His career spanned seven decades and encompassed genre films great and small, loved and loathed. Italian producer Dino De Laurentiis has died at age 91.

Variety , quoting Italian media, reports that De Laurentiis passed away in Los Angeles; details of the cause of death have yet to be confirmed. Born Agostino De Laurentiis, he began his producing career in the 1940s, and his over 500 movies included pictures from such acclaimed directors as Federico Fellini, Ingmar Bergman and Robert Altman, along with action hits like SERPICO, DEATH WISH and CONAN THE BARBARIAN. In the ’60s, he worked with genre filmmakers like Mario Bava on DANGER: DIABOLIK and Sergio Corbucci on GOLIATH AND THE VAMPIRES, and produced Roger Vadim’s sexy/campy sci-fi classic BARBARELLA. In the ’70s, he became notorious for his remake of KING KONG and its follow-up giant-animal-amok flick ORCA, but he went on to back David Cronenberg’s superb film version of Stephen King’s THE DEAD ZONE and also produced the King-scripted CAT’S EYE, SILVER BULLET, FIRESTARTER and the TV movie SOMETIMES THEY COME BACK, as well as the author’s directorial debut, MAXIMUM OVERDRIVE.

De Laurentiis’ other genre credits, as a direct producer or head of the ’80s production/distribution outfit De Laurentiis Entertainment Group, include Sam Raimi’s EVIL DEAD II (for which he formed the Rosebud Releasing label to issue the movie unrated) and ARMY OF DARKNESS, David Lynch’s DUNE and BLUE VELVET, Stan Winston’s PUMPKINHEAD, William Friedkin’s RAMPAGE, HALLOWEEN II and HALLOWEEN III: SEASON OF THE WITCH, AMITYVILLE II: THE POSSESSION and AMITYVILLE 3-D, TRICK OR TREAT, KING KONG LIVES and four Hannibal Lecter films: Michael Mann’s MANHUNTER and Brett Ratner’s RED DRAGON, both based on the latter-titled novel, as well as Ridley Scott’s HANNIBAL and the prequel HANNIBAL RISING. (A tug-of-war with Universal over the rights to make Lecter films in the wake of THE SILENCE OF THE LAMBS’ smash success led to a lengthy delay in ARMY OF DARKNESS’ release.) He had recently been developing THE SWARM, based on Frank Schatzing’s novel about an alien presence dwelling on the ocean floor that strikes back against mankind’s pollution, and a film version of Karen Russell’s fantasy anthology ST. LUCY’S HOME FOR GIRLS RAISED BY WOLVES.

In 2001, interviewed by Fango’s Matthew Kiernan on the occasion of HANNIBAL’s release, De

Laurentiis—then age 82—scoffed at the idea of retirement. “There’s a saying in Italy: ‘Until I no longer have the three C’s, I continue to work,’ ” he said. “In Italian the three C’s are *cervello*, the brain,
cuore
, heart, and
coglioni
[balls]. If I have heart, brain and
coglioni
, I continue to work!” Fango mourns the passing of a movie mogul who had
coglioni
right up to the end.

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