

Fantasia



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DARK SHADOWS over Glen Ridge

By Pamela Y. Wesson

THE MAN behind the scenes of one of the most widely watched soap operas is quite unusual, as is the show itself. The production is "Dark Shadows," and the mustachioed man who, until recently, directed it is John Sullivan of Glen Ridge, alias Sean Dhu Sullivan as listed on the credits. He is presently involved in a weekly called "Like It Is" on Saturday afternoons.

Mr. Sullivan presented an absorbing lecture on Shakespeare and certain characteristics of literature, to the Ninth Grade. Immediately afterwards, this Journalist reporter arranged for an interview. The questions asked were mainly concerned with Dark Shadows, because your reporter is an enthusiastic viewer.

Queried about the people who do the research, he stated that everybody on the show is interested in contributing in that area. Most of the plot seemed to be derived from old horror movies such as "Dracula," "Frankenstein," and "The Werewolf of London." He was asked whether these might be source materials, and he responded that there is a necessity to seek material wherever it can be found. The plot, he said, is quite a challenge to the three writers and packager.

Then Mr. Sullivan was asked a more specific question along this vein: Why, against all laws of the supernatural, could their female vampire Angelique (Lara Parker) be seen in a mirror? He countered that the laws of "vampirology" permitted her reflection to be seen in the magic mirror.

Concerning stage techniques for the show, Mr. Sullivan explained about chroma-key, where an object is placed in front of a special background and inserted into the picture. People can appear and disappear by this method, and still more weirdly, by electronic flashes.

The subject of makeup

was touched upon; specifically, the star, Jonathan Frid, and his first appearance on the Dick Cavette show. A preview was shown of him as a 200-year old vampire. Frid had commented that he had arisen at 4 a.m. for the makeup that had aged him. Mr. Sullivan told me that it was a flashback, not a preview, and that Dick Smith, a skilled makeup man, had worked on Frid. About the star who plays Barnabas Collins, Mr. Sullivan said he was hardworking and sensitive, an excellent actor. Mr. Sullivan had directed that particular episode.

He also predicted that Lara Parker, who opened in a Broadway show, would become a star.

When asked about merchandising for the show, such as selling photographs at the Science-Fiction conventions in New York City, he stated that depends on Dan Curtis, the executive producer, and ABC. They might not always reach an agreement, however, he added.

Mr. Sullivan has worked on practically every kind of TV program--even commercials. This is typical of anyone who's been around a while, he said; he's been involved in TV for 18 years.

Mr. Sullivan's interests have always been in the theater. He attended Harvard and belonged to its Drama Club. He also went to the American Academy of Dramatic Arts, and has had two-season training, summer stock, and off-Broadway experience.

The program, "Like It Is," which he is now directing, appears on Saturdays at 2 pm. It is a documentary concerning poverty, lack of education for blacks, and general race relations, aimed at both black and white.

Mr. Sullivan told me about his first show, which was taped and then aired on January 18. For this episode, he visited a "street academy," which is sponsored by businesses, churches, clubs and banks. This helps get dropouts off the street into an informal school where they can receive the education they need.

Often they drop out from lack of motivation or simply that there is no place to do work. The volunteer workers gain the trust of the boy (or girl) and suggest that he drop by at the street academy. Sometimes he continues and completes the course, more often not.

In one school, out of an enrollment of 1,800, the average daily attendance is 900, and only one diploma was awarded. He said that approximately 1.8% of those students who enroll receive a diploma. Mr. Sullivan said he found the work done was impressive. It is "only a drop in the bucket," he said, "but a bucket is made up of many drops."

The emcee, Gil Noble, is a resident of Montclair. The producer, Charles Hopson, had also worked on Black Journal.

John Sullivan seemed very earnest and enthusiastic about this new program, "Like It Is," which he is directing. It is quite a change from "Dark Shadows," but he is enjoying this worthwhile project.

(Special for the GRHS Journalist, and Fantasia.)

DARK SHADOWS has barely skimmed the surface of its genre. Someone should introduce them to HPLovecraft and his early New England horror

tales: Dunwich Horror, The Case of Charles Dexter Ward, his short stories. Surely the house by the sea recently rented by Nicholas Blair is meant to be the site for a takeoff on "Shadow Over Innsmouth," HPL's 109-page book, "Supernatural Horror in Literature" would give many other leads.

