

THE FESTIVAL of FANTASTIC FILMS

20th October to 22nd October 2017

The success of last year's festival was thanks not just to our great selection of guests, but to all who attended and led to an immediate decision to go ahead with this year's event.

Please accept our apologies for the lateness of this first progress report, but a lot has been going on in the background, not least of all, lining up some extremely interesting guests.

The upcoming 28th Festival of Fantastic Films will be held over the weekend of October 20 – 22 in the Manchester Conference Centre (The Pendulum Hotel) and looks set to be another cracker.

Guests

We are pleased to announce that the following guests have confirmed that they can attend (subject to work commitments).



Lone
Fleming



George
Hilton



Camille
Keaton



Ruggero
Deodato



Jenny
Hanley



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The Festival Experience:

Celebrity guests already lined up include cult Italian director Ruggero Deodato (***Cannibal Holocaust***), actors Jenny Hanley (***Scars of Dracula***), Lone Fleming (***Return of the Evil Dead***), Camille Keaton (***I Spit on Your Grave***) and George Hilton (***The Devil with 7 Faces***).

Ruggero so enjoyed his previous visit to our event that he has chosen this year's festival to premiere his latest film, made in English, ***Ballade in Blood***, whose star, Carlotta Morelli, will also be travelling to Manchester for what promises to be a highly memorable event.

All of our guests are scheduled to be interviewed on stage and will be around for autographs or a chat in the bar in the uniquely informal atmosphere of our annual get-together.

Our 2016 celebrity visitors included directors Jorg Buttgerit (***Nekromantic***), Harry Kumel (***Daughters of Darkness, Malpertuis***), actresses Jacqueline Pearce (***The Reptile, Plague of the Zombies, Blake's 7***), Dagmar Lassander (***The Iguana with the Tongue of Fire, The Black Cat***), Linda Hayden (***Taste the Blood of Dracula, Blood on Stan's Claw, The Boys from Brazil***) and Edith Scob (***Eyes Without a Face***).

Also attending were two great friends of the festival, top cult film director Norman J. Warren (***Terror, Inseminoid***) and renowned film composer John Scott (***Greystoke, The Shooting Party***), who first came along as celebrity guests, but enjoyed the experience so much that they have become regular visitors to our annual jamboree.



Guests: **Harry Kumel, Norman J. Warren, Linda Hayden, Edith Scob, Jacqueline Pearce and John Scott.**

The Festival Experience: Last Year's Guests

Edith Scob

A typically serendipitous moment during last last year's festival occurred near the end of the showing of poetic 1959 French horror classic, ***Eyes Without a Face*** when its starlet, Edith Scob, wandered in, not knowing that the door was right beside the screen. There she was, then and now, nobody there will ever forget that unique moment.

Interviewed on stage by lecturer and film expert Darrell Buxton, Edith was absolutely charming and provided an illuminating account of her fantastic career and how it began:

"I was very shy," she said, "I was studying French at university and took a course in theatre at the same time. Then I thought that it was better to say the words of playwrights than to write a dissertation about poetry, or the theatre.

"At the time there were much fewer actors than today and it was very easy for me to begin to work. I met Georges Franju and he gave me a very nice part in the first film he made called ***La Tete Contre les Murs (Head Against the Wall)***, it was a very beautiful film and I had a very small part, a young crazy girl – very mystical, there was a church and mad people surrounding me.

"I was a kind of image of purity and after, when he wanted to make the film ***Eyes Without a Face***, he thought about me and he gave me the part, which was great for me. At the same time I worked with Pierre Brasseur (who plays my father in the film) in the theatre, in the first play by Henry de Montherlant.

"That was my beginning in the theatre and my job as an actress in film, it was very easy, but afterwards people only gave me parts reflecting those I had already done and I was typecast as a victim until relatively recently.

"But for the last 20 years I have felt more free in the parts I could play.

"Appearing In ***Vidocq*** in 2003, I was very pleased, because I had played so many virginal, mystical people, but the director Pitof, chose me to play the financier of a bordello, it was very good and very different."

In ***Eyes Without a Face*** how did she approach playing Christiane Genessier while having to wear a mask?

"It was the first big part I'd had and I thought it was normal!"



When the audience laughter died down, Edith continued, "I was absolutely apart from the other people working in the film because, with the mask, I couldn't eat with the others, the only way I could eat was using a straw. I was really, as in the film, alone, closed in a part of the house, but I think it helped me a lot.

