



The Glassy Eye

By
Dave
Meile

Friday, 9 a.m. WTBS, ch. 4 or Saturday, noon KPTM, ch. 9

"Terror in the Wax Museum" (1973) Ray Milland, Broderick Crawford

It's full of old movie stars and it's really crummy. Ray Milland runs a wax museum where murders have been occurring. Hard-drinkin' Broderick Crawford drinks and tries to solve the crime. After drinking some more he tries to bridge the generation gap by chasing after a buxom barmaid half his age. When she refuses he calls her a tramp. John Carradine has had dreams and hangs out with his deformed assistant, Karkov. At the end a guy swan-dives into a vat of molten wax. Are you surprised? Supposed to be in London, circa 1860, but looks more like CBS television studios, 1973.

Saturday, 10 a.m. KPTM, ch. 9

"Mighty Joe Young" (1948) Terry Moore, Robert Armstrong

It's a lot like "King Kong," so this should be a real simian weekend. It's even got Robert Armstrong from the original King Kong in the same role as a showman! Mighty Joe and his pal Terry Moore are brought to Hollywood where drunk guys bean Joe with champagne bottles. He gets sore and starts kicking butt. Great special effects by Willis O'Brien and Ray Harryhausen, who did "Jason and the Argonauts" and "The Seventh Voyage of Sinbad."

A couple of years back Moore claimed she was married to Howard Hughes and entitled to his fortune except that she didn't have the marriage certificate. When nobody believed her she was so mad that she went and posed nude in Playboy. That'll show us.

Saturday, 11 a.m. USA, Ch. 17

"The Alligator People" (1959) Beverly Garland, Lon Chaney

Before you start laughing about the title, let me explain a couple of things. First of all, this flick was distributed by a major studio, 20th Century Fox. It was even directed by Roy Del Ruth, a reliable old Hollywood "B" director, and the approach by all concerned was one of sincerity and earnestness.

Beverly Garland, the undisputed scream queen of the '50s, goes to an old plantation in Louisiana to search for her husband, who dashed off on their wedding night. She meets up with Lon Chaney, who looks really boss as a dipso plantation worker in desperate need of a shave. He's also got a cool "hook" hand and he's bitter: "I

hate them dirty stinkin' gators, they bit off my hand!" growls Lon as he fills stray reptiles full of lead with his trusty handgun.

After the spinster and the token mad doctor prove uncooperative, Bev discovers her husband in the parlor playing piano, wearing a trenchcoat and beginning to look pretty darn gatory. His voice is gravelly, which evidently means that if you ever become an alligator you'll wind up talking like David Janssen.

Finally it's time for Bev's husband to undergo a new laser operation that will turn him back into regular old run-of-the-mill actor. "I know when you come out of there you'll be your old handsome self," she tells her hubby, whose face looks like very expensive luggage. Chaney, full of Boone's Farm, bursts into the laboratory ready to tear the guy a new snout. Smoke bombs go off, and Paul emerges from the table with a full Gator head (which actually looks like a huge grinning duck). Lon gets electrocuted, Beverly screams, his mom faints, and Paul runs out and drowns in some quicksand. See ya later, Alligator. Thank you for your cooperation, you may now start laughing.

The Glassy Eye is pleased as punch that one of Lincoln's oldest Theaters, the State, is reopening after two or three months of inactivity. It's at 1415 O St. right next to the Fun Shop, so you can buy piles of fake vomit (known as "OOPS!") and fake dog crap (known as "Fake dog crap") before you take in a flick. This will be appropriate since the State Theatre is reopening with "King Kong Lives," the newest big-ape saga produced by Dino de Horrendous, who brought you "King Kong" (1976), a bastardization of the 1933 classic. The State is a great theater and is one of the few places where you still buy your ticket outside at the booth. You can even talk to the cashier through the little vent! I expect all loyal readers to attend the grand opening at 7 p.m. Dec. 19. Get a bucket of popcorn with hot yellow oil on it. Look for me, I'll be the one throwing Jujy Fruits at the screen.

