



Schlock

classic, *House* retains a quaint campiness that grows on you as the film attempts every clichéd scare in the house (not always succeeding, but gosh darn, it's fun to watch it try).

JEFF SZPIRGLAS

COUSIN OF KONG

SCHLOCK (1973) Blu-ray

Starring John Landis, Saul Kahan and Eliza Garrett
Written and directed by John Landis
Arrow Video

"It's such a terrible movie," John Landis says during the audio commentary on Arrow Video's Blu-ray of his debut feature, *Schlock*. While it's certainly not that bad, it does suffer from the common first-film lack of discipline that's especially crucial in comedy. There are funny individual moments scattered throughout, and way too many scenes that play far longer than they should. More noteworthy than Landis' writing and directing, in fact, is his physically expressive

performance as the titular beast, inside makeup maestro Rick Baker's very first ape outfit.

Landis admits in the commentary (ported over from a long-out-of-print DVD) that he originally sought a "bad ape suit" to complement the intentional cheesiness of the movie, only to change his mind once he got a look at the talented young Baker's work. "*Schlock's* major achievement was launching Rick," the director says, and the artist returns the favour by joining Landis in the recording booth. Their dialogue, which contains a lot of good-natured ribbing of each other and the film, is a great deal more entertaining than the movie itself and makes this disc worthwhile. Along the way, we learn the particulars of the *Schlock*

outfit's creation, and the numerous scenes that were only shot and added after distributor Jack H. Harris picked the film up and decided it was too short.

Despite its very low-budget origins, *Schlock* looks like anything but in Arrow's 4K 1.85:1 transfer, with a crisp image and modest, accurate colours. New to Arrow's Blu-ray, and nicely complementing the talk track, are an interview with Kim Newman, exploring the film's place in the monster/fan scene of the '70s; a 40-minute interview with Landis touching on many other facets of his career; and an archival interview

with director of photography Bob Collins, sharing a few new anecdotes.

MICHAEL GINGOLD

