

with a comic book in their adult hands, have a great fondness for the characters and situations remembered from their youth. Some even have enough fondness that they try, as adults, to invent their own comic-book universes. Most do so in the comic-book genre, but now George R. R. Martin has edited two books (with more coming)

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about a 'shared universe' where super-powered people, aliens, cosmic forces, dark conspiracies, powerful romances, and bizarre creatures combine in a tapestry that reads like space opera.

"WILD CARDS I and II assume that shortly after World War II, an alien race came to Earth. A plague was (accidentally?) released, killing 90% of the people who contracted it. Of the survivors, 90% were cursed with aftereffects of the plague: hideous 'mutations' or worthless 'powers.' These people are called 'Jokers.' The lucky 10% were blessed with desirable traits like exceptional strength or telekinesis, and are called 'Aces.'

"The books cover a much different terrain than the typical comic book. Emphasis is on the sociological effects of the plague and the aliens; the world is recognizably our own, only stressed a bit. Some of the characters (e.g. the Great and Powerful Turtle) are as three-dimensional and memorable as any I've read about. WILD CARDS I and II aren't great literature, but they're worth a look."

And Dale Skran says: "Good stories by some of the best SF writers of today: Martin, Shiner, Waldrop, Walter Jon Williams, and Zelazny. The history of an alternate Earth where a "wild card virus" creates super-heros, super-villains, and endless misery. First book is better than the second, but both are fun and well written. Recommended."

2. Halloween is on its way. Since our next film fest will be just two days before Halloween, we are going to have a taste of 1930s horror. In that decade Universal Pictures made three films which claimed to be based on stories by Edgar Allan Poe; all three starred their recently discovered horror star Bela Lugosi. Thursday night, October 29, 7 PM, we will show:

Universal Poe

MURDERS IN THE RUE MORGUE (1932) dir. by Robert Florey
THE BLACK CAT (1934) dir. by Edgar Ulmer
THE RAVEN (1935) dir. by Louis Friedlander

Bela Lugosi stars as Dr. Mirakle whose weird experiments are the basis of MURDERS IN THE RUE MORGUE. The film is directed in high style by Robert Florey (FACE BEHIND THE MASK and BEAST WITH FIVE FINGERS), one of the great Gothic directors. Arlene Francis plays a prostitute who is one of of Mirakle's victims.

The best of the three is THE BLACK CAT, a stylish black comedy starring for the first time together Karloff and Lugosi. A young couple honeymooning in Austria become pawns in a monstrous game between a man whose treachery during WWI had killed thousands at the battle of Marmaros, and the man whose wife and daughter and life he stole. Phil Hardy in ENCYCLOPEDIA OF THE HORROR FILM says "Strange, hypnotic, tormented and eliciting the best performances

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of their careers from Karloff and Lugosi, THE BLACK CAT is one of the masterpieces of the genre."

Karloff and Lugosi are back with Lugosi as a brilliant surgeon who is fixated on Poe to the point that he even has built the torture devices from "The Pit and the Pendulum." Karloff is a criminal who comes to Lugosi to have the surgeon's skill cure his ugliness, only to find his is in the power of the mad Poe-fanatic.

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20TH INTERNATIONAL TOURNEE OF ANIMATION

A film review by Mark R. Leeper

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Capsule review: Each year the International Tournee of Animation presents eighteen or so award-winning animated. This year there were no really excellent entries, but just about everything was at least good.

Pretty entertaining overall.

Just about a year ago I reviewed the Nineteenth International Tournee of Animation. I had some fun doing that so I jumped at a chance to review the Twentieth. General comments about the two tournees? There was less variation this year. Of nineteen short films, there were only four I can say I did not actively like. On the other hand, last year the Tournee included a short fantasy film, "Skywhales," which I thought was of high enough quality to deserve science fiction Hugo award. It is difficult to compare, but I'd contend that "Skywhales" was better than A l i e n s, which did win the Hugo.

- "The Frog, The Dog, and the Devil" (Bob Stenhouse; Academy Award nominee 1986; New Zealand; 7:15): This one sets a tough standard for all the pieces that follow. It combines humor, horror, and unconventional artwork. It is based on a credited story, but probably best in this form. One minor quibble: the date given as a Friday was actually a Saturday. (+2)
- "Set in Motion" (Jane Aaron; First Prize, Baltimore Film Festival; USA; 3:54): No plot to this one, just paper stripes marching all over a room through the magic of pixellation. It gives the impression of being good amateur work rather than professional material. (+1)
- "Luxo, Jr." (John Lassiter/William Reeves; Academy Award nominee 1986; USA; 2:07): Images created and manipulated entirely in a computer but much better than last year's similar attempt, a piece showing piano-bar player "Tony De Peltrie." In this piece desk lamps are given a real personality. They behave in very human sorts of ways and one forgets they appear to be just desk lamps. A very nice piece of work. (+2)
- "Success" (Zoltan Lehotay; Special Jury Prize, Varna, Bulgaria Animation Festival; Hungary; 4:19): The worst animation technique but the idea is amusing. I predicted an ending much like the one the film actually had. It is hard to say a 259-second film is overly long for its idea, but this one was. (+1)
- "Garbage In, Garbage Out" (Terry Wozniak; Finalist, L.A. Animation Celebration; USA; 2:49): Not very funny and built around an old

idea borrowed old Chuck Jones cartoons. Just okay. (0)

