

WHERE are the science fiction and fantasy films of yester-year?

A young arts student at the University of Sydney who "grew up with Dr Who" and is a connoisseur of the genre says very few are available here. He is trying to remedy the situation.

The student, Antony Howe, has organised a Science Fiction and Fantasy Festival for the end of the month at the Paris Cinema.

Mr Howe, who is concentrating on government in his studies this year, organised a similar festival last year.

He says this year's should be much better because he has managed to get the Paris Cinema with its wide screen.

There will be about 28 hours of films spread over the Friday, Saturday and Sunday, March 31 to April 2.

Twenty-eight hours of escape from the nagging problems of this world to the excitement of warring monsters and robots and fantasy worlds far distant in time or space.

"I got interested in science fiction from television, mainly," said Mr Howe. "Then I got on to reading books, and from that to films."

"I grew up with Dr Who. At the moment I'm president of the Sydney University Science Fiction Association."

"There's a science fiction convention in Melbourne over Easter. Brian Aldiss will be coming out for that and then coming to give a talk at Sydney University on April 3."

"One of the films to be shown at the festival, *Doomwatch* has never been released in Sydney before. It's akin in some ways to *Andromeda Strain* because they're both ecological thrillers."

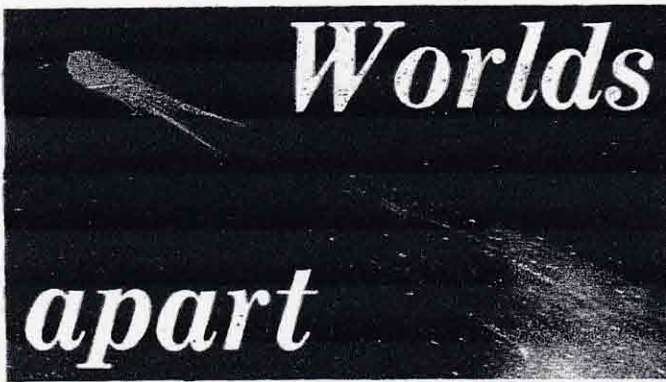
"*Andromeda Strain* is about bacteria from outer space brought back to the United States by a satellite."

"And *Doomwatch* is a very topical ecological thriller about radioactive and chemical wastes dumped in the sea near an inhabited island."

"The chemical waste corrodes the containers, leaks on to the sea bed and has a rather disastrous effect on some of the inhabitants of a fishing village on the island."

"It's based on a fairly successful British television series of the same name. I can't swear if the actors are the same, but I think they might be."

"Several classics from the past will be shown too. The earliest, *A Trip to the Moon*, was made in 1902. It's based on a com-



CONVERSATIONS with Marie Knuckey

combination of Jules Verne and H. G. Wells.

"The Cabinet of Dr Caligari (1918), Conquest of the Pole (1912), Metropolis (1926) and Fall of the House of Usher (1928) are the other classics."

"Robotrix" in Metropolis was one of the robots which inspired C3PO in Star Wars."

Zarqos, Planet of the Apes, Wizards, Phantom of the Paradise, Futureworld, Andromeda Strain, Logan's Run, Soylent Green, Fantastic Voyage, Behind the Scenes with Ray Harryhausen, Creeping Unknown, and Jaberwocky, are the other films to be shown over the three days.

Youngsters who enjoyed Star Wars should find the festival's backward look at more than 70 years of science fiction movies interesting.

None of the films are rated R, Mr Howe said, so parents will be able to bring their children.

"The Creeping Unknown (Quatermass Experiment) is very rarely shown in Sydney. It was made I think in 1955 and is based on another British television series, the Quatermass series. The film must have been fairly successful because they made two more after it. We showed the third film, Five Million Years to Earth, last year. This year we're showing the first one, Creeping Unknown."

Mr Howe hopes by putting on these festivals to draw attention to the interest in science fiction films so that they will be more easily available.

"When films get scratched they often don't get replaced," he said. "Classic science fiction of the fifties is almost impossible to get."

"Occasionally, if you're very lucky, you can get a 16mm print which isn't much use in a proper cinema. The 35mm prints are almost impossible to obtain. And

a lot of the films from the sixties are also impossible to get.

"You can't get films like *This Island Earth*, *Forbidden Planet*, *War of the Worlds* and *The Time Machine*. *War of the Worlds* was available last year. When I tried to get it this year, they said it was too badly scratched. As far as I know they've got no plans to replace it."

"Certainly they've got no plans to bring in new prints of the fifties films. Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea is no longer available."

"George Powell is making a sequel to *The Time Machine* — another reason why it seems odd they haven't any new prints available."



Red-garbed assassin on a mount that is half horse, half turkey in *Wizards*.

"When *Worlds Collide* is another fifties film that isn't available, although I believe two rival companies are trying to do remakes of it."

Andromeda Strain and *Logan's Run* will be full-size 70mm prints at the festival. Part of the picture is lost when 70mm prints are reduced to 35mm and purists object to this, said Mr Howe.

so the forces are embattled: Avatar and elves plus magic and the simple rustic life against Blackwolf, technology and Nazi goblins.

Logan's Run, the last film on the Saturday evening, is a bit closer to today. It is set in a US city in the 23rd century.

The city is sealed off from surrounding devastation. Its people enjoy themselves until they reach 30 — their Lastday. A few seek to live beyond 30. They are called the Runners. The Sandmen are a police unit whose job is to exterminate the Runners.

Melies' Conquest of the Pole (to be shown on Sunday) is a bit of a send-up of science fiction, said Mr Howe.

"George Melies was a magician, and he transposed his sleight of hand skills to the cinema and got some quite hilarious results."

Ray Harryhausen is famous as a science fiction special effects man, and one of the films to be shown on the Sunday is called Behind the Scenes with Ray Harryhausen.

"He does the Sinbad films," said Mr Howe. "His most famous was probably Jason and the Argonauts."

"Jaberwocky, the first film to be shown after the dinner break on the Sunday, is based on Lewis Carroll's verse. Apparently it has a fairly unconventional sound track, but it's not the same as the Monty Python film."

Apart from his studies at the university, Mr Howe publishes a Dr Who magazine called Zerinx, which comes out every two or three months.

Bookings for the Festival can be made through Box 191, PO Gordon, or at the Galaxy Bookshop.



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(Suggests end of March for the Science Fiction & Fantasy Festival)