



ORLOK THE VAMPIRE: A mind-numbing *Nosferatu*.

*Initiation* revolves around a female reporter who is investigating a case of spontaneous combustion and becomes involved with a group of witches. The story never really amounts to much more than a lot of obvious lesbian/feminist references and, like its predecessor, is a bit dull. Still, there is a sick and disturbing vibe here that makes it almost worth recommending.

Like *Part 4, SN, DN 5: The Toy Maker* is a stand-alone film with no ties to the original theme. It's also completely screwy. Mickey Rooney plays a toymaker whose constructions are built to kill in unique ways, such as a gang of toy soldiers that slice up a young couple making out... right after they finger the dude's rectum! While undeniably low-budget and badly acted, the Yuzna co-scripted *Toy Maker* is at least weird enough to be entertaining.

All in all, this set is pretty lame, and the lack of a continuing storyline doesn't make *Silent Night, Deadly Night* a particularly collectible franchise either. *Initiation* is unique enough to check out, but I wouldn't bother adding it to next year's wish list.

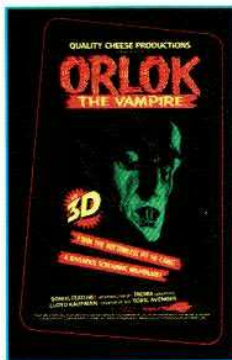
AARON VON LUPTON

## SCHRECK TURNED DRECK

### ORLOK THE VAMPIRE (1922)

Starring Max Schreck, Gustav von Wangenheim and Greta Schroeder  
 Directed by F.W. Murnau  
 Written by Henrik Galeen  
 Quality Cheese Productions

If F.W. Murnau had conjured images of the future and witnessed what Quality Cheese Productions would do to his film, he may not have made it at all. As most horror fans know, Murnau's *Nosferatu* is the first film adaptation of Bram Stoker's 1897 novel *Dracula*. Due to a copyright infringement conflict, the prints for this, one of the finest films of the silent era, were destroyed. (The producers, denied the rights by Stoker's widow, changed locations and names but the similarities were still too obvious.) The



few surviving copies have languished in the public domain ever since, with countless DVD reissues of varying quality.

Now, where to begin with this disastrous new jokey 3-D version? First off, the opening credit sequence: while presented as an "F.W. Murnau picture," this DVD is apparently "produced and directed" by Keith Carter. Sorry Keith, authoring new inter-titles and optimizing the original film for 3-D does not a director make.

Accompanying a loathsome ragtime piano score is a spinning bat logo, à la 1960s *Batman*, which appears between scenes. And because no silent film is complete without sound effects and voice-overs, we have Orlok (Max Schreck) sounding like a congested mouth-breather, Hutter (Gustav von Wangenheim) as a lecherous vaudevillian with a sometimes "gee, shucks" demeanor and Mina (Greta Schroeder) mewling and cooing. To add to the nausea, you can even watch it in 3-D, although despite my best efforts to optimize my screen – while sitting in the dark like an idiot, wearing a pair of 3-D glasses, no less – it barely worked, unless its goal was to give me both a headache and a nosebleed.

I understand this is meant as a joke, but the entire thing falls flat by simply not being funny. I'm not opposed to lampooning classic horror, either: Universal did it best with the short film *Boo!* (1932), containing overdubbed clips from *Nosferatu*, *Frankenstein* and a few other Universal pictures. Cheesy, but it's an interesting

curio, with Groucho Marx-style narration musing about the Great Depression and puns which would have Lloyd Kaufman taking notes. Speaking of which, Kaufman himself introduces this new film, and likens *Nosferatu* – sorry, *Orlok the Vampire* – to a shot-by-shot remake of *Schindler's List* without the concentration camps.

Avoid at all costs, especially if you have yet to see the original film. Instead, opt for Kino's amazing Ultimate DVD Edition of *Nosferatu* (2007), featuring the original inter-titles and Hans Erdmann's inimitable score.

ERIC VEILLETTE

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