"I had different masks, three or four kinds, one very close to the skin, very, very thin, I had to go to make-up four hours before filming."



Darrell commented that the way her character seemed to float through scenes was so effective, adding to the film's unique atmosphere, did she choose to do it that way or was it Franju?

"I think it was something intuitive. The way I was, I couldn't talk normally, that's why I did a lot of interpretation with my body to express this person, Christiane Genessier."

It's a beautiful and poetic movie, yet contains one of the most gruesome scenes on film prior to 1960, with the operation and face removal: was Franju trying to shock, or did he have a more artistic motive in mind?

"Georges Franju wanted to suggest things, not to show the blood and horrific things – I think that the producer insisted a lot on having something terrifying and horrible. It was not exactly to the taste of Georges Franju, he was more poetic."

Did she ever ask him where her character would go at the end of the film?

"No. I don't need explanation. And the work I have done recently – with Leos Carax – he will say nothing and Franju didn't say much – certainly nothing psychological.

"I think that if you just open all the possibilities, the sense of what this end is, it's better than saying she will do this or that, the image is enough."

What was the reaction when the film was first released?

"People in the cinema were shocked, they weren't used to this sort of thing.

"But today it's very difficult, when I see the film, the moment with the scissors and the skin is the only moment when I sometimes have to laugh, it has not aged well, it's not magical as the rest of the film is.

"Jean Cocteau adored the film, he wrote a big review, which was very effective, very good. That helped the film a lot."

Did other directors want to work with her specifically because of her role in ***Eyes Without a Face***?

"I'm sure. It's stuck to me all of my life, it has followed me. I didn't work with the Nouvelle Vague – because I had worked with Georges Franju.

"When I worked with Christophe Gans on ***Brotherhood of the Wolves***, he told me how much he admired the work of Franju.

"It was the biggest film I had ever done, everything was outdoors, many people, fights. I'm not very used to these kind of films and it was strange because when they called 'Action!' Gans was in another room watching what the four or five cameras that he used were actually filming.

“It was a kind of working I was not used to.

“Then when I worked with Leos Carax on **Holy Motors**, which is a very good, very beautiful film – there is a reference to **Eyes Without a Face** openly, as he loved the film.”

Darrell asked Edith about her other work with Franju during the 1960s when she seemed to have become a sort of muse to the great director, most famously in **Judex**.

“That is a very beautiful film and there is another fantastic film, **Le Sang des Betes (Blood of Beats)** – a marvellous film.

“I think I was a sort of antidote to the violence, as you see at the end of **Eyes Without a Face**, in the scene with the birds. It’s a lovely contrast, something more poetic, pure.”

And what of her film **The Burning Court**, based on the novel by John Dickson Carr, set in a lovely chateau with a striking gothic atmosphere and directed by Julien Duvivier?

“It was very difficult because my father was very ill then, it was a mix between personal life and work, but I was very happy to be in the film. I was really a kind of victim in that I was vampirised.”

On that marvellous word, Darrell mentioned the overuse of the word surreal and how it applied to her work with Luis Bunuel in **The Milky Way (1969)** and more recently with Leos Carax.

“It’s very interesting as a question. It’s marvellous because both of them knew so well what they had in mind and it’s very pleasant being an actor because you want to enter into a world. You are pleased to work with such people, it’s a fantastic experience.

“Bunuel was fantastic.”

Leos Carax’s **Holy Motors** ends with Edith donning a mask not unlike that in **Eyes Without a Face**, what did the director tell her about his attitude to the scene and how it fitted into the narrative of the film?

“The first time I met Leos Carax, he was very shy. I was very impressed because I love his films, he is a great poet.



“He told me, ‘You will drive a limousine,’ and I thought that was all I had to do, just drive. But he would add some little phrases, some sentences, some dialogue.

“Maybe one or two months before we began to work together , he said, ‘I thought just recently – would you mind if at the end of the film you could put on a mask – a reference to the Franju film which I like very much.’ I agreed instantly.

“I had in my house the mask from more that 50 years ago and I said to Leos, ‘I will give you the mask.’ He was astonished, but I found that at some time the mask had ended up in the bin!”

Edith has done a lot of stage work, which does she prefer, theatre or cinema?