Also, the Collins family is a natural for "The Maze," by Maurice Sandoz. (Illustrations are by Salvadore Dali, and the frontispiece is later turned upside-down to depict the denouement.) This might involve an air shot of an English labyrinth, but then, I am only suggesting inspirations, not plagiarisms.

"Fear No Evil" had such an intellectual -- for TV -- approach that I'm certain the idea of a series will be dropped. "Journey into the Unknown" also had a splendid opener, but scripts were uneven, with John Collier at the top of the graph and a gun-it-out at rockbottom.

In general, as a newcomer tripping naively into this medium as of Christmas 1967, I am happy we never had it before the boys left home for college. Pam is not a tube boob, but she prefers it to homework any day!

But I am taking my 7" Sony to Florida Keys with me, so I don't miss "Dark Shadows" while on the beach! Pam and I both take off from John F. Kennedy airport, she to return to Italy for a 10-day tour with fellow-classmates and their Latin teacher on a Foreign Student League trip. My holiday is the reason this issue may be foreshortened. HW

BARNABAS and

YEE CHING

BARNABAS COLLINS has returned to the past, 1800, using Chinese magic (called Yee Ching on the program) which involves short, marked bamboo sticks cast hap-hazardly into a pattern which determines fate (in his case how he re-enters the past).

This method of fortune-telling is common throughout the Far East, originating in China where it is called "Chien" (in Mandarin), which, in another dialect, just might be Ching or Chi'ng. Ching can be translated "Power" (see journal on Tao enclosed).

Usually the bamboo sticks are placed in a bamboo cup which the person whose fortune is to be told shakes until one stick falls out of the cup. The markings on that stick holds the key to one's future.

Though my fortune was told this way in Japan, more memorable was the little bird who took my coin, hopped to a miniature temple, rang a bell, and pulled out my "fortune" -- in "English" yet. However, in Bangkok, in the Temple of the immense Reclining Buddha, again I shook the cup before an altar rich with incense, lighted candles and atmosphere. The old priest examined the stick which was flung out, paused, and suggested I try again. The second stick apparently was more auspicious for he

smiled, reached for the fortune--written in Thai--and offered a brief translation. (I think I am now in the period of the first cast, but when a Thai AFS student stayed with us for a week last summer, I did not wish her to translate either one!)

The Japanese are very superstitious though it is not immediately apparent. A bit of it has rubbed off on me: I never use four flowers in an arrangement; it would be un-Japanese, though I know it stems from the ideograph which can also be translated "death."

However, "China probably leads the world in ordering its life and timing its actions in accordance with the dictates of fortune....in China, every action permissible or forbidden, is clearly laid down in the calendar for each day of the year. .. Even a visit to the coiffeur on an unpropitious day may entail a very unpleasant penance for a relative in the other world, who is condemned to drink the dirty water for a month after her descendant has committed the indiscretion." *

Fortune-tellers are always consulted for the three great events in life: birth, death and marriage.

Part of the training of a Taoist Priest is in telling fortunes, offering slips of paper in a bamboo cup or box, and translating and interpreting the characters inscribed on the paper chosen. This is popular at fairs and temple festivals, when the crowd is in a holiday mood and money flows freely...even as in Japan today, though it may not be true of Communist China today, I don't know.

If Dark Shadows ever runs out of Occidental ghosts, it can always turn to the Oriental world of the supernatural. --HW

* Chinese Creeds & Customs by V. R. Burkhardt, D.S.O., O.B.E.; Hong Kong.



Origin: Japan

Not strictly a ghost as Japanese ghosts never have feet.

CAMPUS CAPERS

Thai Style

CHULA THAMMASAT SOCCER (They say football) game is a yearly event of national importance, like the Rose Bowl. It is televised. The students prepare 2½ hours of parades -- one band after another, one marching group after another, costumes, uniforms, routines both simple and elaborate, a display of 1968 Mercedes driving the schools' beauty queens about the stadium, mini-skirted uniforms, Chinese pajama uniforms, a hippie comedy routine... Then the King comes (this year with his daughter -- from across the stadium it looked like Ubolrat, the middle one), then the game begins. Do the students stop? Oh no, this is when they get started.