The Clip and Save Dept.

As a special service to readers, here's a guide to good and bad flicks during the Christmas Holidays:

"Werewolf of London" (1935) The first sound werewolf flick. (WOWT, Sat., midnight)

"Captive Wild Woman" (1943) A doctor turns an ape into a woman. Starring Aquanetta, the woman whose name sounds like a hair spray.

(WOWT, Sat., 5 a.m.)

"Fighting Youth" (1935) A college quarterback fights the commies that have infiltrated his campus. (USA, Dec. 17, 3 a.m.)

"Anatomy of a Murder" (1959) Otto Preminger's courtroom drama incurred the wrath of censors in '59 for words such as "underpants." James Stewart is excellent. (WTBS, Dec. 18, 7 p.m.)

"To Kill a Mockingbird" (1962) Great novel, wonderful film. Gregory Peck won the 1962 Oscar for Best Actor for his portrayal of Atticus Finch. (WTBS, Dec. 18, 10 p.m.)

"Cool Hand Luke" (1967) One of many great Newman performances that went unrecognized by the Motion Picture Academy (WTBS, Dec. 20)

"The Frozen Ghost" (1945) Lon Chaney stars in this Inner Sanctum mystery based on the popular radio series of the '40s. The film is introduced by a evil head in a water cooler. Lots of whispering voiceovers. (WOWT, Dec. 20, midnight)

"Meet John Doe" (1941) Directed by Frank Capra (It's a Wonderful Life). It is like most Capra films, corny but entertaining. Gary Cooper stars as a man who, because of all the injustice in the world, vows to commit suicide on Christmas Eve unless people of the world wise up. President Reagan likes to quote from Capra films as a reinforcement of his policies. They aren't. (USA, Dec. 24)

"Touch of Evil" (1958) Considered a minor classic by some, it also stars Orson Wells directed after a long hiatus. Sleazy, fascinating and well-photographed. (WGN, Dec. 26)

"Man with a Synthetic Brain" (1956/71) Another piece of trash from trashmeister Al Adamson, featuring go-go dancers, ex-Disney stars, John Carradine, and — most important of all — a zombie guy with an electronic brain. Three films pieced together, it was also released as "Blood of Ghastly Horror." (USA, Dec. 27)

"Son of Godzilla" (1969) Godzilla teaches his son Minya to blow smoke rings. (WTBS, Dec. 30)

On a further Godzilla note, watch WOWT Jan. 10 at midnight for "Godzilla vs. the Smog Monster," an environmentalist epic in which our hero fights an evil pollution monster. Right to Lifers will be appalled when Zilla performs an abortion on the nasty bilge pile. Great Japanese rock tunes like "Save the Earth." Merry Christmas.

Cray's album is bluest of blues in 1986

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crafted, smooth LP with masterful songwriting backed up with Cray's powerful and soulful voice.

Cray's guitar doesn't overwhelm this LP, although it certainly could if he wanted it to. Even more important than his cool picking, are the stories Cray tells. Sure, almost 90 percent of the songs on "Strong Persuader" are about "those cheatin' women." Cheating women are a time-honored tradition in blues lyrics. But Cray doesn't go for the hackneyed "My baby left me and found somebody new blah, blah, blah" approach. On "I Guess I Showed Her," Cray sings:

"I pay the clerk and move right in/ A single room with a twin/ Room 16 ain't got no view/ But the hot plate's brand new/ I guess I showed her."

On the next song, "Right Next Door (Because of Me)," Cray tells the story of how a man breaks up a couple just so he can "put another notch on my guitar." He hears the couple's hearts breaking and feels the guilt. All the best songs on "Strong Persuader" are stacked on the first side. A local critic called

Cray's latest the blues album of the decade.

Side two doesn't do much for me. The quality of songs aren't nearly as high, and the betrayal theme starts to be redundant. Blues LP of the decade, no; blues LP of 1986, yes. Besides, Cray has three years to outdo himself.