“I have done much more theatre than cinema, I like it because it’s really family. At the beginning I was very terrified by cinema, but today no. In films you can begin again, you can take risks and it’s a pleasure to play.

“I like them both, but in film, if you are helped by a really good director, it’s fantastic.”

Does she like British films?

“Oh, yes, yes. **The Draughtsman’s Contract**, **Monty Python** and the big fat comic, very funny, absolutely crazy . . . Benny Hill! He’s fantastic.”

Any actors or directors she would like to work with?

“Many.

“I work with very young people who are making their first short films, they are very interesting.

“Sometimes I think I have to do something I have never done before, in a kind of atmosphere I don’t know, it’s a kind of adventure.”

Does she have a favourite role in theatre, film or television?

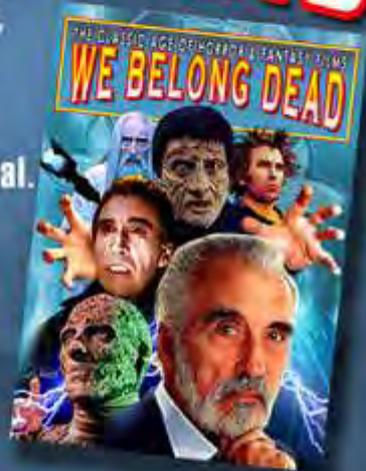
“Every role I play when I am playing it.

“But **Eyes Without a Face** is the only film that has been with me all of my acting life and which is well-known all over the world, which pleases me greatly.”



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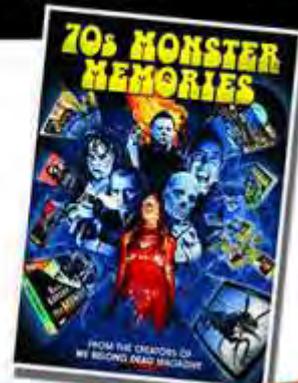
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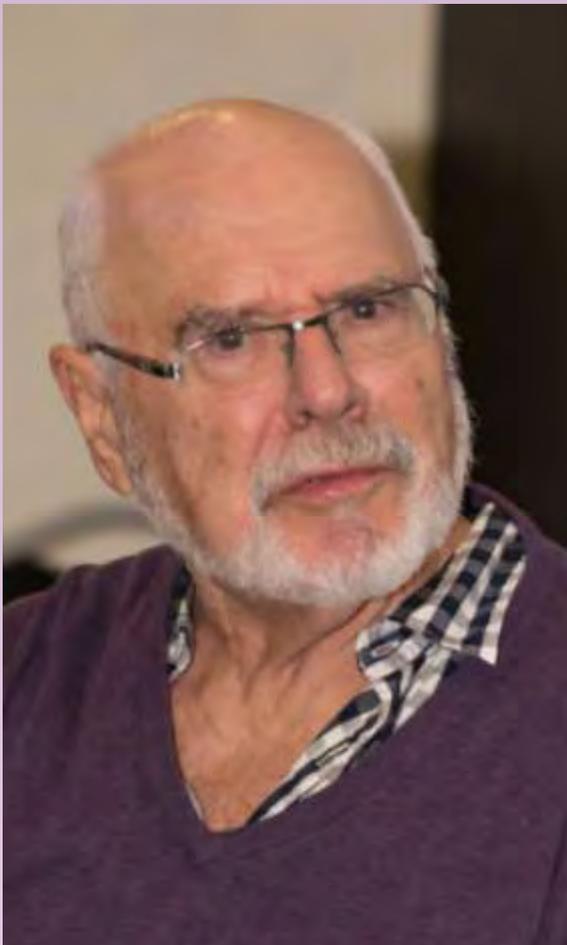
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More of the Festival Experience: Another of Last Year's Guests

Harry Kumel

The Belgian director of legendary cult horror-fantasy movies such as *Daughters of Darkness* and *Malpertuis* took to the stage to talk about his life and work with Darrell Buxton.



Darrell began by asking Harry about his first major feature film, *Monsieur Hawarden*, a drama about a woman who masquerades as a man for many years. As the film is dedicated to Joseph Von Sternberg, had Harry set out to take inspiration from the great directors of the past whom he particularly admired?

“Not at all.

“I had made documentaries for television and was a reporter on film-making, so we were sent to many festivals and I had the luck to meet a lot of interesting directors and actors. I was also making dramas, I was 20 years old and still at university.

