

THE FORT LEE FILM COMMISSION • NELSON E. PAGE • ALOIS DETTLAFF
AND THE HUDSON RIVER ARTS COUNCIL PRESENT:

Cliffhanger 2003

A SALUTE TO FILM PRESERVATION

FOR THE FIRST TIME IN 90 YEARS, EDISON'S "LOST" 1910 FILM CLASSIC

"FRANKENSTEIN"

ALSO THE N.J. PREMIER OF THE
NEWLY RESTORED 1927 CLASSIC FILM

"METROPOLIS"

Meet
Legendary Film Collector
AL DETTLAFF

&
Author of
"Edison's Frankenstein"
FRED C. WIEBEL

SPECIAL SNEAK PREVIEW

By Invitation Only!

THURSDAY, APRIL 24TH

7:00 P.M. AT THE GALAXY THEATRE
7000 BOULEVARD EAST • GUTTENBERG, N.J.

FOR A GALA FUNDRAISER TO BENEFIT
THE FORT LEE FILM COMMISSION.

TICKETS ARE \$25.00 AND INCLUDE REFRESHMENTS.
ORGANIST, FORT LEE'S OWN JEFF BARKER WILL
ACCOMPANY THE FILMS ON THE ORGAN. THERE WILL
BE EXHIBITS OF FILM MEMORABILIA FROM THE
COLLECTIONS OF THE FORT LEE FILM COMMISSION,
ALOIS DETTLAFF, AND NELSON E. PAGE.

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:
SEE THE FORT LEE FILM COMMISSION WEBSITE AT
WWW.FORTLEEFILM.ORG OR CALL: (201) 592-3663

FOR TICKET INFO OR DIRECTIONS:
CALL THE GALAXY THEATRE AT (201) 854-7847

Fort Lee Film



Commission

HUDSON RIVER

ARTS COUNCIL

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF THE ARTS

The History of the Landmark Loew's Jersey Theatre, Journal Square, Jersey City, NJ

Once upon a time, the great film studios of Hollywood built theatres the likes of which no one had seen before. They had bronze railings and plush carpets, rich red tapestries, marble columns that soared to coffered ceilings covered in gold leaf. And they were huge, with thousands of seats.

In truth, the buildings seemed more like palaces than theatres. Not surprisingly, they came to be known as Movie Palaces.

In spite of their name, Movie Palaces were equipped with full stages and dressing rooms as well as projectors because in that long ago time the then-new movies were presented as part of a double bill with live stage shows. And almost all Movie Palaces included a massive pipe-organ. Though originally intended to add sound to silent film, organ concerts, including audience singalongs, became part of the regular programming of most Movie Palaces.

The reason Hollywood studios built the Movie Palaces was an idea that was as bold as it was simple: that a theatre should be so spectacular as to become essentially an opening act for the show itself, and that together Movie Palace and act would create an unforgettable entertainment experience.

This idea, in turn, was part of something we call "the art of American entertainment" – the mix of artistry and showmanship which, in the first decades of the 20th century, melded the performing arts traditions of all the peoples who came to this country into a force so compelling that it not only entertained us but also defined the American Experience to ourselves and to the world.

So it was that spectacular Movie Palaces were built across the country during the 1920s. And the public flocked to them.

The elaborate designs of the Movie Palaces were based on European opera houses and palaces. But unlike their Old World antecedents, the Movie Palaces were not built for a privileged elite, but for everyone. The banker and the shop clerk sat side by side in the Palaces, and were equally entertained. In this, the Movie Palace was a unique expression of American democracy.

New Jersey got its grandest Movie Palace on September 28, 1929 when the Loew's Jersey opened its grand doors on Journal Square, Jersey City. Called "the most lavish temple of entertainment in New Jersey," the Loew's was exactly that. For residents of Hudson, Bergen and Essex Counties and beyond, a show at the Loew's was the definition of a great night out on the town.

Acts from Manhattan's Capitol Theatre regularly toured the Loew's Jersey. Most of the stars of the 1930s "trod the boards" at the Loew's, in addition to appearing on the Theatre's silver screen. And one of the greatest stars of the century was "born" at the Loew's one evening in 1933, when a teenager from nearby Hoboken watched Bing Crosby perform live on our stage and was inspired to believe he too could be a star. His name was Frank Sinatra.

In the Great Depression, the Loew's and all the Movie Palaces were magical oases from the bleakness of hard times. During World War II, they were the gathering places where Americans bolstered their resolve to carry on to victory.

