

1940 flicks find time on boob tube

The Glassy Eye By Dave Meile

Thursday, 7:05 p.m. WTBS, Ch. 4:

"High Plains Drifter" (1973)
The guy with no name.

A really spooky, mysterious guy rides into town (Clint Eastwood). Who are you? everyone asks. Is he God, or Jesus, or the Angel of Death? The mysterious guy fills a bunch of unkempt guys full of lead (Jesus or God or the Angel of Death apparently would've wanted it that way) and then burns the town to the ground.

All-purpose midget actor Billy Curtis from "The Wizard of Oz," (last seen frequenting the posh Hamburger Haven in L.A.), keeps asking Clint: "What's your name?" Maybe he's Rowdy Yates, since the town bartender is the scuzzy cook, Wishbone, from "Rawhide." One last question: But, Clint, could you act your way out of a paper bag? Jesus/God/Angel of Death smiles. He knows better. In the

Clint Eastwood Self-Plagiarism and Allusions to "Shane" Department, check out "Pale Rider."

Friday, 1 a.m. USA, Ch. 17:
"Club Havana" (1945) Tom Neal, Margaret Lindsay.

Minimalist filmmaking from cheapjack PRC studios. It's worth a look since it's directed by cult fave Edgar G. Ulmer. Leading man Tom Neal is best known as the doomed man in Ulmer's fatalistic noir piece "Detour," for punching out fellow actor Franchot Tone over the affections of starlet Barbara Payton. And for being convicted of manslaughter in the death of his third wife in 1965.

"Virginia City" (1940) Errol Flynn, Senor Bogart.

A harmless Warner pic with some pretty strange casting. Bogart as a Mexican saying, "Si, Senor."

WOWT's Dale Munson's Late Night Theatre

Saturday, 5 a.m. Ch. 6:

"Man-Made Monster" (1941)
Lon Chaney Jr., Lionel Atwill.

Dynamo Dan, the Electric Man (Chaney) in a circus sideshow, is injured in a car wreck and is turned into a luminous zombie by one of Doc Atwill's (white lab coat appearance #892) fiendish experiments. Dan kills numerous people,



Courtesy of Ernest Haller



Courtesy of Universal Pictures

Lon Chaney Jr. and Lionel Atwill in "Man-Made Monster."

is hauled into court and says "I killed 'em" 27 times.

The movie is enhanced by John P. Fulton's special effects and Chaney's sympathetic portrayal, which was used to full effect a year later in director George Waggner's real classic, "The Wolfman." Stoke up the VCR for this encore presentation.

Saturday, 9:30 a.m. Ch. 2:
"Sherlock Holmes and the Voice of Terror" (1942)

Just like "Sherlock Holmes in Washington," Arthur Conan Doyle's 19th-century detective somehow ends up in World War II England to help the Brits find the originator of Nazi propaganda radio broadcasts. Great fun. Watch for fish-faced bad guy Sir Henry Daniel, who in other Holmes entries played his enemy, Professor Moriarty.

Saturday, 2 p.m. Ch. 9:
"Guyana: Cult of the Damned" (Mexico—1980) Stuart Whitman.

The true meaning of exploitation filmmaking wherein oodles of has-beens are flown to Mexico to capitalize on the death of hundreds of lethal Kool-Aid fans. Stuart Whitman is the Rev. Jim Johnson.

Bette Davis and her "evil twin."

Also featuring Lily Munster.

Director Rene Cardona Jr. also did the tacky TV movie about the Brazilian soccer team that crashed in the Andes and resorted to cannibalism (remember Filet of Pele?). His father, the great Rene Cardona Sr., did hilariously trashy films in Mexico about voluptuous wrestling women battling gorilla men ("Doctor of Doom") and mummies (The Wrestling Women vs. the Aztec Mummy).

With a history like this, "Guyana: Cult of the Damned," perverse as it probably is, should be a real hoot.

Saturday, 11 p.m. Ch. 16:
"Double Dynamite" (1951)
Frank Sinatra, Groucho Marx, Jane Russell.

Considering it has old Blue Eyes, criticism must be worded carefully or I may wind up with a cement overcoat and tossed into the East River. Please don't watch this. It is strictly pedestrian, and even Groucho is relegated to doing lame Catskills club schticks. "Duck Soup" it isn't. Sinatra was a has-been at this point of his rather tainted career. Two years later he would get an Oscar for his rather

overrated performance in "From Here to Eternity."

Saturday, 2:15 a.m. Ch. 6:
"All Through the Night" (1942)
Humphrey Bogart, Peter Lorre.

Bogart as Gloves Donohue is a Broadway gambler who infiltrates a gang of Nazis. Great cast includes Karen Verne (who?), Martin Kosleck (Nazi portrayal #395) and Peter Lorre. Look for a very young Jackie Gleason (as Starchie) and Phil Silvers as a waiter.

Sunday, 2:30 a.m. Ch. 4:

"Dead Ringer" (1964) Bette Davis, Karl Malden.

A Bette Davis Evil Twin movie!! The evil twin murders the good twin and assumes her identity. Both twins were after the same man. Whattcha call "dumb fun."

Directed by "Casablanca" co-star Paul Henreid, who also did a great evil-twin movie called "Hollow Triumph." Much like Joan Crawford, Bette made her living in the '60s doing "scary hag" films like "Hush, Hush Sweet Charlotte," "Whatever Happened to Baby Jane?," "The Nanny" and "The Anniversary" (where Bette wears a cool eye patch).

Theater professor uses innovative attitude

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over your life as a professional actor," he said.

Though he enjoys acting, he says he is gradually fading it out to further his directing career. But he will return to New York this summer to work in a show — but on his

terms.

His "terms" include a show with plenty of movement and experimentation. He found and began to explore and perform in experimental theater while in college. He says he finds experimental theater more interesting than conventional theater.

"It's got to be innovative," he said. "The director has to have a vision of the show. I've got to be inspired, not by the money, but how it will change the world, and it's got to be challenging for me as an actor."

"The power of the theater is to show them (the audience) things

they would never anticipate, something not like their life," he said.

"TV and movies capture realism better than I, so I try for a more dream-like quality, or in the abstract. A lot of people have trouble with that," he said.

He describes his upcoming Theatrix production as "a fusion of

music, theater and dance." He says he enjoys giving his productions a dream-like quality with a no-holds-barred flavor.

"As a director, you have control of your art, and the sky's the limit," he said. "Most people will hate what you do, but that doesn't mean you're wrong."