“Subsidies came along in Belgium to make films and since I was very young and had a television show where I was in high regard, they asked me if I would like to make films, so I presented them with Daisy Miller by Henry James, adapted for Flanders. But they said, ‘This is a subsidy for Flemish culture and it’s not Flemish enough.’

“Then somebody showed me the novel of Monsieur Hawarden, which I said was an impossible story to film, but when you are in your twenties, impossible stories are a challenge.

“The woman should be a bit manly, but not too much.

“It was based on a real story, her grave is in Wallonia, you can still see it, she was not a cross dresser, she was in hiding from a murder that she had committed in Vienna, of a man who wanted to rape her. She had to flee and went to a farm belonging to her family and everybody pretended that she was a man.

“I went to the Festival of Cannes as a journalist and approached Ingrid Thulin with the screenplay. She wanted to play it and she could have, but unfortunately she was too expensive.

“Then I considered Hildegard Knef, who would have been very good too and I met her in Hilversum, but she drank like a fish.

“There is this thing that happens between a director and an actor or actress, if you don’t love them it’s like a marriage, it doesn’t work.

“So I went to the best actress in Holland, asked her and she did the part: Helen Vogle, she died just last year, she was a wonderful person.

“The film was no success at all in Belgium at the beginning, then I presented it at the Festival of Mannheim in ‘69 – a film in costumes in the middle of these idiot Germans trying to imitate the French Nouvelle Vague, women in black dresses and men with unwashed hair.

“They booed the film and the director of the festival came up to me and said, ‘Don’t worry, they booed Antonioni too.’”

That certainly made our audience laugh.

“I said, ‘Yes, but he makes bad films!’”

And that made them laugh even louder.

“I still believe that – he makes boring movies.

“So the film came to Britain, David Thomson said he wanted it for the London Film Festival.

“In Britain they know what masques are, because they have had Shakespeare and Noel Coward and Oscar Wilde and Gilbert & Sullivan, so they know about masques, they don’t get that on the continent.

“But in Britain, they knew the conventions, they accepted the film.

“Peter Brooke was in the audience and we were at the then freshly built in brutalist style National Film Theatre in London.

“We stood on the terrace and Peter Brooke said to Helen Vogle, ‘This is the best film performance I have ever seen.’

“And she fainted.

“So that was how **Monsieur Howarden** came about.”

In his next films, Harry had two cinema legends topping the bill, Delphine Seyrig and Orson Welles, how did they compare and contrast?.

“I can say it in a few words, Delphine Seyrig was an actress, Orson Welles was a ham. That’s all I have to say.

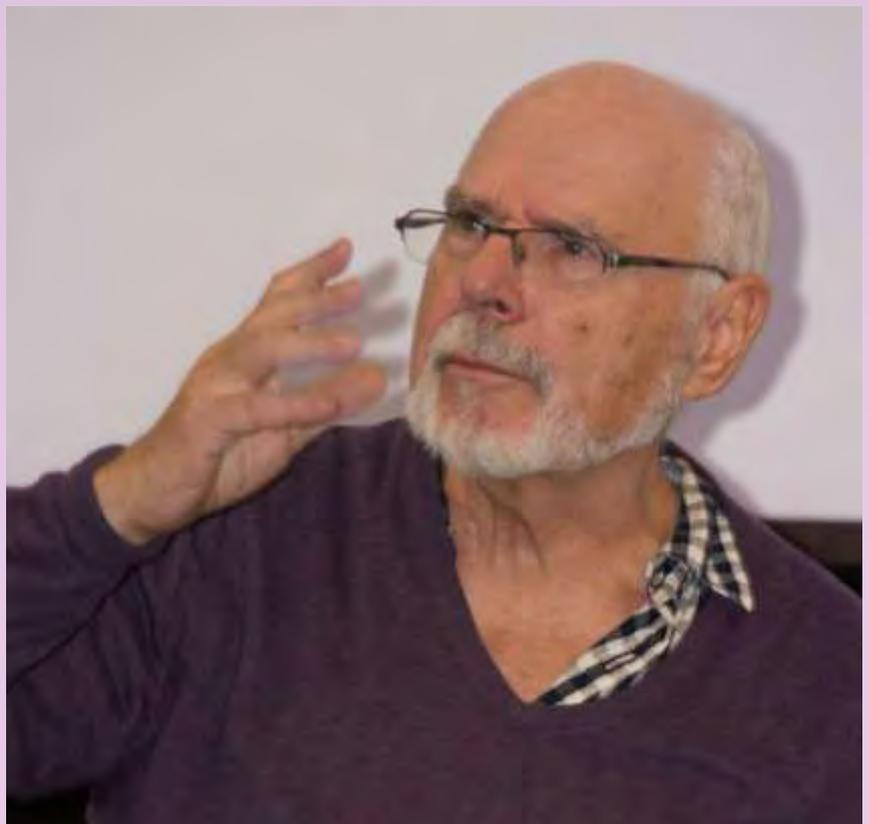
“**Daughters of Darkness** was a subject chosen quite by chance because the young producers came to me and said, we want you to make a film in the style of **Monsieur Howarden**, but commercial, and I said, if you make it in my style it won’t be commercial!