But the public's love affair with the Movie Palaces was strained by the advent of television. To many people, the grand theatres seemed old fashioned when compared to the new magic of the electronic marvel in their living rooms. Making matters worse, many people began to move away from the cities to the suburbs where new and very plainer theatres were being built.

As early as the 1950s, the great Movie Palaces began to close and be torn down.

As scores of Palaces were destroyed in the 1960s and '70s, a handful of enlightened cities saved their Palaces and discovered that once restored, these magnificent old theatres make wonderful centers for arts and entertainment. The generation that grew up watching TV rediscovered the Movie Palace's unique showmanship. Still, the preserved theatres were the exception, as many more Palaces continued to fall to the wrecker's ball.

The Loew's Jersey actually stayed open as a first run movie house much later than most of the Palaces. And remarkably, it also survived in better condition than most, with its ornate walls and finishes left largely intact. But in August, 1986, time seemingly ran out for the Loew's: it closed with an installment of "Friday the 13th," having been sold to a developer and scheduled for demolition in the Spring of 1987.

By reputation, Jersey City did not seem like a place where a grass roots battle to save a landmark could be waged and won. But a determined group of residents set out to save the Loew's Jersey.

It turned out to be a 6 year crusade. In that time, the initial band of preservationists grew into a corporation called Friends of the Loew's. Thousands of people signed our petition asking that the Loew's be preserved. The Jersey City Economic Development Corporation joined the struggle. A series of City Council votes backed our efforts. Finally, Friends of the Loew's proposed that Jersey City buy the Theatre, and on April 5, 1993 the City took title.

Now, Friends of the Loew's, working in partnership with JCEDC and the city, is leading the restoration of the Loew's as a non-profit arts and entertainment center that will attract audiences from throughout the region while improving both the economy and quality of life in Journal Square and all Hudson County.

A capital campaign has raised over \$3 million in public and private funds, including major support from the City of Jersey City, the New Jersey Historic Trust and the New Jersey Urban Enterprise Zone Authority.

In addition to repairs made by contractors, a unique aspect of the Loew's restoration is the critical role volunteers play. To date, volunteers have accomplished well over \$1 million worth of construction repairs and improvements, a value based on estimated costs of specific work items that were identified in architectural surveys of the Loew's. This volunteerism demonstrates the deep community support that the Loew's enjoys while allowing Friends of the Loew's to stretch the value of donations as far as possible.

When the Theatre resumes full operation, it will be as a not-for-profit arts and entertainment center presenting a broad spectrum of programming, including: Jazz and Swing Concerts, Rock and R & B Concerts, Folk and Country Concerts, Symphony, Opera & Dance, Musicals and Dramatic Plays, Multi-Cultural Programs, Children's Programs & Materials, Classical & Independent Film* and more.

* Film is of course an art form in itself, but it is also a "gateway experience" – the medium through which many people, especially young people, are most comfortable when exploring the various performing arts for the first time.

This variety in programming, together with the Movie Palace heritage of the Art of America Entertainment, makes the Loew's an art center that is uniquely able to break down the preconceived divisions between "art" and "entertainment," "classical" and "popular" and between different performance disciplines – divisions which prevent many people, especially young people, from thoroughly exploring and enjoying the performing arts.

Friends of the Loew's in partnership with
The Fort Lee Film Commission/2003 Cliffhanger Present

THE MANY FACES OF FRANKENSTEIN

The EDISON KINETOGRAM

VOL. 2

MARCH 15, 1910

No. 4

2 Days of
Triple-Feature-Plus
Film Programs

Featuring
The Official Public
Re-Premiere of
**Thomas Edison's 1910
"Lost" Frankenstein**

SCENE FROM
FRANKENSTEIN
FILM No. 6904

Friends of
The Loew's

2003 Fort Lee Film
Commission
Edison National
Historic Site

April 26th & April 27th, 2003

Co-sponsored by The City of Jersey City, Mayor Glenn D. Cunningham
and the Municipal Council and The Jersey City Economic Development Corporation

To find out more about Friends of the Loew's, or to volunteer, come in on a weekend, or call 201-798-6055.

Visit our website, www.loewsjersey.org

To contribute, make checks payable to: Friends of the Loew's Inc., PO Box 3779, Jersey City, NJ 07303

"Friend. Good."

Where would we be without friends?

