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Donald F. Glut

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#1066158 in Books McFarland 2012-07-30 Original language: English PDF # 1 8.90 x .60 x 5.90l, .60 #File Name: 078646805X204 pages | File size: 39.Mb

Donald F. Glut : Shock Theatre, Chicago Style: WBKB-TV's Late Night Horror Showcase, 1957-1959 before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Shock Theatre, Chicago Style: WBKB-TV's Late Night Horror Showcase, 1957-1959:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. "Shocking. Positively shocking." By Jim Stenstrum Shock Theater came as a complete shock to my little seven year old system. It hit Minneapolis in 1957, and I had never seen anything

like it. Every one of those 52 films was brand new to me. I had never seen ANY of the Universal films, including Frankenstein, Dracula, The Wolf Man and all the others. I had never even seen a movie with Karloff and Lugosi before! So Shock Theater was a revelation to me, and I've been a huge fan of these classic horror films ever since. What amazes me about this book is how thorough and detailed it is as Don Glut gleefully describes the whole Shock Theater experience through his own young eyes in Chicago. Incredibly well-researched, and a terrifically fun read! Highly recommended!

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. SHOCKEROO By Richard Duncan If you're too young to remember Marvin, you're out of luck because there's hardly any video that survives from "Shock Theatre". Glut's book certainly brought back great memories of the TV show that I lived for back when I was 10 years old. It's filled with great photos, original TV Guide ads for the show, reviews, schedules and interesting biographical info about host Terry Bennett and the way local Chicago TV was produced in the '50s. I've watched those Universal movies over and over again through the years with different hosts and formats, but nothing can compare with seeing them for the first time with Marvin and his crew. Thank you, Donald Glut!

18 of 20 people found the following review helpful. THOROUGHLY DELIGHTFUL AND INFORMATIVE By Charles Grippo Having grown up in Chicago during the 1950's. I, like so many others, was an enormous fan of "Shock Theatre," a Saturday night television showcase for most of the great Universal horror films of the 30's and 40's. It was "Shock Theatre" which first introduced us kids to the Frankenstein, Dracula, Mummy, Wolf Man, and Invisible Man movies, since we had been born too late to see their original theatrical releases. It was where we first saw Karloff, Lugosi, Chaney, Jr., and all the rest in their classic monster roles. But, most of all, "Shock Theatre" was its host: "Marvin," a delightfully demented beatnik with Coke bottle glasses, who introduced the films, and, during the commercial breaks, made us laugh out loud with antics that are best described as Charles Addams meets Ernie Kovacs, with a dash of the Marquis De Sade thrown in. To my knowledge, Donald Glut's new book "Shock Theatre-Chicago Style" is the first and only book length account of the show, and it is as welcome as reuniting with a dear old friend from childhood. Actually, "Marvin" was created and portrayed by Terry Bennett, who, in 1957, was a staff employee at WBKB (now WLS TV), the ABC owned and operated television station in Chicago. WBKB had just acquired 52 of the Universal horror films, which Screen Gems (the television arm of Columbia Pictures) had syndicated to stations all over the country, with great success. Bennett convinced station management to let him present the films in his own unique style, an idea that paid off in such ratings success that WBKB became the envy of the city. "Marvin" developed such a fan following that Bennett was mobbed in his personal appearances. Audiences regularly tuned in, not so much to see the movies, as to see what weird experiments Marvin was conducting in his laboratory (a set which intentionally resembled Frankenstein's laboratory). Usually the object of Marvin's experiments was "Dear," a young woman whose face was never shown to the camera. (Originally "Dear" was portrayed by model Dorothy Johnson, but, subsequently, Bennett's wife Joy took over the role, and viewers loved her almost as much as they loved Marvin.) The key to Marvin and Dear's appeal was simple: Terry Bennett was a genius. An actor, ventriloquist, writer, producer, composer, artist, Bennett made Marvin into a three dimensional character, not simply another announcer. To this day, Marvin remains as vivid in my memory as any of the Universal monsters. And Joy Bennett also developed "Dear" into a fully realized character. Best of all, Terry Bennett was genuinely funny, which is much more than one can say of many horror movie TV hosts. (Marvin also had a musical group called the Deadbeats, which performed Bennett's own ghoulish inspired compositions on many of the shows.) Incredibly, at the same time they were doing "Shock Theatre," Terry and Joy Bennett also starred in a daily children's show which Terry conceived and wrote called "The Jobblewocky Place." In this show Joy played Terry's 12 year old ward named Pamela Puppet, and, though you did see her face, she was heavily made up. (Actually Joy Bennett was a beautiful woman, as off stage photos of her prove.) Glut has done a terrific job of researching and assembling what is, unfortunately, obscure material. He interviewed - first hand -- many persons who either worked with or knew the Bennetts. (Their son Kerry wrote the forward to the book.) He even corresponded with Joy before her death in 2005. And both Kerry and Joy gave him access to boxes and boxes of Terry's scripts, songs, newspaper clippings, photographs, and other career memorabilia. As a result, "Shock Theatre-Chicago Style" paints a full portrait of an iconic television show. Most of all it presents uncontrovertible proof that, although Terry Bennett wasn't the first horror movie TV host, he created the definitive template for all the others who have followed him to this day. One of the saddest things about Terry Bennett (apart from his death at a young age) was that, although his ratings success brought him national attention, none of the networks gave him his own prime time show. Oh, not as Marvin, of course. I mean, the kind of variety show that was so popular back in those days. Bennett was an original, with seemingly endless comic imagination, and a charisma that would have put him alongside Ernie Kovacs and Sid Caesar in the ranks of television comedy, if he had been given the right opportunity. (Unfortunately, so far no video tapes of Bennett's work have surfaced. "Shock Theatre" was done live most of the time, and the few shows that were taped were likely recorded over by the tv stations, to save money.) The next best thing, then, is Donald Glut's book. If you were fortunate enough to see "Shock Theatre" (Chicago style) and Terry Bennett, this book will bring back wonderful memories. If you've never heard of either the show or the man, this book will introduce you to one of the most gifted, yet unjustly neglected, talents in television history.

From December 1957 through October 1959, Chicago TV viewers were held in thrall by "Marvin," the ghoulishly hilarious host of WBKB-TV's late-night horror film series Shock Theatre. Marvin and his lady friend "Dear" (her face ever hidden from the camera) introduced thousands of Chicagoland youngsters to such classic Universal chillers as Frankenstein, Dracula and The Wolf Man. This history of Shock Theatre focuses on the series and its creator, Marvin himself--in real life, the multi-talented Terry Bennett, whose wife Joy played "Dear." Terry's son Kerry Bennett provides an affectionate foreword, while celebrated horror host Count Gore De Vol (Dick Dyszel) supplies the afterword. Included are dozens of photos and vintage advertisement reproductions, as well as two appendices featuring a resume of Terry Bennett's career and a list of films telecast during his two-year Shock Theatre run.

"lively information...definitive"--Filmfax; "Glut has provided a magisterial glimpse of the show...an enjoyable historical excursion into the early years of genre movie television broadcasting"--Mad Scientist; "Glut is a readable writer and a thorough researcher...stands as the ultimate record of the show"--Scarlet; "recommend...emphatically"--www.mania.com.About the AuthorDonald F. Glut is a prolific book and article writer, and movie producer-director. Among his many works is the award-winning Dinosaurs: The Encyclopedia and its supplements. He is the president of Frontline Entertainment and lives in Burbank, California.