“But they said, try, so I went out and saw a publication called Bloody Countess or The Blood-stained Countess, which I bought and I said, wonderful: 800 virgins involved, but the producers said, impossible, we have no money - and costumes!

“When you say to a producer that you’ll need costumes, they do not like it, as if in a modern film you do not clothe the people.

“Anyway they said, no, no, and I said, very simple (I was still young), ‘Then we make a modern version – she’s a vampire, so she still roams around the world.’ And from there, we wrote a treatment, Pierre Druot, the co-producer and I, in three days and three nights, very fast, 60 pages, on the corner of the table in the dining room of my parents – there we could get food too (my poor mother).

“We had a fantastic seller of films in France, the greatest gangster of all times, he owed me at the end 400,000 Belgian francs, which



was a lot of money at that time, in the seventies.

“But he sold like an angel, he went to Cannes – at that time you could go to Cannes and sell a movie on a treatment, it was extraordinary.

“Naturally we had put in everything so that it could be sold – sex, blood, everything commercial. We had put so much sex in it, the most complicated sex possible, so it was sold immediately. We had money from America, we had money from Germany, we had money from Italy, from Canada, from everywhere.

“But that meant I had people from all these countries who had to be in the film.

“The only condition Pierre and I insisted on was that we wanted Delphine Seyrig in the main role. I wanted the chic-est actress, who had played for Alain Resnais and Losey and all these chic directors.

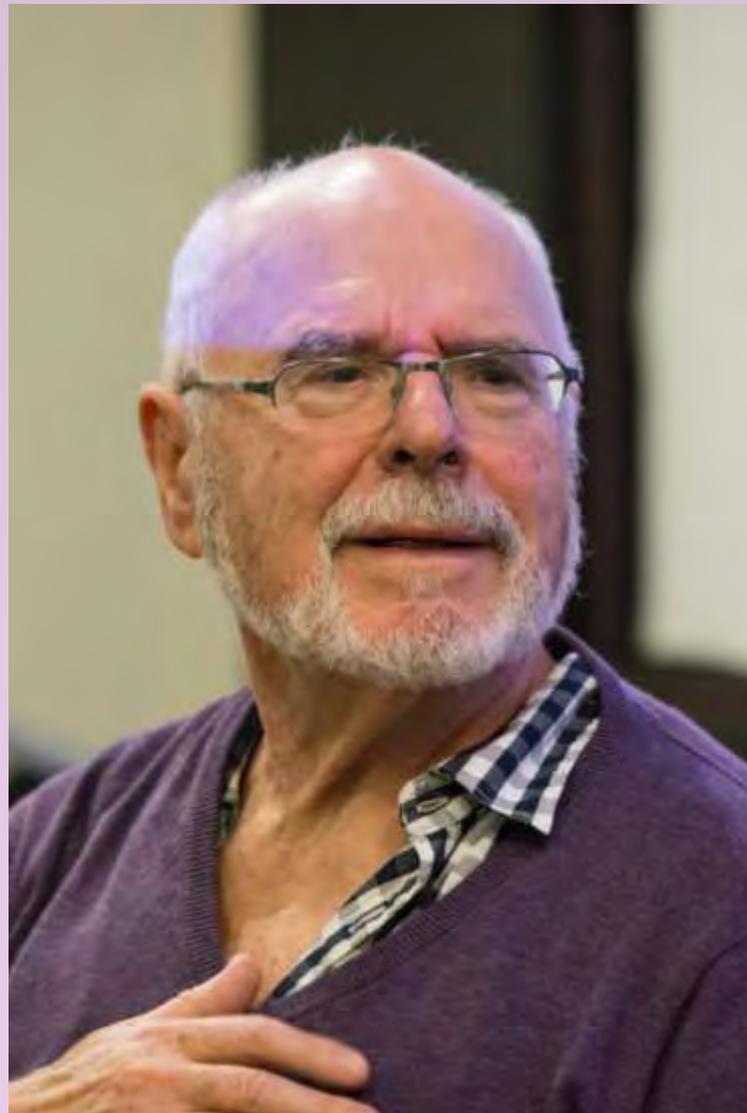
“I said, ‘I want her otherwise I don’t make the film.’