- "Carnival" (Susan Young; First Prize, L.A. Animation Celebration; Great Britain; 7:54): Slow. It seems to be saying that if the nasty police would leave people alone they would all drink and dance and have a good time. This cartoon comes from Britain where their own event, similar to Carnival but at the end of the summer, causes a massive jump in the crime rate. (-1)

- "Baeus" (Bruno Bozzetto; Finalist, L.A. Animation Celebration; Italy; 6:19): Pleasant enough little story by the creator of _ A_ l_ l_ e_ g_ r_ o_ N_ o_ n_ T_ r_ o_ p_ p_ o. This one is about a bug who falls in love with a human woman.

- "Oilspot and Lipstick" (Special Feature; Walt Disney Studios; USA): Disney's favorite plot--likeable hero slays a monster and wins the girl--retold with characters made up of parts from a junkyard. All done with computer animation. (+1)

- "Academy Leader Variations" (Grand Prize Winner, Cannes Film Festival; USA, Poland, Switzerland, China; 5:45): Leader tape is the one part of a film most audiences never see. When they do, you can usually hear them shouting "Five! Four! Three! Two!..." Some filmmakers use the leader in very creative ways as a joke for the very narrow audience of projectionists. There are about fifty creative leader tapes from four countries here. (+2)

- "A Greek Tragedy" (Nicole Van Goethem; Academy Award winner 1986; Belgium; 6:28): This, "Luxo, Jr.," and "The Frog, the Dog, and the Devil" were three of the five nominees for the Academy Award for Best Animated Short this year. This was the least interesting and least creative, had the least interesting artwork, and was the least entertaining of the three. Naturally it won. Three statues of ancient Greeks, looking more like cigar-store Indians than Greek statues, are used as pillars to hold up the roof of a building in a way the Greeks never used them. They are having trouble as the building starts to crumble. (0)

- "Plus One, Minus One" (Guido Manuli; Finalist, L.A. Animation Celebration; Italy; 6:00): The title refers to how life is different with and without someone. Sort of a cartoon answer to _ I_ t'_ s_ a_ W_ o_ n_ d_ e_ r_ f_ u_ l_ L_ i_ f_ e. This story seems to imply things would not be worse if one person was eliminated. Instead some things would be better, some worse, some just different. (0)

- "Red's Dream" (John Lassiter/William Reeves; Finalist, Siggraph Computer Animation Exhibition; USA; 4:10): This is sort of an overblown version of what was good about "Luxo, Jr." Again, inanimate objects take on human characteristics. More detailed but not better. Same artists at Pixar as "Luxo, Jr.," incidentally.

- "Your Face" (Bill Plympton; Most Popular Film Award, L.A. Animation Celebration; USA; 3:11): This one is actually more clever than at first it seems like it's going to be. Entertainer sings a silly song about "your face" while his head goes through interesting changes--literally. Fairly imaginative at times. (+2)
- "Break" (Garri Bardin; Second Prize Winner, L.A. Animation Celebration; Soviet Union; 10:21): Soviet clay animation of a prizefight. This is the longest piece in the show, over ten minutes. It does some interesting meta-humor about clay, though it could have used a bit of editing. (+1)
- "Gravity" (Dirrenc Rofusz; Hungary; 2:46): A short parable, neither all that interesting nor particularly well-animated. An argument for conformity. (0)
- "Augusta Feeds Her Child" (Csaba Varga; First prize, Canadian Animation Festival; Hungary; 4:18): This is a sequel to last year's "Luncheon," in which Augusta was feeding only herself. The novelty is that clay animation mixes with real food. There are a few cute jokes but nothing really special. (+1)
- "Girl's Night Out" (Joanna Quinn; Special Jury Prize, Annecy Animation Festival; Great Britain; 6:10): Cartoon of role reversal. One night a week the girls get together, go to see male strippers, get drunk, and get rowdy. The implication is that this is what men do. In my whole life I have met exactly one man who does anything remotely like the male stereotypes that this film lampoons. It is, however, a lie that is convenient in other rationalizations. (0)
- "Drawing on My Mind" (Bob Kurtz; Best Animated Short, Los Angeles Film Critics Award; USA; 4:56): This is an animated version of a George Carlin comedy routine. A few good gags. (+1)
- "Snookles" (Juliet Stroud; Winner, Focus Film Award; USA; 2:20): This is a short piece moving in on "Bambi Meets Gozilla" territory. A baby dragon meets a cute little bird. An okay bird. (+1)

This Tournee was dedicated to the creative work of Winsor McCay, who created Gertie the Dinosaur, Little Nemo, and several other fine animated creations. Best of this show I'd have to say is ""The Frog, the Dog, and the Devil.""