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April 29 2014 16:19

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**Film review: Jaguar**

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The Catered Affair

Another television script proves mild in theatre screen form. Drab story. Spotty prospects for Chayefsky story despite strong cast.

Hollywood, April 24. Metro release of Sam Zimbalist production stars Bette Davis, Ernest Borgnine, Debbie Reynolds, Barry Fitzgerald, Jr., Victor Mature, Robert Simon, Madge Kennedy, Dorothy Stickney, Carol Veazie, Joan Camden, Dan Tully. Directed by Richard Brooks. Screenplay, Gore Vidal; play, Paddy Chayefsky; camera, John Alton; editors, Jerome Hughes, Grant Santillo; music, Andre Previn. Previewed April 20, '56. Running time, 72 MINS.

The Bronx bourgeoisie, represented by the Irish in the family, is the chief concern of this little comedy-drama originally teleplayed by Paddy Chayefsky, and now put into screen form by Gore Vidal also from tv, for Metro production. The entertainment is mild, the prospects spotty.

Producer Sam Zimbalist has packed the star ranks with the best with the names of Bette Davis, Ernest Borgnine, Debbie Reynolds and Barry Fitzgerald so top-of-the-bill bookings generally should be the rule. Overall, the performances are good, and there are occasionally amusing and touching moments in the otherwise talky, mostly drab, affair under Richard Brooks' direction.

The dramatic to do set up by the plot whirled around Ma Hurley's decision to give her daughter a catered wedding, overruling the daughter's objections and overruling the meager savings of taxi-driving Pa Hurley. Script has a repetitious quality in the spate of pros and cons tossed but, eventually, the more unpleasant truths have been spoken, the catered affair is called off, with the mother and father winding up closer than they have ever been. Dominant emotion aroused is one of feeling sorry for everyone concerned, but principally for the daughter, Maureen, and her fiancé, Rod Taylor, both of whom handle their characters very well.

As the mother (played on tv by Thelma Ritter), Miss Davis is consistent in performance, if not with her dialect, and proves a strong force on the drama side of the film. Borgnine's scenes as the father have less force with the exception of the moment when he tells his side of a weary marriage to his nagging spouse, Fitzgerald, as a 12-year visiting relative, brogues most of the chutes and Dorothy Stickney is good as his latter-day romance. Others good include Robert Simon and Madge Kennedy, as Taylor's parents, and Joan Camden's sad matron-of-honor-to-be, and Jay Adler, a cable.

A technical oddity created by John Alton's rear-sized, black-and-white photography of the drab Bronx setting and the projection at the preview gave the picture a look of a kinescope, instead of a motion picture. Brog.

Unidentified Flying Objects (DOCUMENTARY)

Carefully documented report on the "flying saucer" investigations, including hitherto secret footage of "saucers" in flight. Interesting, informative and important.

Hollywood, April 23. United Artists release of Clarence Greene-Russell Home presentation, produced by Greene. Directed by Winston Jones. Written by Francis Martin; camera, Howard A. Anderson, Ed Fitzgerald, Bert Spirovoogel; editor, Chester Schaeffer; music, Ernest Gold; conducted by Emil Newman. Previewed April 23, '56. Running time, 91 MINS.

In the wake of a rash of scientific subjects dealing with interplanetary travel that has stirred public imagination, producers Clarence Greene and Russell Home have scored an authentic hit with the first documented feature film based on the continuing governmental probe into the phenomenon generally known as "Unidentified Flying Objects" or "UFO." Based on secret footage (in color) of "saucers" in flight, the film visualizes the widely held theory that the objects have been flying objects apparently controlled by an intelligent force, the which is totally un-sensational terms. It not only proves that the real, but it does it

without sensationalism. Rather, the producers have injected an almost studiously documentary flavor that sometimes detracts from the presentation. For while the film is interesting, informative and important, it sometimes tends to obvious theatrics to emphasize its recreation of known events, particularly the appearance of a flight of unidentified objects over Washington, D. C.

Basically, the story is that of Albert M. Chop, onetime newspaperman who became head of the Press Section of the Air Materiel Command, who was directly involved in "Project Bluebook," the Air Force's official designation for the secret investigation of UFO. Also depicted are Captain Edward J. Ruppelt, who headed "Bluebook" and Major Dewey Fournet, J. Pentagon liaison officer on the project. All have attested to the accuracy and validity of the events depicted.

