

SYNERGY MAGAZINE

MAY 2009

TEAR SHEET

Attached is a Tear Sheet of a review prepared by Synergy Magazine, we welcome corrections, additions or comments.

Your feedback is always appreciated.
Robert Black
Editor
Synergy Magazine

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The Retro Visions of Christopher Mihm

Christopher R Mihm Biography and Background

Christopher H Mihm's filmmaking career began in 2005 with his first film **"The Monster of Phantom Lake."** However, to really appreciate the raison d'être behind Mihm's films you must first come to appreciate his late father George Mihm. His father would tell great stories of spending cold, small-town Minnesota winters in the relative warmth of his local movie house, taking in double features of trashy, B-grade science fiction and horror flicks.

For a quarter he'd see double bills with such classics as **"Village of the Damned"** ("The eyes..." he'd tell Mihm.) and **"Them!"** ("Giant ants!" he would exclaim.)

When Christopher was a kid, his dad would rent these movies over and over again. They would frequently watch them together although, at the time, Christopher could never quite figure out just what it was his dad saw in this low-grade and hardly frightening genre of cinema.

At age 51, in the year 2000, his father died of stomach cancer. Since then Christopher has revisited many of these old movies and realized, they're just not the same without him.

Fellow producer and actor Josh Craig and Christopher had been friends for many years. And regularly discussed making their own movie. Seeing those old movies again and enjoying their often poorly written dialogue, barely passable camera work and marginal special effects, an idea arose. In Christopher's own word's "What would happen if Josh and I stopped talking about it and actually made a movie? And not just ANY movie but THIS kind



Christopher Mihm with Josh "Jackson"

of movie, one that a ten year old version of my dad would approve of?"

That thought soon took over and the obsession began. Before they knew what hit them **"The Monster of Phantom Lake"** was born and they were holding auditions and then amazingly, shooting a movie !

The film was finally released in March 2006 to highly receptive crowds and has since played at numerous film festivals. An award-winning sequel, **"It Came From Another World!"**, followed in May 2007 and a third, **"Cave Women on Mars"** in April 2008.

A fourth film, **"Terror from Beneath the Earth"** will premiere on May 20th, 2009.

The Monster of Phantom Lake
Written & Directed by Christopher R Mihm
B&W
Saint Euphoria Studios
Web: <http://www.sainteuphoria.com>

Reviewer: Bob Estreich

This film promises us “*Unbridled Terror, Unquenchable Romance, Unbelievable Science, and the Unstoppable Power of the Rock and Roll*”. Christopher Mihm offers us another take-off of those dreadful 1950s horror films that graced many a late night session at the drive-in.

Professor Jackson and his assistant are camping near Phantom Lake, ready to engage in some research. I was a bit concerned when Professor Jackson suggests that his young female graduate assistant, Miss Yates, should “get it from the rear”, but apparently he is referring to their camping gear in the back of the car. At the same time a group of young people are camped nearby, and one tells the story of the old war veteran who lives in the area. He killed his wife and is now completely crazy, roaming the woods and muttering about “the Germans”. We add to this mix some workers from a local factory who are dumping atomic waste into the lake, and we are ready to begin the slaughter.

“I was only fooling, Miss Yates. You do like to fool around, don’t you?”

In the morning the Professor and Miss Yates start to “do a little science”, and test the water of the lake. A strange growth catches their attention, and they are about to run it through the Evolutatronic Spectronaliser when the Professor spots an eight-legged frog. Is it the next step in amphibian evolution or ... something far more

Phantom Lake Monster Attacks



.... insidious? Yes, Professor Jackson does talk like ... that. The algae is also giving strange results so they take it back to their camp for closer examination. The youngsters, meanwhile, have gone for a hike in the woods and managed to get lost. They have also seen a strange large four-fingered pawprint high on a tree. While trying to find their way back to their camp they run across the Professor and Miss Yates.

The boys take the Professor back into the woods to examine the pawprint, and on their way back they discover an empty canoe that was used by the local Canoe Cops, and then find the veteran’s camp. It has been thoroughly trashed. Meanwhile Miss Yates has analysed the algae and found that it is a partly human hybrid.