Throughout the game they hold up various cards spelling Thammasat (god forbid a mere T. U. - heck no, this was T H A M M A S A T U N I V E R S I T Y and, across the stadium, C H U L A L O N G H O R N U N I V E R S I T Y). In script. In print. In colors. "Let's win the game" in colors (always in Thai, of course) and script. A colored picture of the King, Queen and Crown Prince. (Chula only had the King and Queen, and in black and white at that, but they did a dog walking across the field, and the Royal Barge rowing up the river out of sight...) They flashed at each other and competed with each other with magnificent timing. If Thammasat did the king, Chula did its king. At one point Thammasat showed a sunset skyline of Bangkok ((a most distinctive skyline--HW)).

One of the best routines was Thammasat's: a TU boy and a CU girl (faces and the school letters for identification) and a heart; second, TU boy and CU girl kiss!! third, CU boy looking at TU girl with hearts in his eyes; fourth, TU boy hitting CU boy on the head with a stick while TU girl looks on. If there was a fifth, we never saw it because at that moment, TU, mud on the face of a very fan, noticed that Chula had just scored the first point!!! What disgrace, not to win the first point!

Well, later Thammasat evened the score, and the game remained 1 to 1, but TU was quite disappointed, since it has the reputation of winning every year. (Partly because anyone who ever graduated from the school is allowed to join the team, and they have several national soccer champions play each year -- one is 35, and took 12 years to try to get through TU and was finally (being from an influential family) given a 3-year certificate! This year the teams were pretty well matched, although TU had more potential goals (well-placed kicks but caught in the nick of time by the goalie) than Chula.

The morning of the game, at about 6:30, the students gather with their friends, wearing lightweight yellow (TU) or pink (Chula) sweatshirts and black slacks. They go in rented and borrowed trucks, mostly open ones, and cruise the streets until the parades start at 2. The fourth year students had arranged for us to have yellow shirts, too and the first year students were going to take us to the game in their car, but never showed up. Apparently, all the first year students made such promises to their fahrang ((foreign--HW)) teachers but evidently in the moment of truth weren't sure whether it was such a good idea,

and so none of them arrived. (Again an evidence of the Thai custom of being polite by accepting an invitation or inviting, but not being concerned about follow-up. It is NOT polite to refuse an invitation. Imagine, not showing up for your teacher, in America, once you'd extended the invitation!)

Since Thammasat was looking direct into the sun, there were many yellow sweaters where we sat in a slightly less sunny section. But in the morning, the Chula students had been riding and cheering in trucks with Thammasat students, half the time. And after the game it was no surprise when both CU and TU students marched together down the main road in Bangkok all the way from the stadium to Thammasat on the other side of town. Traffic was of course diverted (which was more important, after all?) and the students sang each others' school songs (each school has about 20!). Then they partied together until about midnight.

Did I mention that the two schools never once stopped cheering? Most cheer in Thai, a few in English: "Chula weel ween tday, Chula weel weel! Fi for ouh vitory...." Some in Thai with tunes like Red River Valley.

STUDENT RIOTS,

...A THAI TEACHER shyly informed me today that the school was closed because of some fighting. By 10:00 the law students and the polisci ((political science--HW)) students were having it out in full form -- throwing bricks, stones, and hitting one another with clubs and iron bars. Several students were injured, most bloodily, and one girl ambulated off to the nearest hospital.

Why?

Well,

it's an old quarrel. Law students are not welcome in the polisci canteen or something, and some kid, some two months ago, had a cup of tea there and the fight's been brewing since then! This is traditional. PS, Law, and Engineering students in all the universities fight each other and their counterparts in other schools regularly, over such violent and vitally important questions as the right of a Chula engineering student to date the girlfriend of a Kasetsart engineering student -- and often 30 or more students will attack a program or assembly, armed with guns and clubs! ((Makes Chicago seem like the Good Ship Lollipop!--HW)) One pretty Chula coed drove her pretty red convertible around the CU campus distributing clubs in a riot last year.

So, here we are with a holiday, out of the blue. The students have not had two consecutive weeks of study this semester.

(Exerpts from the letters homeward written by Joel Aronson, Ph.D., and his wife, Margot Richardson Aronson, M.A. Joel was in Bangkok to do psychological testing to implement acceleration of the Thai school system. Margot taught English Lit. at T.U.)

FOR SALE: Twenty-five years of Harry Warner's HORIZONS I

For a suitable bid I'll report back in detail. This collection should be complete and in good condition.
Will someone mention this in a Shadow mailing also?

--HW

COMPLIMENTS OF THE AUTHOR

(who discovered the inevitable typo while helping her
Dad fold the 4,800 sheets involved in collating.)