"UFO" tells the story of the project, of the careful analysis of the hundreds of reports of "sightings" and of the care and research that went into the Air Force's handling of a touchy matter. In addition to the secret footage of "saucers" in action over Utah and Montana, it tells for the first time the story of the Washington "invasion," which was tracked on radar screens but erroneously listed as caused by an inversion. This error also is cleared up. For the first time in the film in what amounts to a gripping climax.

Unfortunately, in the careful documentation, too much time has been spent on background and almost 40 minutes elapses before the first footage of the "saucers" in action is screened. The feature moves at a quicker tempo from this point.

Born of the fact that Greene himself had seen an unidentified flying object in the sky, the film carefully presents the official findings that 15% of all "sightings" cannot be explained. And it ends on the three important questions: "What are They? Where are They? From? Who Made Them?" Winston Jones' direction of the recreated scenes have a tendency to be stilted and the camerawork of Howard A. Anderson, Ed Fitzgerald and Bert Spirovoogel occasionally has an amateur feel, a circumstance which sometimes lessens the documentary flavor.

Like its subject matter, "UFO" seems like a mystery, boxoffice-bait and the skeptics will hail it and the skeptics will avoid it. If there are still enough people with open minds on the subject left in the country, it should register well. Government approval or disapproval would produce a definite boxoffice effect. A noncommittal attitude, however, could relegate "UFO" to the ranks of a seven-day boxoffice wonder. Kap.

Godzilla, King of the Monsters (JAPANESE)

Despite mediocre acting, Japanese import shapes as lusty exploitation entry for that type situation.

Embassy Pictures release of Toho Company Tanaka production. Stars Dr. Yamano, Akira Takarada, Momoko Kuchi, Akira Takarada. Directed by Ishiro Honda. Screenplay, Shigeru Kayama. Special effects, Masao Tamai and Guy Roe. Special effects, Eiji Tsuburaya, Akira Watanabe, Hiroshi Yamaguchi, Kunitada Iwatsuki. Editor, Terry Morse; music, Akira Hukube. Previewed April 18, '56. Running time, 80 MINS.

Godzilla, King of the Monsters, a Japanese import which Terry Turner and Joe Levine of Boston's Embassy Pictures Corp. picked up in association with Harry Rybnick and Ed Barson. A contemporary "King Kong" it should generate a b.o. excitement in houses geared to ballooning product and its production is also worth watching after the lullars harassed by the current product shortage.

Story of a prehistoric monster, who emerges from the sea to dole out special effects lessons. There's some striking realism as the 400-foot tall "thing" lashes a Japanese metropolis, spreading flames from his mouth, trampling down skyscrapers and uprooting bridges from their foundations. The film's yarn, of course, is just a touch of imagination. Acting, too, is impressive particularly the special effects of Raymond Burr, lone American in

Madame Butterfly

"Madame Butterfly," an Italo-Japanese co-production which premiered Monday (23) at the Baronet Theatre, N.Y., was reviewed in Tokyo by VARIETY in the issue of April 27, 1955. In appraising the Technicolor film's b.o. prospects in the U.S. market, Lars, who was reviewed in Tokyo by VARIETY in the issue of April 27, 1955. In appraising the Technicolor film's b.o. prospects in the U.S. market, Lars, who was reviewed in Tokyo by VARIETY in the issue of April 27, 1955. In appraising the Technicolor film's b.o. prospects in the U.S. market, Lars, who was reviewed in Tokyo by VARIETY in the issue of April 27, 1955.

Reviewer also pointed out that "this is the first definitive filmed version of Puccini's famous opera. Combining the talents of Japanese actors and actresses with Italian voices, Japanese art directors and set designers (with the music of Puccini played by an Italian orchestra) under an Italian director could only result in a filmed "Butterfly" which will probably never be equaled until it is made in Japan with native sets.

"But this is still a filmed opera, and one can't forget viewing it. This is no realistic motion picture, telling a plausible story. There are anachronisms throughout and librettist J. L. Long's original libretto licenses with reality have been retained in the film. Still it is a far more effective presentation of the opera than could be done in an opera house."

Performances are impressive, wrote Lars, who emphasized that "greatest praise" must go to Kaoru Yachigusa in the title role... The director, "starring" Puccini, from her Italian and Japanese co-workers. Voices of the Italian singers, critic added, are "superb." I.T.E. Kinging Corp., which is distributing the Rizoli-Toho-Gallone production in the U.S., has added an English narration to the foot-ages that help explain the story for those who may be unfamiliar with it. Running time, including a brief prologue, is 114 minutes.

an otherwise all Japanese cast. These deficiencies are more than offset by the startling special effects which obviously lend themselves to strong promotion.