“A meeting was arranged and I went to see her thinking, she’ll never do this.

“But she had seen my first film and she said she wanted to do the film. Alain Resnais had said he liked the story and she also liked it, she had a great sense of humour.

“The actual script was written very fast by a great script writer called Jean Ferry, the writer of the greatest French films, like *Quai des Orfèvres*, a fabulous film by Henri Clouzot.

“And he was the original writer of the story of *Les Enfants du Paradis*, nobody knew until the Criterion DVD came out. He’d written the story in 1943, but his name could not be put on it because he was Jewish.



“If you read his story, you will see it’s exactly the film, Jacques Prevert only had to add the dialogue.

“Jean was a fabulous writer, extremely intelligent, erudite.

“But he had been completely forgotten, like most of the great French writers or actors or directors, they were all relegated to menial tasks, because of the Nouvelle Vague, which is only vague and not novel.

“I sent him the treatment, hoping that he would throw it in my face saying, ‘This is disgusting, disgraceful, but no, he wrote a telegram saying, ‘This is a great liberation, I want to write the dialogue.’

“So I had to do this movie which I was a little bit ashamed to show my parents.

“Jean wrote it very quickly, in three weeks. There were real artisans at that time, they don’t make them like that any more.”

So with Delpine Seyrig starring, what of the eclectic international cast imposed by the various backers?

“I had then the sex star of Canada, Danielle Ouimet, then the Americans sent me John Karlen, who had been in the US television series *Dark Shadows*, but when he came off the plane, I didn’t see the young man

that I had seen in his photograph. He was not middle aged, he was just not so young any more.

“Another producer sent a friend of his whom I went to see in a pornographic movie. In Belgium at that time, pornographic movies were shown in special cinemas, but in every shot where you had full frontal nudity, the distributor blanked it with a marker, by hand. So the first image I had of this young lady, when she came out of the water, she was preceded by a swarm of bees.

“But she was so beautiful, she was not a great actress, but she had IT, and Delphine loved her.

“We filmed in Ostend and it looked like winter, but was in the middle of a heatwave. Poor Delphine in her big coat, she transpired so.

“The exterior of the hotel was there, but we filmed the interiors in the Astoria in Brussels, which is now closed, but in restoration.

“We made painted backdrops to match the interior with the exterior, something which I utilised much more in **Malpertuis**.

“Films are practical things, there’s no inspiration, not what film critics think, if they think . . .

“In art, it’s always resolving a problem, never something that’s done with inspiration. You start to work, it’s as simple as that, all the people who tell you otherwise are either critics or bad film-makers.

“**Malpertuis** came about slowly because **Daughters of Darkness** had been such a big success everywhere – about the only Belgian film ever shown in drive-ins and in New York – on 42nd Street, which was very sleazy at that time, but it was New York and a lot of people saw it. Therefore they gave me a lot of money for my next film.

“Somebody came up with the novel of **Malpertuis** and said, ‘This is a good movie for you,’ and I said, ‘Oh this is again an impossible story, but we should only use half of the book, because it becomes too complicated, too mystic.’

“Jean Ferry worked very hard on that script, very very hard.

“This was a very expensive film and I said, there are only three possible actors to play the role of Cassavius: Orson Welles, John Huston or Peter Ustinov, in that order. John Huston had been very good to me and I can assure you easier to work with.

