

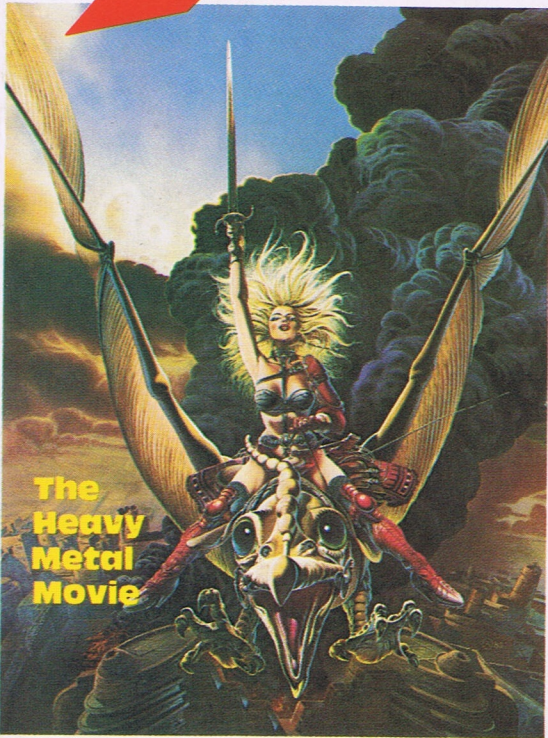
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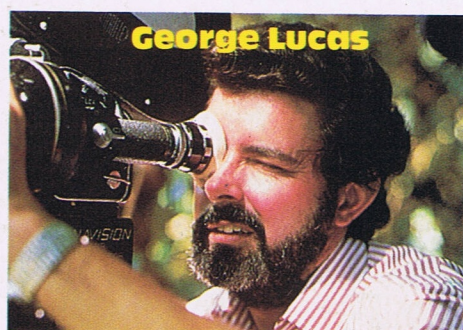
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The Heavy Metal Movie



Space Science



George Lucas



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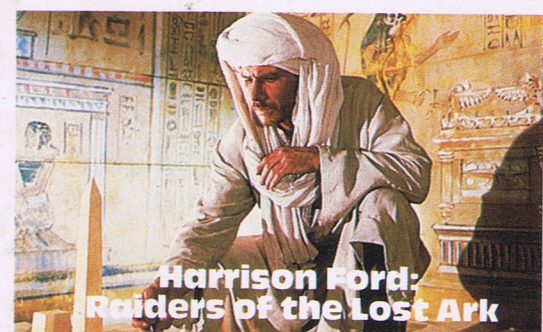


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BILL MUMY

"Lost in Space's" Will Robinson talks about life on and off the "Jupiter II" and his plans to rev her engines again.

By BILL COTTER & MIKE CLARK

For three years he was part of a family marooned on several uncharted planets. Before that, he was a monster who terrorized a small town, a boy who talked with his deceased grandmother, and a child who haunts his father in a closed amusement park. At one time he flirted with Brigitte Bardot, another time he was directed by Alfred Hitchcock.

Bill Mummy had quite an amazing childhood. His playthings were movie sets, futuristic props, and witty robots. While ordinary school children read *Tom Sawyer*, Mummy was memorizing dialogue as he shot around space in the *Jupiter II*. The ship never made it back to Earth, but if Bill Mummy has his way, we haven't heard the last of the Robinson family, who may be coming home at last in a proposed sequel to *Lost in Space*.

Mummy's first television appearance was on local TV in Los Angeles. The show was *Romper Room*, and he liked the medium enough to pursue other endeavors in TV. His first network performance was on ABC's *Riverboat*, followed quickly by live appearances on *Red Skelton*, *Playhouse 90* and *Bob Hope*. His many filmed programs include *Have Gun—Will Travel*, *Ozzie & Harriet* and *Ben Casey*. Mummy also provided the voice of Matty Mattel on *Matty's Funday Funnies* in the early sixties.