For one thing, we wouldn't have the Landmark Loew's Jersey Theatre were it not for the dedication of the Friends of the Loew's who fought to preserve, restore and resurrect this historic building. Furthermore, without friends of Friends of The Loew's (our sponsors, patrons, archivists, partners in film preservation, etc.), programs such as this Frankenstein Festival would not be possible. Friends make the impossible possible.

Until recently, film historians thought it impossible to locate a surviving print of *Thomas Edison's Frankenstein*. This 14-minute, landmark 1910 film, considered to be the progenitor of the horror genre and a forerunner in the field of special effects, also holds the distinction of being the first celluloid incarnation of author Mary Shelley's Frankenstein monster. Although photographic evidence of the film's existence was discovered in the Edison Archives in West Orange, New Jersey, no actual print of the film could be found. By 1980, The American Film Institute had declared *Edison's Frankenstein* to be one of the top ten most "culturally and historically significant lost films."

Enter friend, Mr. Alois Dettlaff of Wisconsin. When Mr. Dettlaff learned of the AFI list, he let it be known that Edison's Frankenstein was indeed very much "alive" and well preserved in his private collection. Dettlaff had acquired the Frankenstein print upon the death of his wife's grandmother who had herself collected prints during her years as a film distributor. Because of copyright concerns, Dettlaff had turned down numerous requests to screen the film publicly. Now that Mr. Dettlaff has decided to release the film on DVD, he has agreed to allow the official public re-premiere of this landmark film appropriately at the Landmark Loew's Jersey.

We owe our deepest gratitude to Alois Dettlaff, who has generously shared Thomas Edison's vision of Frankenstein with us. A "friend" such as Mr. Dettlaff is indeed "good," as the Frankenstein monster might say.

Dear Patrons...Please be advised that the taking of still photos or motion pictures, video or digital duplication, or any other means of reproduction and/or recording of any of the films, or portions thereof, presented at the Landmark Loew's Jersey is strictly forbidden. Anyone who violates this prohibition will have to surrender any and all such duplicated images to the Theatre Management and will be asked to leave the premises. We thank you for your cooperation.

Our thanks to the following individuals and organizations for providing assistance and archival materials for this weekend's program: Pete Apruzzese, Brian Bavosa, Ray Faiola, Jeff Joseph, Joe Villanella, Frederick C. Wiebel, Jr. and The Edison National Historic Site - Maryanne Gerbauckas, Director. Special thanks to Thomas Meyer, Louis Azzollini and The Fort Lee Film Commission for their expertise and support. Archival Frankenstein trailers courtesy of SabuCut Productions; "Third Dimensional Murder" 3-D short courtesy of 3-D Archive.

Bernie Anderson has graciously provided piano accompaniment to the screening of *Edison's Frankenstein*. Mr. Anderson gained his undergraduate degree in music composition from Montclair State University (NJ), and earned his MFA at NYU, where he completed and workshoped a full-scale musical, "*The Washington Buzz*." His credits include orchestration assistant on "*Big*," "*King David*," "*The Radio City Music Hall Christmas Spectacular*," "*Fosse*" and "*Seussical the Musical*," and orchestration of TheatreFest's "*Triplets*."

Bernie has studied under Danny Troob, orchestrator for Disney films "*Beauty and The Beast*" and "*Aladdin*"; and with the late Lee Erwin, famous for having scored and performed original scores for silent films with theatre pipe organ accompaniment. Bernie has since scored and performed many silent film scores on organ throughout the tristate area. In 2001, Mr. Anderson was the premiere organist for the NJ edition of the American Movie Classics Film Preservation Tour where he performed his original scores to several titles.

Mr. Anderson collaborated with Tony Award winner, William Finn, on two new songs commissioned by *The New Yorker Magazine* for their 75th anniversary festival in May of 2000. Bernie Anderson is the recipient of the ASCAP Frederick Loewe Award.

Coming Soon To The Loew's Jersey!

The 2nd Annual

SCI-FI FILM FESTIVAL

Fri. & Sat. May 30 & 31, 2003

H.G. Wells' *The War of the Worlds (1953)* & *Invaders From Mars (1953)*

Additional titles to be announced. * Titles subject to change.

Watch the marquee, call the theatre or check our website www.loewsjersey.org updated information.

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Friends of the Loew's Board of Trustees would like to thank the Friends of the Loew's Volunteer Crew. These dedicated individuals contribute their talent and services to maintain the Loew's, and assist in its restoration and operation.

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