing pins. / Well my two main men are Jesus and old John Birch, / So we're goin' on down to the gun sale at the church."

Now you know the facts, what's it gonna be? Do you call yourself a revolutionary? Well, you can listen to some freak mumble about a proletarian, paisley, pot smoke-shrouded revolution that nobody even cares about, much less believes in any more, or you can have the glorious cowpunk honest-to-God rock 'n' roll revolution right on your turntable. Trendies or Beat Farmers, the choice is yours.

— Chris McCubbin

Killdozer, "Snake Boy"

This is ugly. Mindlessly, horribly ugly. From the blood splattered cover to the ugly title. Inside is a cover of Neil Young's "Cinnamon Girl" that strips the epidermis off the original with an acetyline torch. Ugly. Ugly. Ugly. Ideal for slam dancing in Bhopal or some other ugly place. Not music you like but music you put on to show your friends you can take it.

"Sure, I listen to this stuff all the time."

"Wow, man, all the time?"

"Sure, and uglier stuff, too."

"Wow."

— Charles Lieurance

"Evol" by Sonic Youth (SST)

Another god-worthy offering by the Sonic quartet. Music of pure raw emotion — out of tune, out of synch guitar noise produced by unorthodox finger positions and drumsticks used as instruments of musical distortion. A celebration of freedom at its most frenzied and violent pitch, Sonic Youth's musical intensity parallels the poetic contortions of their lyrics.

The music has progressed from an expression of emotion through the violence done to the musical instruments to an expression of emotion by the violence of the music itself.

"Evol" is not as rough as the earlier "Confusion is Sex" EP, but it's just as caustic. The music, though still somewhat disjointed has grown into a much more calculated disquiet. The lyrics have always concentrated on the same major theme, namely, breaking through sexual and emotional repression. And the synthesis of the two elements — music and lyrics — draws one into a Sonic world by laying bare the unsightly and painful that has been hidden by societal complacency. But this is the world of the individ-

ual. In "the Shadow of a Doubt" the turmoil, disquiet and guilt caused by an encounter with a stranger is relived and absolution is sought. In the final song from the album, "Expressway to yr. Skull," a melody finds itself in the middle of a nasty musical convulsion showcased by acerbic lyrics, and the *piece de resistance* is a calculated skip strategically placed at the end of the song to make sure it never ends...

Convert now.

— Bernadette Barnard

The Art of Noise, "In Visible Silence." Chrysalis Records.

Shotgun surrealism is a technique artists like Dali have used to shock the masses for one reason only... shock value. In the art world, shotgun surrealism refers to any aesthetic work that uses ridiculously bizarre images which convey no worthwhile meaning or purpose. Such folly seems to be imbued in the latest effort by The Art of Noise, a group of three British studio musicians who create what their name implies: noise, noise, noise!

But what beautiful noise they make.

The group soared to the top of the dance charts two years ago with "Close to the Edit," a grating, dance-oriented oddity that featured creepy chanting patterns and staccato drum machine programs. Club-hopping kids in London and New York loved its throbbing beat and quirky aura, but critics and high-brow musicians shrugged it off as over-produced, pretentious dance drivel. And The Noise had another, more serious strike against them — they didn't sing or write lyrics.

"In Visible Silence," their second release, is as meaningless and empty as their debut, but that's all it wants to be. The Noise has packaged another LP rife with electronically-produced beats, funky intonation patterns and strident sound effects.

Tracks like "Paranoimia," "Backbeat," and "Eye of the Needle" are merely high-tech musical acid trips that you can dance to or use as background noise. A remake of Henry Mancini's campy 1960 "Peter Gunn" theme is a jaunty, outer spaced-out slab of retro-kitsch that will thrill B-52 fans.

"In Visible Silence" is mindless yet engaging. The group seems to concentrate more on sound effects than substance. Evidently, however, that's exactly what they are trying to do.

— Scott Harrah

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