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Friday Night Frights: The Complete Festival of Fright DVD Review

October 29, 2010 No Comments



Originally released as stand alone discs, Festival of Fright volumes 1, 2 and 3 have been combined to make this 220 minute set of vintage horror movie trailers. Most trailers are black and white although some of the early 70s Hammer classics are included as well with their rich Technicolor look. As a matter of fact, I believe the most recent horror movies included in this collection are *Whoever Slew Auntie Roo?* and *What's the Matter with Helen?* both of which came out in 1971. Both also star Shelly Winters and are great movies but now I am digressing. There are some semblences of groupings as, say the Abbott and Costello series of horror comedies are all included in order on the third disc. The interactive menus are very nicely laid out and make it really easy to find the specific movie trailers that grab your attention.

If you are like me and have somewhat of an addiction to horror movies, you tend to sometimes have a hard time tracking down new movies that you haven't seen. Collections like this are perfect as, like I mentioned in the last review of a trailer collection that I did, I always have something to take notes with me when sitting down to one of these discs so I can go track down a few movies that interest me later on. As soon as this review is done, I will be going on a quest to track down *The Fiendish Ghouls*, which features Donald Pleasance and George Rose as graverobber Burke and Hare.

As a big fan of Rob Zombie's music, it also turns into a bit of a game as you can pick out a lot of the sound clips from his albums like *Hellbilly Deluxe* and *Sinister Urge* in these trailers. One that had me stumped was the opening for *Living Dead girl*, which it turns out is from *Lady Frankenstein*, which is included in this set.

The thing about these trailers that make them so much more original and creative than today's is that when they were created, they were the sole means of advertising the movie and they were really only viewed once or twice at the most since they were not viewed repeatedly on television or shown on YouTube. Movies couldn't give websites and bloggers "exclusives" to hype up releases, it was all word of mouth, trailers and perhaps a newspaper ad or two. As a result the focus was on selling the viewer on this movie they probably had never heard of in the 2 or 3 minutes they had to present the trailer. As a result, some of the most creative pieces of advertising ever were created to be shown before the feature movies.

Picture quality varies wildly as some of these trailers are pretty banged up and abused over the years. The majority are full screen although a few widescreen trailers surface from time to time. Sound is overall clear, save for some cracking

in some of the really old stuff.

The special features kick off with an interview with Bela Lugosi from 1955 as he is exiting his rehab treatment. The audio is a little hard to understand but, as I have never seen any Bela Lugosi interview footage, I was just happy to get to watch one of his final interviews! Also included are two old radio dramas, The Creaking Door and The Strange Dr. Weird. No longer frightening for anyone, they are still fun to check out and since these old radio broadcasts are The Monster Club's favorites, it makes sense to let a wider group of horror fans get a taste of these shows. Finally, one cool special feature that is on all three discs is an alternate instrumental audio track. The perfect thing for parties, it strips the audio out and instead plays light creepy music while the trailers run.

I think this is my last movie trailer collection to review for a while. There is something about vintage trailers that always draw me in, even when I have seen some so many times that I know the dialogue by heart. Festival of Fright the Complete Collection is a nice set geared primarily toward the pre 1970's horror fans, which makes it different from the Cheesy Trailers collection. There are some fun extras included but the trailers alone make this one a recommended purchase for fans of vintage horror.

Special Features:

- Interview with Bela Lugosi
- Old Time Radio Horror: The Creaking Door and The Strange Dr. Weird
- Party Track

The Complete Festival of Fright collection is available in a 3 disc DVD box set now, courtesy of MVD Visual and Synergy Entertainment.



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