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THE MONSTER AND THE APE (2 DVD) – CHEEZY

FLICKS

 30/100

The Monster And The Ape was a Columbia Pictures serial from the mid 1940s or 1945 and 1946 to be exact. In the late pre-TV days The Monster And The Ape was shown in 15 Saturday matinees in theaters. The plot follows the creation of a robot, named Metalogen Man, at the Bainbridge Research Foundation. This invention was to, presumably, usher an era of easier living because the robot is shown to make easy job of lifting objects and other hard-to-manage tasks. Things, however, go wrong when the first prototype unit is stolen and three of the scientists working on it are killed by an ape. Professor Franklin Arnold, the lead scientist, his daughter and Ken Morgan, a representative of the company due to mass produce the robots spend 15 episodes trying to recover the unit and get to the bottom of the matter. The acting is sketchy even though The Monster And The Ape does feature at least one notable name. George Macready playing the bad guy (Professor Ernst) here would years later be seen in Stanley Kubrick's Paths Of Glory. The plot is dreary and is not helped by the use of Willie Best as a character that makes you, the viewer, wonder if it was written for a civil war, Gone With The Wind type role. Best does everything from assisting to cleaning and is often (comically) scared of the robot. This is one role that can best be used in a cinema history class as a prime example of racism in Hollywood and America.

All in all The Monster And The Ape has little effect on a 21st century audience. One gets the impression that it even had the same non-effect on those watching back in the '40s. It indeed comes off as repetitive and even mundane when watching it in the present day. The implied cheesy attribution is apt and the picture quality while not bad is certainly not great. Note that the DVD case has this running at 450 minutes but the actual running time is close to 300 minutes! – Anna Tergel