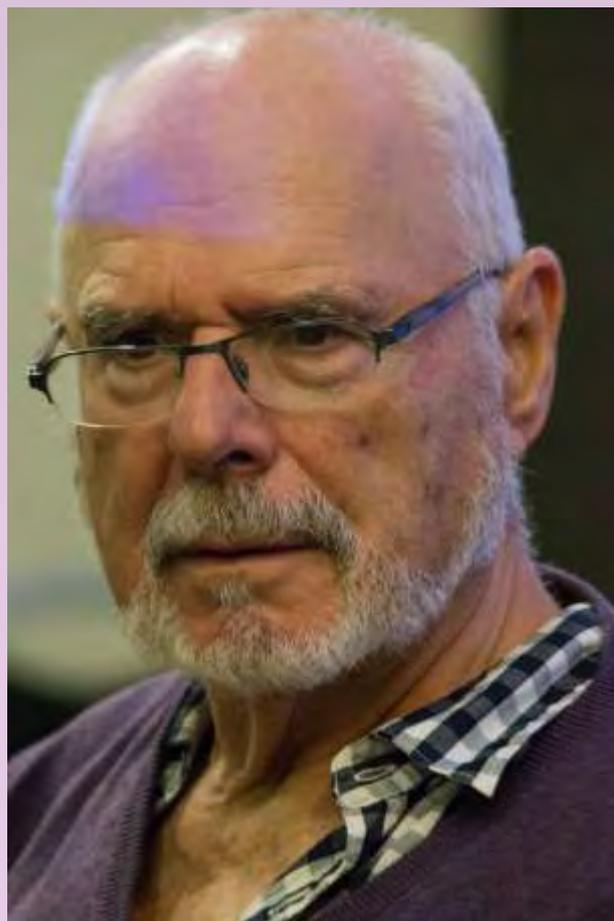
“Orson accepted immediately because he accepted everything that came along because he needed money and he said to me, ‘This is the first film in a long time where I don’t feel like a whore.’

“But Orson Welles was unkind to his fellow actors and he rationalised this by saying, ‘They must be afraid of me.’ I said, ‘Orson, it’s only a movie.’ But he said, ‘They must be afraid of me, because that’s better for the part.’ Can you imagine someone saying that, after which he asked, ‘Why did you choose me, I’m just a ham.’ I said, ‘I chose you because you’re a ham.’

“But he was very good.

“He didn’t know anything about cinema any more and the modern way of making films at that time and direct sound, that was so sad.

“You know why he didn’t want direct sound? Because he was so drunk all the time that he couldn’t from one take to the other keep the same level, but he knew that when looping he could settle that and he did looping very well, he was used to it.



“Susan Hampshire was wonderful, one-take Susan, she came on the set prepared, like a British actress always is, shot the scene and that was it.

“Same thing with Michel Bouquet, they come on set, do it, that’s why you pay them.

“I had also chosen a young actor I had seen in a film of Schlorndorff, **Young Torless**.

“Matthieu Carrière was very beautiful and innocent in the film, but he had aged a little.

“And I had a very good director of photography, Gerry Fisher, a wonderful man.”



Step back in Time

Memories of Past Festivals



Award winning Author David Gates recently got in touch and wanted to share his memories of the first festival. Check out his article on his webpage: <https://davigates.com/festival/>

Please identify his ‘mystery woman’ he has been waiting for 27 years...

Did you attend a past festival? Please share your memories with us:

Membership

Rates are £85 for the full weekend of the 2016 Festival.

Day membership is: Friday £30, Saturday £40, Sunday £30.

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Child Under 7 years - Free

Child 8 Years - 11 years £10

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Please Note:

Any accommodation not booked before 31st August will be charged at the regular Hotel rate. No payment is required at this point just a booking. So book please before the end of August.

The Venue

The Festival returns to the Manchester Conference Centre on Sackville Street in Manchester, a purpose-built conference centre and hotel.



The Hotel has 117 bedrooms

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£80 B&B per room, per night.

If staying for 3 nights the third night is £60



For more details check out the Centre's [website](#)

Help Wanted

We have a great line-up of guests, and there will be plenty of movies to keep you all entertained. However this festival is about you, the people. So it would be good to feature some 'tales of past festivals'. Please send in some memories and photographs so that we can capture what this has meant for all of us.

We are also looking for some help during the festival, on the front desk, helping guests, gophers, etc. So please spare some time and volunteer.

Contact Gil on gil@manchesterfantasticfilms.co.uk