Much of the dialog has been dubbed into English. In the non-dubbed sequences an English narration handled by Burr adequately explains what's going on. Takeo Murata, who plays a screenplay based on an original by Shigeru Kayama hints that hydrogen bomb experiments have activated a prehistoric monster, known to Japanese legend as Godzilla.

When the monster becomes a menace the Japanese government launches an investigation headed by paleontologist Takashi Shimura, his daughter and assistant Momoko Kuchi, her naval officer boy friend, Akira Takarada, and numerous scientists. They're accompanied by Burr, an American newspaperman who is impervious to shellfire and high voltage, ultimately is finished off by a secret weapon of scientist Akihiko Hirata.

Joint direction of Terry Morse and Akira Hukube is properly accented by the horror sequences which have been excellently lensed by a quartet of special effects cameramen. Balance of the camerawork, filmed by Masao Tamai and Guy Roe, is good. Physical values provided by producer Tomoyuki Tanaka reflect a high budget according to Japanese standards. Music of Akira Hukube, Morse's editing and other technical credits further assist in pointing up this import's elements. Gibb.

Legends of Anika (YUGOSLAVIAN)

Sexy Yugoslav import; fair art house b.o. potential.

Grand Prize Films release of Avala Film production. Stars Milena Dapevic, Bratislav Gribic. Directed by Vladimir Pogacic. Screenplay, Vjekoslav Jasovic based on novel by Ivo Andric; music, Srebrko Kacic; editor, Milada Raisic-Levic; music, Kreimir Baranovic. At 22nd St. Playhouse, N.Y., April 26. Running time, 83 MINS.

An exotic Yugoslavian import, "Legends of Anika" has attracted a lot of art house attention is a tale of a young girl, Anika, who is kidnapped by a gypsy and sold into slavery. The film's story is of lust and passions and its production values are in short crude. But despite the film's shortcomings, its beauty is enough to excite the interest of audiences in search of something different. Based on a novel by Ivo Andric,

script concerns the amatory problems of Bratislav Gribic. A strapping, intelligent youth, he's seduced by a bonyon farmer's wife with a fixation for things carnal. When her clumsy husband intrudes upon the trust his spouse dispatches him with a knife seized from her frightened guest.

Period is circa 1804 and its indicated that Yugoslav citizens were relatively broad minded in those days. But nevertheless Gribic develops a guilt complex. He travels far afield to think things over as a shepherd. His thoughts occupy him for eight years. But at this point he returns home to find his frustrated childhood sweetheart, Milena Dapevic, plying the trade of a harlot.

While free with her favors, it's obvious that Miss Dapevic cherishes only one male. Unfortunately, the love she has for her wit brother slays her in a fit of rage. In this grim and frequently sensuous tale Miss Dapevic exercises a saucy, blase demeanor that's on par with the eloquence of her flashing eyes and dark wavy hair. It's a strong contrast to Gribic's moody, almost melancholy performance.

Fair support is provided by Severin Bjelic and Mata Mileovic in lesser roles. Flavor and atmosphere of the era are further accentuated by scenes of several native dances. These, as well as the film's rugged types and terrains, are ably lensed in grim, low-key style by Alexander Sekulovic. Heavy-handed direction of Vladimir Pogacic is in keeping with the dark shadings of this gloomy tale. Sidney Kaufman's English narration and subtitles are adequate. Gibb.

Jaguar

Poorly written routine jungle yarn for less discriminating producer. Mickey Rooney as a producer.

Hollywood, April 20. Republic release of a Mickey Rooney-Maurice Duke production. Stars Sabu, Maurice Chevalier, Barton MacLane, Mary Lang. Touch Connors. Directed by George Blair. Screenplay, John Fenton Murray-Benedict. Previewed April 16, '56. Running time, 44 MINS.

Sabu plays a young South American who is captured as a small boy in the jungle by a British doctor and raised in civilization, a far cry from his savage Indian ancestor. His great fear is that he is reverting to the jungle savagery, occasioned when he comes under suspicion of brutal murder during an expedition up river to discover gold. He thinks he may have committed three murders while under the influence of a drug without being aware of it, but finally proves his innocence to himself after he is captured by Indians.

The John Fenton Murray-Benedict Freedman screenplay permits no more than stock portrayals by the cast and George Blair's direction never rise above script. Chiquita, the dancer, is in for romantic interest; Jonathan Hale is Sabu's foster-father and Barton MacLane and Touch Connors wildcat oil prospectors. Technical credits are standard. Whit.

