

Monster from Green Hell

What can you say about *Monster from Green Hell* that hasn't already been said? Directed by Kenneth Crane (*When Hell Broke Loose*, *The Manster*), and written by Endre Bohem and Louis Vittes, *Monster from Green Hell* was released in 1957 on a double bill with *The Brain from Planet Arous*. It opened to rave reviews and was one of the highest-grossing films of 1957. Now that we've gotten past the alternative facts part of the liner notes, in writing about *Monster from Green Hell*, critic Glenn Erickson praised it by saying, "Unadulterated awfulness."

One of a spate of big bug pictures, this one has something to do with scientists sending small animals into space to see if the gamma rays produce mutations. Hint: They do. When the rocket lands in far-off Africa, we meet the mutant wasp, the titular monster who resides in an area known as Green Hell for reasons that were most likely clear to the screenwriters. Since the budget of the film would not have paid for shoe polish, let alone airfare, naturally they could not travel to Africa to shoot location sequences. Therefore, there is quite a lot of stock footage from the 1939 film, *Stanley and Liv-*

ingstone, which starred Spencer Tracy and Cedric Hardwicke, who do not appear in *Monster from Green Hell*.

The stars of *Monster from Green Hell* are Jim Davis (Dallas), Eduardo Ciannelli (Gunga Din), and, of course, the mutant wasp. The mutant wasp gets off much easier than the actors – it only has to buzz loudly – the poor actors have to spout some of the worst dialogue ever written for the screen. You will not, however, find such dialogue as "Does an elephant run from superstition?" in any other film.

For a film like *Monster from Green Hell*, one needs the perfect composer, and they got him – Albert Glasser, whose music graced some of the most beloved and classic low-budget films of the 1950s, including several other big bug movies like *Beginning of the End* and *Earth vs. the Spider*, as well as such other films as *The Cyclops*, *The Amazing Colossal Man*, *Attack of the Puppet People*, *War of the Colossal Beast*, and *The Boy and the Pirates*, all of which just happened to be directed by the great Mr. BIG himself – Bert I. Gordon.

Albert Glasser's music for *Monster from Green Hell* is classic Glasser – all blaring brass and screeching strings and jagged rhythms, bombastically keeping the movie trudging along for all of its seventy-three endless minutes, and making it seem like something is actually happening. Glasser was an expert at this kind of thing, and clearly in his musical element. In his unpublished autobiography he has great fun talking about all these films, the deadlines, the lower than low budgets. While he never scored a real hit film, he worked all the time, scoring every kind of movie as well as some early television like *The Cisco Kid*.

This release was prepared from Albert Glasser's own tapes and our restoration expert, Chris Malone has done his always-masterful job in transferring them and making them sound as good as possible.

— Bruce Kimmel