Lonnie Brooks, "Wound Up Tight" (Alligator Records).

It shouldn't be a surprise that Texas guitarist Johnny Winter makes a guest appearance on Lonnie Brooks' latest LP. Both are former rock 'n' roll guitarists turned bluesmen and Brooks was one of Winter's guitar heroes from his childhood in Texas. But where Winter has turned wholeheartedly back into pure blues, Lonnie is keeping a beautiful melange of rock 'n' blues.

Brooks has been playing on the road for 30 years, touring as Sam Cooke's guitarist, a rock 'n' roller, a top-40 player and country-western picker, and of course, some Cajunzydeco music from his native Louisiana. He played whatever payed the bills for years until signing on Alligator in the late '70s.

On "Wound Up Tight" the rock influence remains. "Got Lucky Last

Night," the opening song rocks out with a rift lifted from "The Crawl" and searing licks from Winter. Brooks rarely slows down for a slow tempo song. He boogies Texas style on "Bewitched" and "Boomerang," making some of the most danceable blues rock around. What make Brooks more blues than rock, no matter what his guitar is doing, is his powerful, bluesy voice. He growls and moans with an intensity unmatched by present-day blues singers.

His voice and with his rock 'n' blues guitar make Brooks reportedly one of the most exciting live acts on the circuit. "Wound Up Tight" successfully captures some of this performance energy, which is a difficult task.

Albert Collins, "Cold Snap" (Alligator Records).

Albert Collins, "The Master of the Telecaster," has been called the greatest blues guitarist in the world. Personally, with all the great blues guitarists around and with all their different styles, I could never bring myself to call one better than the other. But if I were to make up some kind of top-10 list, Collins would definitely be near the top.

Collins is also widely known for

mixing in some jazz and funk to break up straight blues tedium. To get funky, two ingredients are necessary, a great bassist and some powerful horns. "Cold Snap" has both. Collins' regular bassist, Johnny B. Gayden, who filled in for Magic Slim's bass player last month at the Zoo Bar, snaps the bass strings on "Cash Talkin' (The Working Man's Blues)" and "Bending Like A Willow Tree," the first two blues-funk songs on the LP. From there, Collins stretches out into some big-band jams with the "Uptown Horns" and jazz organist extraordinaire Jimmy McGriff.

All this jazz, funk and blues makes a fun LP. Collins' choice of songs is no accident, either. Besides a couple of slow, traditional blues songs, Collins picked out some boppin' songs with humorous lyrics. In "I Ain't Drunk," Collins plays the alcoholic's denial game.

"I ain't drunk/ I'm just drinkin'," he lies. "But you're so high/ You stay drunk all the time," the chorus chides. On side A Collins tells his woman to stick with him because "A Good Fool is Hard to Find."

Collins could simply blow away the listeners with his stinging gui-

tar solos, but that would get old. Thankfully, he's more concerned with making fun, danceable music, and that's what "Cold Snap" is.

The blues in Lincoln

If final exams and papers are giving you the blues, dead week and finals week is a perfect time to see two great blues guitarists practice their art. Chicago's Magic Slim and the Teardrops make their final appearances of 1986 tonight through Sunday. Sunday will be the now-traditional "Blues and Bar-b-que Night." Ernie will park his famous barbecue truck outside the Zoo, and the audience is encouraged to eat the best ribs and chicken in town while enjoying Magic Slim, the giant of Chicago Blues.

Next week, Matt "Guitar" Murphy, the Blues Brothers' guitarist on all their albums and in the movie, jams Monday through Saturday.

If you're interested in hearing any of the artists mentioned in this article, KZUM, 89.5 or 99.3 on the FM dial, has several excellent blues shows that encourage requests.

Tonight and all Thursdays Jim Anderson, Lincoln's blues guru, is host of "Nothin' But the Blues" from midnight to 3 a.m. or later.