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Films Need

"foreign" whereas U still groups U. S. and the Dominion as "domestic" business.

Differing from majors like Metro and 20th-Fox, which still have farflung overseas theatres and bunch that revenue into the momentarily a producing and distributing organization, and depends 100% on U. P. sales for revenue. Rackmil, Daff, studio topper Ed Muhl, et al., will stress U's current crop of pictures. There are 8-10 "good" pictures in the can, and the hoopla will embrace universal sales pepper-upper for Universal product.

Christophers

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"Studio One"; producer Richard Lewis, director Sobe Martin and writer Ed Adamson for "Fear," given on CBS-"Crusader"; producer Lee Cooley, director Grey Lockwood, writers Goodman Ace, Jay Burton, Mort Green and George Foster and musical director Mitchell Ayres for the NBC Perry Como show of March 17; producer Frederick Heider, director Cort Steen and writer Jean Meegan for "Springtime U.S.A." on ABC-"Firestone Hour"; and producer Maury Holland, director George Roy Hill, writer John Whedon and set designer Duane McKinley for "A Night to Remember" on the NBC-Kraft show, to be repeated in kine form next month.

Reich Hopeful

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Real Film (Hamburg), Carleton (Munich) and VCC (Berlin) outfits. Podhorzer, a cec in the German film field he's also prey of Casino Film Exchange, said many elements in Germany were mulling the idea of having a German showcase house on Broadway that would play German releases on a regular basis. "Until the industry gets ready to act jointly—and that time hasn't come as yet—individual producers think this would be an excellent idea," he said. "I've been asked to look into the possibilities of such a setup."

Question of whether or not to dub for the American market was one that most producers asked him. Podhorzer reported. There's a reluctance on the part of the producers to shell out the additional \$15,000 or so for dubbing unless there's a possibility that the picture can then also be sold to tv.

Podhorzer opined that a brace of German pix he had seen were good enough to crack the ice in the U.S. "One of the obstacles to overcome, of course," he said, "is the fear American exhibitors have in connection with the German product. Once a treatman has been burned, it's very hard to convince him he should try again, regardless of how good the arguments." Podhorzer stressed the need for the Germans to get together and back up their new releases in the U.S. "Quality is fine," he said, "but it isn't enough by itself in a market where the proper promotion of pictures is the battle half won."

Skouras Load

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departure of Darryl F. Zanuck (temporary or otherwise), is on top of production at the studio where Budy Adler is in charge. He's also in very close touch with domestic distribution where the chores of general sales manager have just been taken over by Alex Harrison.

Apart from that, Skouras has always given much time and thought to foreign distribution, and he now seems to have taken on another major project—the creation of a talent school in New York. Associates of the 20th prey are voicing some concern over the pace he's keeping, and there is a general expectation that, as the new men get broken in at their posts, he'll leave more of the immediate responsibility to them. Also, Skouras now has William C. Gehring as v.p. and his exec assistant and is in a position to delegate some of the time-consuming detail work to him. This would include appearances at the various exhibit meets where 20th policy is to be stated.

Pressure on Skouras and his staff has grown somewhat in recent months, not only because of the various exec changes, but also because the company's last quarter of '55 and the first three months of 1956 have been below par. Situation is expected to improve radically during the second quarter when the results of "Carousel" and "Man in the Gray Flannel Suit" will begin to show.

Apart from theatrical field, Skouras also is giving his attention to tv in which 20th is active via the production of several series. Outfit is currently huddling with various tv film distributors on the sale of all or part of its library. Latter has been split into 10 packages of 50 pix each for lease to video.



**Publication title:** Variety (Archive: 1905-2000)

**Volume:** 202

**Issue:** 8

**Pages:** 6

**Publication year:** 1956

**Publication date:** Apr 25, 1956

**Publisher:** Penske Business Media

**Place of publication:** Los Angeles

**Country of publication:** United States

**Publication subject:** Theater, Motion Pictures, Communications--Television And Cable

**ISSN:** 00422738

**Source type:** Magazines

**Language of publication:** English

**Document type:** film\_review

**ProQuest document ID:** 964051469

**Document URL:**

<http://libproxy.uwo.edu/login/?url=http://search.proquest.com/docview/964051469?accountid=14793>

**Copyright:** Copyright Reed Business Information

**Last updated:** 2012-04-05

**Database:** Entertainment Industry Magazine Archive

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