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Mt. Holz Science Fiction Society
09/13/19 -- Vol. 38, No. 11, Whole Number 2084

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Frankie's Flat Top (comments by Mark R. Leeper):

If you have been reading my writing for long you probably know I grew up with the horror images from the classic Universal horror monsters. I did not get much chance to see the films themselves until I was ten or so. But call me dense if you like but I never realized that Universal's Frankenstein monster had a flat head. He seemed to have an imposing brow line. But I never noticed you could put down two cups of hot tea on the top of his head and they would not fall in any direction. I cannot see how this would help the monster to survive. It does not give better access to the brain inside. It would give the creature an easier way to do headstands, but that is about all. [-mrl]

Kasha (Part 1) (comments by Mark R. Leeper):

I have just seen a rare and wondrous sight and I must relay it to you so that you may share in the wonder. My good wife Evelyn is very good at any number of things, but admitting that she was wrong is not one of them. The situation is all the more irritating for the fact that she so rarely is wrong. And when she is wrong she will still go to ludicrous lengths to prove she was right so even then only rarely will she admit to being wrong. To hear Evelyn admit she was wrong is so rare and pleasing an event that friends have been known to drive hundreds of miles just to be present at the event. It is so rare in fact that a star shines over the house and perfect strangers come knocking at the door to see the event. Excuse me, there is someone pulling into the driveway.

Okay, I'm back. They'd missed it by over twenty minutes. I told them all about it. (I wonder who they were?) Anyway, so as I was saying, I often tell people that I have never met a cuisine I didn't like. Not quite true. As a kid I was a very finicky eater. But since I was a teenager I have liked pretty much every new food I have tried, and certainly any cuisine. And I think Evelyn has come to depend on this. She tends to buy odd foods she finds in the grocery. If they are well-made, I generally like them unless they are something I have disliked since I was a kid. She bought a can of something called "Kasha and Gravy." Well, my record remained unblemished. I'd had this Eastern European delicacy as a seven-year-old and I can tell you that it ranks up there with lutefisk and gefilte fish. Not that it has that strong a smell or flavor. No, it is sort of like hominy grits that have gone even more wrong than hominy grits. Kasha doesn't have a whole lot of flavor, I guess. It is amazingly tasteless. It is the

smell that is amazing. It does not smell like food. I am not sure what it does smell like. Pick four cans of various repair materials at a hardware store, add a fifth can--an open can of kasha--and ask a blindfolded man to pick which one was food by smelling the cans. I doubt that the kasha would be picked Find me more than the expected one-fifth of the time.

More on this next week, if your stomachs can take it. [-mrl]

Classical Music References (letters of comment by Kip Williams and Paul Dormer):

In response to [letters of comment on James Bond and music](#) in the 09/06/19 issue of the MT VOID, Kip Williams writes:

THE WIZARD OF OZ has direct quotations from a number of classical pieces. Schumann's "The Happy Farmer" can be heard under Kansas scenes. A Mendelssohn scherzo plays under Toto's heroic run. Kodaly's "Viennese Musical Clock" from Hary Janos is quoted pretty straight.

And yeah, the music in THE RIGHT STUFF was bitten by a radioactive Tchaikovsky violin concerto. First couple of times watching were disorienting, because the music would simply quote Tchaikovsky for a measure or three, then suddenly remember it had promised its mother not to plagiarize and veer off into another direction (and thinking it had fooled anybody). [-kw]

Mark responds:

"The Happy Farmer" is a direct steal. I never knew that. [-mrl]

Paul Dormer writes:

[In reply to Mark] Same here.

The composer Antony Hopkins (not to be confused with the actor Anthony Hopkins) had a radio series called 'Talking about Music' in the seventies. In one episode he pointed out that a theme in Schumann's 'Piano Quintet' sounds like 'Who Wants to be a Millionaire'. He also suggested a mock thesis on the influence of British nursery rhymes on Russian piano concertos. The slow movement of Rachmaninov's 4th is obviously based on 'Three Blind Mice' and the first movement of Shostakovich's 2nd sounds like 'What Shall We Do with the Drunken Sailor?'

There's a bit in Sir Peter Maxwell Davies's piano concerto that always reminds me of 'There's No Business Like Show Business', but that could always be deliberate. When Max (as he was universally known) was touring the US a few years ago, there was a mix-up over his hotel booking in Las Vegas. A British journalist trying to track him down for an interview finally found him listed under the name Mavis. So he wrote a piece called 'Mavis in Las Vegas'. [-pd]

Evelyn adds:

Am I the only person who hears the first few bars of the "On, Wisconsin!" fight song in the main theme of THE BATTLE OF THE BULGE? [-ecl]

Mark responds:

No. [-mrl]

This Week's Reading (book comments by Evelyn C. Leeper):

Last week I omitted the name of the author of ASTOUNDING: JOHN W. CAMPBELL, ISAAC ASIMOV, L. RON HUBBARD, AND THE GOLDEN AGE OF SCIENCE FICTION; it was written by Alec Nevala-Lee.

THE LADY FROM THE BLACK LAGOON: HOLLYWOOD MONSTERS AND THE LOST LEGACY OF MILICENT PATRICK by Mallory O'Meara (ISBN 978-1-4328-6679-2 [Large Print edition]) is supposedly about Milicent Parick, the designer of the suit and make-up for the Creature from the Black Lagoon. In fact, the book has four threads running through it: Milicent Parick, O'Meara's search for information about Milicent Patrick, O'Meara's experiences in Hollywood as a producer (two films), and O'Meara's campaign to improve the position of women in Hollywood, both in terms of opportunities and in terms of treatment. The last is commendable, the third of interest only in illuminating the last, the second of interest as an adjunct to the first, and the first--what most people read the book for--almost gets lost in the mix. Patrick seems to have worked as a model and an actress, both before and after her short stint in the Universal make-up department. (There are several different accounts of why she left. O'Meara claims it was due to Bud Westmore's anger at O'Meara getting credit for the Creature and a place on the publicity tour; Westmore insisted that he be given sole credit for all work done in his department.)

Of the thirteen chapters, only two are about Patrick's monster design work on the four Universal films she worked on (IT CAME FROM OUTER SPACE, ABBOTT AND COSTELLO MEET DR. JEKYLL AND MR. HYDE, THE CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON, and THIS ISLAND EARTH.) My recommendation? Borrow this from the library and skim for the parts actually about Patrick. [-ecl]

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Quote of the Week:

Every dog must have his day.

--Jonathan Swift

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