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## DVD Review: Cheezy Trailers Extravaganza Box Set

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Images from the Internet; note that the videos are not directly from the disk

### Cheezy Trailers Extravaganza Box Set

Cheezy Flicks Entertainment, 2010

405 minutes, USD \$14.95

[Cheezyflicks.com](http://cheezyflicks.com)

[MVDvisual.com](http://MVDvisual.com)

To explain, I am that guy who tries to get to the cinema at the time listed, not when the film starts. While I hate the commercials they've started showing, I will happily sit through 20 minutes of trailers without complaint, and will usually *shush* people around me (dependant on their size ratio to me, and who I am with), despite their usual response of, "Dude, it's just the trailers, dude!" response\*. *Just* the trailers!?!?!?

As long as I can remember, the coming attractions have been a joy, and sometime I may write a blog about just them. Originally, I was even thinking of writing about them for my Master's thesis, but was talked out of it by my advisor), but for now, this is a review, so let me get back to the pleasurable task at hand..

First a bit of business: These seven discs were originally released individually in 2005, and is now packaged as a single box set (a better deal esthetically and financially) in 2010. But that does not really matter (or, as Jesse Jackson famously said on *SNL*, "The point is *moot!*"), since most of the films covered are from the 1940s through '70s.

The subject titles are broken into five sections, being Action, Fantasy, Science Fiction (2 discs), Horror (2 discs), and Exploitation. I'll take each of these sections individually, but it is really important to note that as large and as thorough as *any* collection is, it cannot be all inclusive. There's always that one more you wish were there.

The **Action** disc is also called "Adventure" on the opening track (lets call it the "subtitle" going forward). Along with the serials like *Jesse James Rides Again*, much of this section deals with jungles in various locales, be it South America or – mostly – Africa. Along with the many Tarzan pictures (post-Weissmuller, including Gordon Scott's *Tarzan's Fight For Life* and *Tarzan's Greatest Adventure* (which has a very young Sean Connery in an obvious henchman role), and Jock Mahoney's *Tarzan Goes to India*, there's some mainstreamers like *Zulu!* (Michael Caine), *King Solomon's Mines* (Deborah Kerr), *Mogambo* (Clark Gable and Grace Kelly) and *Hatari!* (John Wayne). But the interest for me is the B- through D-films, with titles like *Jungle Gold* (with Linda Stirling as "the White Goddess"), *Tropic Love* (starring the future second-worst president, Ronnie Reagan), *Safari Drums* (Johnny Sheffield plays Bomba, a Tarzan rip-off), *Hell on Devil's Island*, *Native Girl and the Slaver*, *Virgin Sacrifice*, *She-Gods of Shark Reef*, and the infamous gross-out *Man From Deep River*.

An aspect that is interesting about this genre is the inherent racism and misogyny in these films, whatever the level of grade of release. For example, there is a lot of naked flesh, including breasts, in many of them, but because it was labeled “documentary” footage of native dances, it was permitted even in films for the general public (for example, I clearly remember seeing *Zulu!* in the theater when I was a child). And, of course, with few exceptions, white = civilized and in control, while black = savagery and fear (or, the enemy). Sure, there are some evil white hunters, but the rescuers were always other whites (especially Tarzan).

Among the non-jungle scenarios, there include Steve Reeves’s *Sandokan the Great*, *Two Sane Nuts*, and a few British Hammer (is that redundant?) releases such as *Sword of Sherwood Forest* (with Peter Cushing) and *The Brigand of Kandahar* (starring Oliver Reed). Overall through this section, the word “greatest” is well overused as a descriptor. There are 30 films covered on this disc.

The second disc, *Fantasy*, is more correctly subtitled “Monsters, and Sword and Sandal.” The first half of this disc is indeed, monster-laden, much of it from the ‘50s and ‘60s, with a general focus on larger-than-life creatures, such as *The Giant Gila Monster*, *The Giant Behemoth* (one of my faves as a kid), *Godzilla! King of the Monsters*, *King Kong vs. Godzilla*, *Them!*, *Rodan*, *Attack of the Crab Monsters*, *Konga*, and *Gorgo*. As for the more non-standard versions of the classics, there’s the Spanish *The Werewolf and the Vampire Woman*, and the Hammer *Frankenstein and the Monster From Hell* and *The Abominable Snowman of the Himalayans*. Other radiation-inspired spookers include *Attack of the 50 Foot Woman* and *The Cyclops* (basically an extension of *War of the Colossal Beast*, not represented here). Then there’s *Monster That Challenged the World*, *Rodan*, *the Astonishing She Monster*, *Creature from the Black Lagoon*, and other dinosaurs on the loose, like *The Valley of the Gwangi*, *Mysterious Island*, and *Valley of the Dragons*.

For the Sword and Sandal section, there’s lots of Steve Reeve (including *The Giant of Marathon*, *The Last Days of Pompeii*, and *Goliath and the Sins of Babylon*), of course, and many others such as *Sign of the Gladiator* (Anita Ekberg), *Gold for the Caesars* (Christopher Pike... err, Jesus... I mean Jeffrey Hunter), *Captain Sinbad* (John Robinson... oh, Guy Williams), *Samson and the Seven Miracles of the World*, *Mighty Ursus*, and one of my childhood faves, *Atlantis, the Lost Continent* (with the Chief, Ed Platt). The S&S flicks had some great titles. And lest I not forget, there is *The Three Stooges Meet Hercules* (I grew up loving the Stooges, but the later full-lengthers were sad). Stop-motion king Ray Harryhausen makes quite the showing on this disk. There are 46 titles on disc two.

