

Jeff Kirkendall's Thoughts For The Month Column

Thoughts, Opinions, Reviews, Commentary & More!

Hello and Welcome! My name is Jeff Kirkendall and I'm an independent filmmaker and actor from the Upstate New York area. This is the section of the Very Scary Productions website where I write about topics related to independent filmmaking, digital video production, acting, movies in general, horror movies in particular, my own indie movies, as well as anything and everything related or in between.

I decided to create this commentary page because I find that I often come across things that either interest me, excite me, intrigue me, or maybe just bug me. Any topic related to movies and cinema is fair game, from the most mainstream to the most controversial. For example I'll often read about movie projects that I have a strong interest in or opinion on, for one reason or another. This page gives me a forum to discuss these things. It's all about discussion and furthering understanding of our pop culture. Anyone who has feedback concerning what I have to say here, feel free to contact me (see the contact link at <http://www.veryscaryproductions.com/>).

I'd also like to point out that the following is just my opinion, and everyone is free to agree or disagree with what I have to say. Enjoy, and to all the Indies out there: Keep on Filming!

SUBJECT: The continuing popularity of classic horror characters – July 2010

It seems lately that classic horror characters are taking center stage in an increasing number of modern big budget films and television shows. This realization came to me over the weekend as I sat and watched ***The Twilight Saga: Eclipse***. * For the uninitiated (if there really could be anyone), the ***Twilight*** films are based on a series of incredibly popular books by Stephenie Meyer, and feature vampires, werewolves, and lots and lots of heavy drama. These films seamlessly integrate both types of fanged creatures into decidedly modern teen-oriented tales. ** Similarly, the ***Underworld*** movies feature vampires and werewolves and the conflicts between the two species. Though definitely darker in tone and aimed at a more mature adult audience, these films are also very modern as evidenced by the high-tech weaponry utilized in the constant clashes. Other examples of the classic monsters presence in today's cinema include the recent big-budget remake of ***The Wolfman***, and the upcoming ***Let Me In***, an American remake of the award-winning Swedish vampire film ***Let The Right One In***, an emotional tale about a vampire who befriends a young boy. It's also worth noting the recent reemergence of classic horror film studio Hammer Films. This studio was of course famous back in the 1960's for their colorful vampire tales featuring screen legend Christopher Lee. And on television today shows like *True Blood* and *The Vampire Diaries* are scaring up big ratings.

I've often pondered how these monsters remain relevant and popular in today's age of high-tech media. The likeliest answer is that filmmakers have found ways to take these age-old creatures and make them hip, sexy and/or interesting to today's youth audiences. The ***Twilight*** films are surely the epitome of that concept, focusing on the same type of emotional drama one would find in any regular dramatic movie or television series. In other words, vampires and werewolves now get to experience very human emotions just like everybody else. Intertwined with this is the fact that young female audiences now make up a majority of viewers, and in general women tend to like more than just explosions and blood & guts in their horror. And I think also the torture horror film trend (represented by films such as ***Hostel***, The ***Saw*** series, ***Captivity***, and ***The Collector***, to name just a few) may have now run its course, leaving more space for movie

monsters in theaters across the country. Whatever the case, it's unlikely these classic creatures will die off anytime soon; their cinematic staying power is apparently as long-lasting as their inherent immortality.

* To read my thoughts on ***Twilight***, see the January 2009 TFTM column.

** To read my review of ***Underworld***, see the October 2003 TFTM column. To read my review of ***Underworld: Evolution***, see the January 2007 TFTM column.