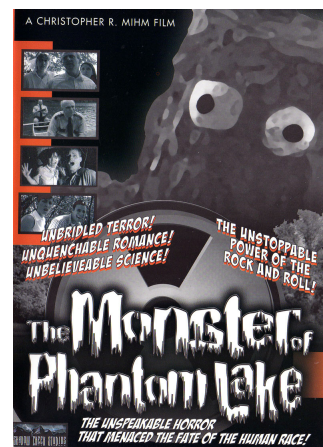
That evening another load of atomic waste goes into the lake, and the two men dumping it are pulled into the lake as well. And that night, the world’s fakiest –looking monster comes out of the lake – to feed? “The unspeakable horror that menaced the fate of the human race ! “ Only one person can save humanity.

“Will self-proclaimed “scared of everything” teenager Elizabeth confront her worst fears?”

How many more will die? Will they die laughing? The film has all the essential ingredients, right down to the cheesy “Holiday For Strings” – type music as the teenagers frolic through the woods, and the brassy ominous tracks as the monster stands there with its arms outstretched reaching for ...???

The film is accurate though subtle in its comedy, but it’s obviously a labour of love from someone who has spent far too much time watching the old movies. I commend it to you.

The DVD includes the usual deleted scene, bloopers, and commentary.



It Came from Another World
Written and Directed by Christopher W Mihm
Produced by Christopher W Mihm and Josh Craig
Saint Euphoria Studios
Web: <http://www.sainteuphoria.com>

Reviewer: Bob Estreich

Excitement ! Suspense ! Canoes !

There's been an event ! Something has caused an earthquake in an area that is otherwise geologically stable, and a previously unknown radiation has been detected. A scientist, Professor Jackson, is sent to investigate, with a couple of local guides, the Canoe Cops.

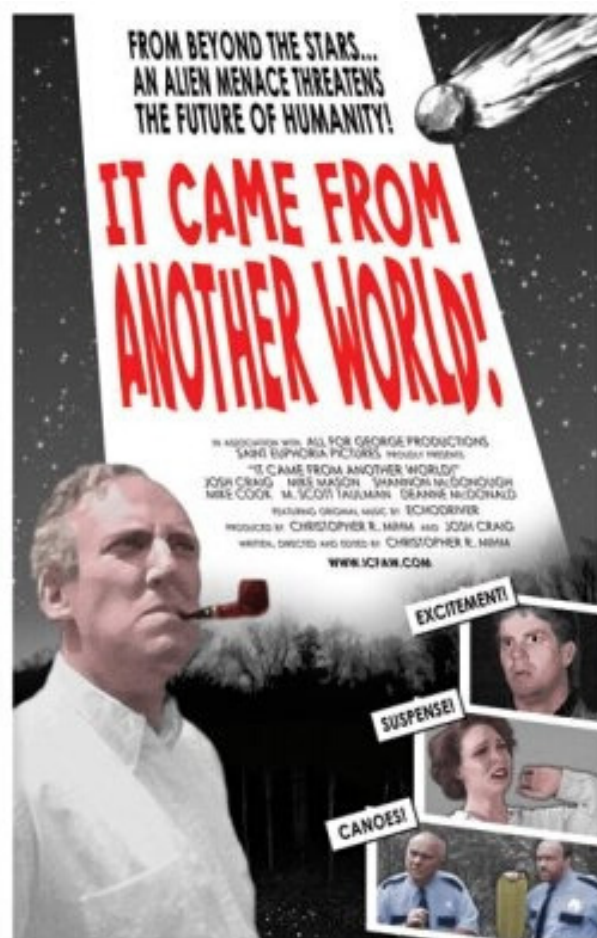
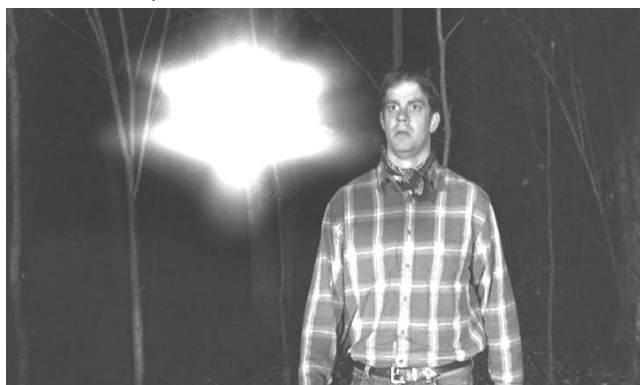
"There's no motorised access so we'll be forced to go in by ... canoe !"

A Dr Frasier has been missing for two weeks in the area where the meteorite crashed. A strange ball of light from the meteorite has taken over his mind. His friend the Professor and the guides find him, and he is taken back to his campsite to recover. Meanwhile the Professor examines the meteorite (with an aircraft artificial horizon ???) and decides that it is from another universe (Shock! Horror! Ominous music!)

