

READER REVIEWS

Real Horrorshow -

Young Frankenstein

By P.R.J. Smith

Directed by Mel Brooks
Produced by Michael Gruskoff
Written by Gene Wilder and Mel Brooks

FOUR STARS*****

In "Young Frankenstein," Mel Brooks has taken the mediocre script that he and Gene Wilder threw together out of Mary Shelley's original *Frankenstein*, mixed with every old horror movie joke they could remember and somehow filmed it to be one of the most polished comedies this critic has ever seen.

I say 'comedies' rather than 'spoofs' because it is exactly that. It does not make fun of horror movies or the Frankenstein story; rather, it treats the themes it works with seriously. It is the characters that are funny and funny more for themselves than for caricatures of the originals.

The film, Mel Brooks says, is a "salute to the great horror movies of the '30's". For this reason, it was shot in black and white using the 1:85 frame size conventional in that era. The sets by Bod de Vestal utilizes the same soaring height that characterize the original film of Frankenstein, and the camera direction by Jerry Hirschfield is a superb study of '30's film technique.

The outstanding characterizations of the film are Mary Feldman's portrayal of the hunchback "Igor" (pronounced eye-gore) and Peter Baylac's (who played the redneck lead in the movie "Joc") treatment of the monster. I won't go into details here, because these reviews always appear a little late and you've probably heard alot about this film from friends who saw it the first week.

Unlike most films, this one needs less of a review than an acknowledgement. This is because news of the quality of the film has traveled by word of mouth far faster than this newsprint could ever hope to travel.

The closest place to the campus that the film is featured would be the #2 theatre at Union Deposit. Do see it and a good evening is assured you with plenty of material to discuss afterwards.

Blood On The Tracks

MURDER ON THE ORIENT EXPRESS

THREE STARS*****

By Grace M. Cole

Murder On The Orient Express now playing at the East Four Theatre's Harrisburg East Mall, is a remake of an old Agatha Christie thriller that has risen and come alive again with a cast of new and brilliant characters.

Albert Finney is marvelous as Monsieur Purot, a classic Poe detective type. A murder that has been committed several years beforehand, now becomes the central source of interaction between the passenger: on the train, each with his own motives or being on the Orient Express at that point in time.

Murder has been committed on board the Orient Express and everyone is suspect. One by one Monsieur Purot questions each passenger, with the help of Martin Balsam who owns the train line, only to be led down a dark alley. Everyone seems to have an airtight alibi during the hours in which the murder could have been committed.

The cast includes Lauren Bacall, Anthony Perkins, Jacqueline Bisset, Richard Widmark, and Martin Blazam. By and large the characters are portrayed as sophisticated, wealthy people out for a pleasure ride, but the ride turns out to anything but pleasurable!

In spite of the fact that the theme of the movie is murder and intrigue, the mood conveyed to the audience turns out to be light and airy as one would expect to find in a comedy. The music seems to flow at intervals and give way to an almost ballroom effect.

The photography is well done, and flashbacks are used throughout the movie in order to give the audience information to correlate both murders. The costuming is lavish and glittery, and Jacqueline Bisset provides a definite asset in this department.

Do see the movie simply because it does provide the viewer with an abundance of perplexing mystery!



Loren Peck performs at a recent Tuesday night Coffee House at the Student Center.
Photo by Mark Feldman



A scene from *The Long Christmas Dinner* by Thornton Wilder, directed by William Turner, a graduate student in the Humanities.

Photo by Mark Feldman

Penn State

C.C. reader