The next two disks (numbers three and four, for those keeping track), are devoted to Science Fiction. There are some obvious choices here, like *Earth vs. The Flying Saucers*, *One Million Years B.C.* (though I would have thought this should be on disc 2), *The Day the Earth Stood Still*, *Rollerball*, *It! Terror From Beyond Space* (from which *Alien* was – err – homage’d), *Forbidden Planet*, *The Time Machine*, *Barbarella*, *Robot Monster* (what, no *Cape Canaveral Monsters?*), a couple of the later *Planet of the Apes* sagas, and *2001: A Space Odyssey*. Again, it is the more obscure ones that piqued my interest, including *Laser Blast*, *The Navy vs. The Night Monsters* (Mamie van Doren!), *Planet of*

*the Vampires, The Giant Spider Invasion, Thunderbirds Are Go* (though I stand loyal to *Fireball XL5*), *The Last Days of Man on Earth, The Flesh Eaters, The Brain Eaters*, and one I've never even heard of called *Superargo and the Faceless Giants* (obviously European). There are 63 films over the two disks.

There is just so much to love about the next two disks (five and six), titled simply "Horror." Now what exactly constitutes horror in the cinema to you? Suspense or gore? Monster or masked killer? Alien creature or reptilian from the sea? All these are represented here. Some of the majors are *Tales From the Crypt, Whatever Happened to Baby Jane, The Exorcist, Friday the 13th, The Tingler, Dr. Phibes*, and to some extent *The Fearless Vampire Killers, or Pardon Me But Your Teeth Are in My Neck*.

As always it's the B- through Z-movies which are the most interesting (and luckily far outnumber the mainstreamers), like the vampire western *Curse of the Undead, Equinox, Berserk* (during Joan Crawford's final career meltdown), *Count Dracula and His Vampire Bride* (Hammer, with Chris Lee), *Sugar Hill* and *Blacula* (both double genre benders, including the blaxploitation theme), *Axe, Raw Meat, The Legend of Hell House, My Bloody Valentine, Captain Kronos – Vampire Hunter, The Velvet Vampire*, and Cronenberg's classic *Rabid* (RIP Ms Chambers). There are a number of Hammer films here, mostly with Lee and/or Cushing.

This is a nicely rounded collection. Thankfully, there is more monster than gore (I'll take a ghost, demon or creature over someone in a mask). Sadly, the movie that I found to be the scariest I've ever seen is not on here: Robert Wise's *The Haunting*, a definite proving case of less is more. However, I do like a good gorefest, nonetheless, but something more imaginative, like Herschell Gordon Lewis's work (e.g., *2000 Maniacs, The Wizard of Gore*), which is also not here. There are 71 on these two disks.

The final collection is set aside for Exploitation. These are films that take a subject and try to scare the bejesus out of the viewer by preying on their fears (sounds like modern day Republicans, doesn't it?), such as sex, drugs or motorcycles, or takes something salacious and hold it up for prurient viewing (ditto). Most of the films here, understandably, are from before the fall of the ratings boards (i.e., before 1968 when the ratings system started).

Usually they had titles to grab attention, like *Pin-Down Girl* (female wrestling and prostitution together!; it contains this great piece of dialog: "He's the sort of guy who would change a girl's evening stroll from a recreation to an occupation."), *She Shoulda Said No, Glen or Glenda (I Changed My Sex), I Passed for White, The Cocaine Fiends, Striporama* (with Bettie Page), *His Wife's Habit*, and *Satan in High Heels* (with Grayson Hall!). Some of the later dated trailers from the end of the '60s into the '70s include the biker themed *Bury Me an Angel, The Glory Stompers* and *Satan's Sadists*.

There are other seedier sides of violence, like *Switchblade Sisters* and *Black Mama/White Mama*, and just a mix-mash from stuff that would seem ordinary on cable today, such as *Myra Breckinridge, The Student Nurses* and Russ Meyer's classic *Supervixens*. Probably the most recent one is *Reform School Girls*, which starred Wendy O. Williams [RIP].

These are the kinds of films that will either cause your blood to boil, or fall down laughing, depending on your creed. This one has 37 trailers.

Lest not to forget, there are two other sections on each DVD in the specials area, one for trailers of other Cheezy Flicks films and one for intermission bits (“let’s go down to the looooooby...”). Note that there are about a dozen of these, and they seemed to be randomly picked six or so on each the disks, so some repeat (both the trailers and intermission shorts), including *Day of the Triffids*, *Horrors of the Black Museum*, *The Headless Ghost*, *Robot Monster*, and the TV movie of the week, *Gargoyles*.

My one complaint about this collection is that there are some trailers that repeat from disk to disk, which makes some sense when they were sold as separate units, but occasionally this happens even within a set. So of the 250 (not 500, as the box claims) or so trailers on the collection, it is narrowed down closer to 225, which is still a fine find and a great deal, and so I’m happy.

This is the kind of collection that you sit down and enjoy it for what it is, or run it in the background during a party, or just jump around to see the ones you like. Either way, there is plenty to go around and satisfy the trailer jones.

*\* Any true duder will (at least) double dude, at the beginning and end of the sentence.*