Despite appearing outwardly normal, Dr Frasier's sleep is broken by nightmares of death and destruction as the alien inside his mind starts to make its presence felt. His behaviour starts to change, and he (gasp!) sleeps with a woman. He also develops a craving for coffee, and bug eyes.

With the help of a Subatomic Demoleculator, the Professor finds nothing wrong with him. In spite of this, the alien succeeds in taking over Doctor Frasier – "You, puny Earthling, are now my vessel". It announces that the Doctor will find a suitable female vessel for the essence of its Queen, who is currently a fine powder locked in the me-

Yes, it came from another world !



eteorite (lots more dramatic music). It has determined that the most suitable vessel is the Professor's fiancée.

The Professor, naturally, objects, but the alien overpowers him. *"There is only I, Ruler of all Cosmos.... don't worry, Earthling – I'm not going to kill you, not yet. Not before you've had the pleasure of watching your world crushed beneath my iron fist of righteousness!"*

Can the Professor break the alien's evil hold? Can he save the world and make it safe for canoes?

The film is a wonderful romp all over the rather crude SF films of the 1950s. The 1950s feeling is perfectly done, complete with cheesy music, fake-looking props, corny dialog and slightly-too-long laughter. And, of course, a heroine who knows her place – cooking, cleaning, and looking attractive for her fiancée. The "science" is as dodgy as it can get, part of the charm of the film. Top marks to all concerned for a great film.

Technically the film is high quality – sharp and clear, a lovely black and white period look, and good quality sound. Extras include a bloopers reel, deleted scenes, and one minute and twenty seconds of malfunctioning eyeballs.

Cave Women on Mars

B&W

Written & directed by Christopher R Mihm

Produced by Christopher Mihm and Josh Craig

Saint Euphoria DVD

Web: <http://www.sainteuphoria.com>

Web: <http://www.cavewomenonmars.com>

Reviewer: Bob Estreich

Primitive Martian Beauties ! Rampaging Alien Beasties ! Out Of This World Romance! Wonders Never Before Seen on the Silver Screen !

This film is a takeoff of those early SF movies – fake-looking low-budget sets, dreadful script, bad acting and all. It is set in the future – 1987 – but the black and white photography and general styling of the props sets the film firmly in the 1950s and its tongue firmly in cheek. To call the film a budget production is to be kind. With a total cast of nine and only a couple of indoor sets, you get what you would expect. What you also get but do not expect is a pretty good spoof.

The first Earth spaceship to Mars has just landed. It appears to be made of wallboard sheet, complete with jointing strips and square corners. Mars turns out to be earthlike, and is inhabited by two tribes of warring native women, the Liak and the Zil. They speak English and dominate the planet and the men. They do not,

Cave Women on Mars—the title says it all !



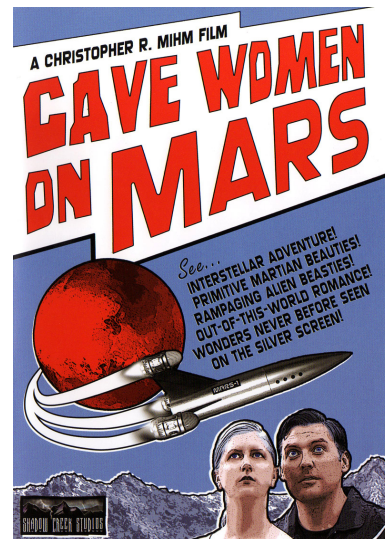
however, dominate many dressmakers as their clothing is fairly minimal. They are amazingly well groomed and made up for young ladies who live rough in the forest (no, not in caves).