Mummy's early TV work is best seen in reruns of *The Twilight Zone* and *Alfred Hitchcock Presents*. The first *Zone* he appeared in was "Long Distance Call," involving a deceased grandmother's attempts to lure a boy into an early grave via a toy telephone. In 1963 Mummy appeared with Jack Klugman in Rod Serling's "In Praise of Pip." Pip was the young spirit of a soldier seriously wounded in Vietnam (an early reference to that war) who returns to his father's deserted carnival for a mysterious reunion. Mummy has an inborn aversion to amusement parks ("I think I must have died at one in a former life!") and the filming of the episode was difficult, especially when he was secluded in a house of mirrors.

Mummy's most effective *Zone* was "It's a Good Life." As a six-year-old telekinetic named Anthony Fremont, Mummy removed his small town to an unknown void, and used his powers against those who displeased him. At the climax of the drama, a birthday party guest is transformed into a living jack-in-the-box, as the other party-goers stifle their terror and fear. Long-time friend Cloris Leachman played his mother in that memorable episode.

Another standout performance is seen in "Bang, You're Dead!" from *Alfred Hitchcock Presents*. Future *Lost in Space* co-star Marta Kristen has a cameo in this episode, one of the few directed by Hitchcock himself.

Mummy remembers the Hollywood legend cautioning him, "If you do not stand still, little boy, I will drive a nail through your foot into the floor, and blood will gush from your toes like milk!" Mummy didn't move.

At the age of 10, Mummy starred with James Stewart in the feature *Dear Brigitte* (original title—*Erasmus with Freckles*). Mummy played a brainy boy whose only human-like trait was his obsession with Brigitte Bardot, who made a cameo appearance ("I'm still waiting for *Dear Brigitte—Part III!*"). From the beginning of his career, Mummy had a natural talent for memorizing a script with only one reading. He used this skill to prompt Stewart on his lines,

and played catch with the star during breaks.

After working in segments of *The Munsters*, *Bewitched* and *The Virginian* in 1964, Mummy was cast by Irwin Allen for the role of Will in the TV pilot of *Space Family Robinson*. The original pilot, filmed in color, was one hour long and covered the launch and subsequent loss of the *Gemini XII*. The action continued on an uncharted planet where the Robinson's dealt with survival on a day-to-day basis. After the pilot was completed, story editor Anthony Wilson felt the show lacked something and provided two additional characters: Col. Zachary Smith, an enemy
(continued on page 80)



Mummy as he appears today and as Will in "There Were Giants in Our Earth."

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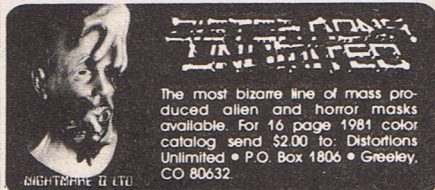
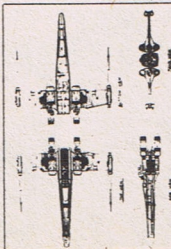
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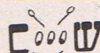
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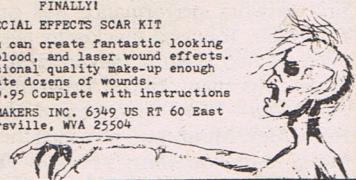
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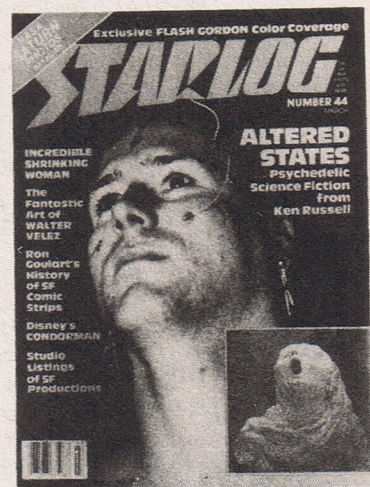
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S47

Mummy

(continued from page 77)

agent trapped on board the ship (now renamed the *Jupiter II*) and an environmental control robot, whose purpose was to test human adaptability to the Robinson's original destination, Alpha Centauri. Smith was scheduled to die after episode three, but Jonathan Harris made him so appealing a character that he was saved and thus changed the course of the series.

Lost in Space ran three years on CBS, and in reruns will probably run past 1997, the time period of the series' pilot.

Bill Mummy now resides in the Hollywood Hills of Los Angeles, lead player and vocal for Bill Mummy and the Igloos. Always remembered as Will Robinson, Mummy is attempting to re-unite the original cast again for one last adventure. Along with friends Paul Gordon and Brian Greer, Mummy has written the two-hour script, consulting with friend and former co-star Mark Goddard. Mummy recently took time out of his schedule to discuss his work on *Lost in Space* and the possibilities of a new made-for-TV movie.

* * *

Starlog: When did you first notice the series was starting to slide in your direction?

Bill Mummy: I think towards the end of the first season. The "Smith-Will-Robot" syndrome started to become a reality and cement itself into place. The first season I feel very good about. After that, I can't say that it was a quality science-fiction show anymore.

SL: What were your favorite episodes?

BM: "The Keeper" (a two-part episode with Michael Rennie) was good. I like "Return to Earth," too.

SL: What do you think were the worst episodes?

BM: I wish to apologize now for being affiliated with "The Great Vegetable Rebellion." I'm a vegetarian, but I don't want to see a big carrot walking around. That was a horrible show, embarrassing beyond all belief, but I still love the series and it had its great moments.

SL: Did you watch the show as it appeared on Wednesday nights?

BM: Yes. Sat there with a bowl of Jiffy Pop... switching back and forth to *Batman*.

SL: Like everybody else in the country. Do you think *Lost in Space* was influenced by the attitude of *Batman*?

BM: I guess it definitely had its influence—that whole camp trip. We were on the same lot, and *Lost in Space* took up a lot of room. The exterior of the *Jupiter II* and interior of the upper deck were on one stage, the lower deck on another.

SL: Was there any critical feedback from Irwin Allen?

BM: Irwin sat apart in his building. People used to storm off and talk to Irwin all the time... I'M GOING TO TALK TO IRWIN!" But Irwin didn't interfere with us. He was our guide and overseer. Irwin demanded a lot of respect and got it... deservedly so. Irwin was always just "Mr. Allen" to me—"Hello, how are you, sir?" Irwin loved a good lurch scene. He was always there for all the good special effects stuff.

SL: It's well known that Guy Williams didn't like the direction *Lost in Space* took.

BM: Guy wasn't given too much to do half the time, which wasn't the way he started on the series, as the star of the show. The talking carrots were also reasons why Guy wasn't happy.

SL: Do you think he would agree to be in the new version? We've heard that he's now living in South America, and might not be available.

BM: I don't want to speculate too much, but I'm sure if a good dramatic role came along, he'd be interested in doing it. I would assume that. The man's an actor and there are planes that go to L.A. every day.

SL: Getting back to the first year, how did they manage to produce a TV series with so much of you in every episode? How was this possible with school and the child labor laws?

BM: It was a pain, but it was also fun. You'd go and shoot a scene and then immediately run to this trailer for 20 minutes of school. Seventeen minutes didn't count, it had to be 20. So after every shot they would rush me off to school and expect me to lock into an entirely different head space and study geometry. And suddenly the 20 minutes were up and it was "OK, get Mummy in here!" I'd come running in there, save the Universe, and then go back and fail geometry.

SL: The third season almost returned to some of the good aspects of the first season.

BM: I really like the hint of what the third season would be. I thought it was getting better... much better than the second season. When we left after the third season, there was no doubt we were coming back. CBS picked us up for a fourth season, but wanted to cut our budget. Irwin refused and that was that.