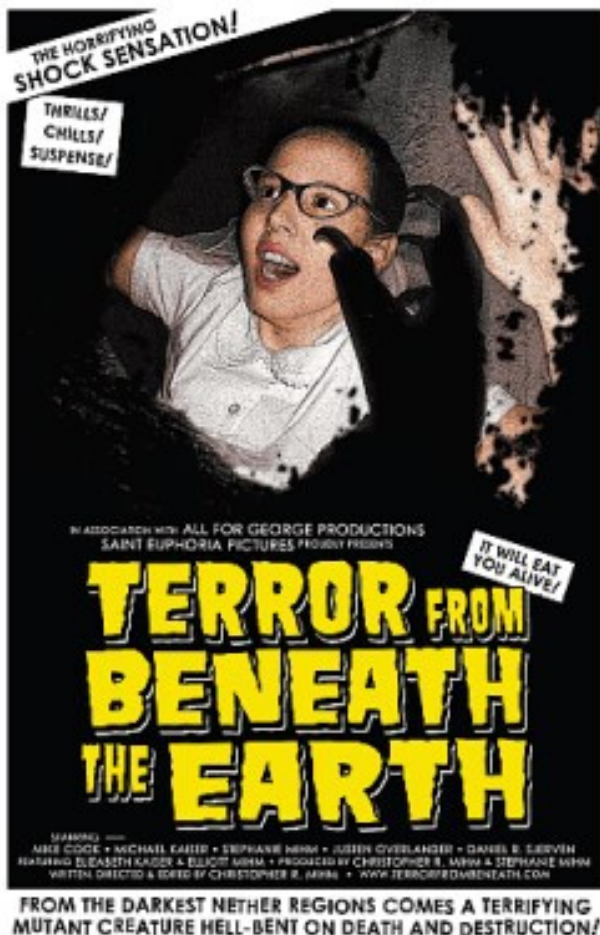
The forest is inhabited by monsters (as usual in this sort of film, men in furry monster suits) (well, one, anyway – it IS a budget film)). One of the two-man crew, Lieutenant Elliott, is captured by Eina, the leading warrior of the Zil. They begin to fall in love. The tribe's wise woman tells the Lieutenant of a prophecy that the two warring tribes can be united only if a man and woman can fall in love, and show the women that their men are more than pets.

Unfortunately he is then captured by the cruel Liak, but is saved by the Captain. He decides he will stay on Mars with Eina. Eina and the Liak warrior then engage in the slowest staff-fight ever. Eina wins. Will love now triumph? Will the tribes join and find peace? Will it never end?

The blooper reel is in many ways even funnier than the film. The actors and crew had a lot of trouble keeping a straight face. This is hardly surprising, considering that they are amateurs, and given the quality of the script. It is so typical of the 50s films. It is not helped by aircraft flying over, bugs, ducks, and fits of the giggles. The Special Features demonstrate the problems caused by bad rear projection and keeping the damn parking lot out of shot. A deleted scene is possibly better than the one used in the film and explains how the two tribes developed separately. If I have one real criticism it's that the dialogue could have been hammed up a little more. Otherwise the film is good fun.

It is not truly dreadful like Plan 9 From Outer Space, but I must give it points for trying sometimes. It can be surprisingly hard to make a good spoof that doesn't just look silly, but this one succeeds.





Terror from Beneath the Earth

B&W

Written, edited, directed by Christopher Mihm

Saint Euphoria

Web: <http://www.sainteuphoria.com>

Reviewer: Bob Estreich

Yes, he's at it again. Christopher Mihm gives us another wonderful takeoff of the 1950s sci-fi movies. Once again we have the unlikely plot, the even more unlikely monster, and the cheesy 50s music. *"From the darkest nether regions comes a terrifying mutant creature hell bent on death and destruction".*

Atomic testing has been carried out in the Wisawa cave system, but has been stopped by the Supreme Court as it is a sacred site to the Native Americans. The testing wasn't stopped soon enough, however, and in one bat-infested cave the radiation has spawned a deadly human-sized mutant bat creature. Two kids have wandered into the caves and been taken by the creature. Coincidentally a scientist and his niece are also investigating the caves and they find the little girl's school-



Attack ! Attack !

books. They report this to the Sheriff who arranges a search of the cave. The kids' father and the Professor's niece are also taken.

Professor Jackson (yes, our slow-spokenhero.... from earlierfilms) sends them a Sonic Amplitude Oscillatortron which can generate sound waves that can attract and even kill the creature. Will this unhappy and unique creature, created by man's excesses and war-like nature, be cruelly and wantonly destroyed? Of course it will. We wouldn't have it any other way.

Carol Eade, Stephanie Mihm and Shannon McDonough must, I assume, accept the responsibility for the hilariously fake creature with its cardboard ears. I don't know who to blame for the scenery which looks like and almost certainly is someone's house wrapped up in canvas, complete with the door arches. A budget production? Undoubtedly, and all the better for not trying too hard to hide it. It's just fake-looking enough to work perfectly. If there is a negative point in the whole film, it's that I missed the earnest Professor Jackson and his speech problem..

I am truly scared now...