SL: We hear that Irwin Allen had a script for the final episode, where you return to Earth. Dr. Smith is put on trial and found guilty, and as punishment is sent out in space again. Is that true?

BM: No, I never heard of that.

SL: What did you do after the end of *Lost in Space*?

BM: I did a picture for Disney, *Rascal*, a good film that made a lot of money. I also did some guest shots on TV shows like *Lancer*, *Here Come the Brides* and things like that. Then there were the *Sunshine* shows—I felt they were a real quality television project. I did *Papillon* in 1973, after *Bless the Beasts and the Children* in 1971. When *Bless the Beasts* was completed I had a band, *Redwood*, that I believed was on the verge of doing something good. It didn't work out the way we planned.

SL: I imagine your musical plans must have affected your acting career at the time.

BM: I did kind of stop acting for a couple of years, and then I did *Papillon*, which was a great disappointment to me. I spent three months and ended up with about 20 minutes on the screen and a shaved head. It wasn't a pleasant experience, although working with Hoffman and McQueen was great.

SL: As far as your career today, we know you're still involved with music. However, we're quite interested in your latest project. Who first came up with the idea of reviving *Lost in Space*?

BM: Paul Gordon and I came up with the concept about three years ago. People are always coming on to me for *Lost in Space* things. There's an energy there that just hasn't dissipated. Everybody's done sequels, and to me *Lost in Space* was never resolved. I mean, I care about those people and wanted



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The "Invaders from the Fifth Dimension" plan to use Will's brain in episode eight.



Left to right. Mark Goddard, June Lockhart, Guy Williams, Mummy, Angela Cartwright, Jonathan Harris, Marta Kristen and the Robot.

to resolve it. I carry Will around inside of me. He was a good influence and is definitely there.

SL: Will was always so polite.

BM: Yeah, I liked that.

SL: How long have you been working on the script?

BM: Several months now. It's basically done, and runs about two hours with commercials. It's a psychological drama in a science fiction setting. It's one probable reality of what would happen to a family of eight people who have been stranded on a very small planet without any alien beings around them for about 15 years... with no fuel.

SL: This doesn't sound like a typical *Lost in Space* outing.

BM: We're not trying to write a show that's full of gimmicks. We're trying to write a drama. The thrust of this story is "How did they survive all those years on an isolated planet?"

SL: You mentioned that they were without fuel. Do you think there's a message in that for America... surviving without fuel in an alternative way.

BM: Sure. (laughter)

SL: Is the robot still in the show?

BM: The robot is there. We also have a new character—Don and Judy have a son, little Joshua West.

SL: We know you don't want to reveal too much of the plot, but do the Robinsons entertain the idea of returning to Earth?

BM: Yes, they do.

SL: Will you be able to counteract the last two season's influence of Dr. Smith's character?

BM: Yeah. He's not the same man at all.

SL: Have you received any positive answers from the other cast members?

BM: Yes. Besides Mark Goddard and myself, I know Marta Kristen wants to do it. I think Angela Cartwright would, although I haven't spoken with her about it yet, to get a definite

yes. I'm sure June Lockhart would do it. It's a definite study of these eight individuals... it's not a lot of one person. It's very intricate parts for everybody. It's good, and everybody would want to do it from a dramatic point of view.

SL: You said that Mark Goddard was also involved in spearheading the project.

BM: Mark approached me with some ideas, and turned it over to us. He's definitely involved on a production level. We're hoping Mark and I can produce it, but it's too early to say.

SL: How will Irwin Allen figure into this?

BM: I can't imagine doing a new *Lost in Space*, without Irwin. I think the show is equally owned by Irwin and 20th Century Fox. It's a big, complicated thing, but that's what those studio people love to solve... big, complicated things. I think everything will be fine once they read the script. It's most definitely an achievable thing. ★