

Mark L. Lester talks new creatures (with exclusive pics) and “COMMANDO”

Written by Michael Gingold
Friday, 15 June 2012 09:14



Veteran action/horror filmmaker Mark L. Lester is coming to New York City this weekend for a special double feature of two of his best-known films, and Fango took the opportunity to chat with him about both his latest creature features and one of those movies being screened, the Arnold Schwarzenegger classic **COMMANDO**.

Although he still directs, most recently on the thriller **GROUPIE**, Lester (whose credits at the helm include **FIRESTARTER** and **CLASS OF 1984**) has been busier over the last decade as a producer with his American World Pictures. The company has been behind such Syfy titles as **YETI: CURSE OF THE SNOW DEMON**, **LOST COLONY: THE LEGEND OF ROANOKE** and **SAND SHARKS** (the latter coming to DVD July 31 from Phase 4), and Lester gave us the scoop and a few exclusive photos from two upcoming titles.

“We have **DRAGON WASPS** [helmed by **GHOST GAME** and **CULT**’s Joe Knee], a giant-insect movie that we shot in Belize for Syfy,” he tells Fango; you can watch the trailer for that one below the pics. “We also just finished shooting **JURASSIC ATTACK** [4th and 5th photos] in Belize. It’s a big, epic dinosaur movie about a group of commandos who travel to the jungle to fight terrorists. Their helicopter crashes in a crater, and they find themselves in a lost world of dinosaurs. Anthony Fankhauser [who did **2012: SUPERNOVA** and **8213: GACY HOUSE** for The Asylum] directed, and we’re editing now.”

Lester gets a kick out of creating new monster movies in the old tradition: “It’s been great, because Syfy is really the only outlet for keeping alive the spirit of independent horror/sci-fi movies, where you can make them for lower budgets; you don’t need \$100 million. It’s a lot of fun paying homage to the old classic science fiction movies.”

Lester’s own cult favorites are being celebrated tonight and tomorrow night at Manhattan’s [92](#)

Written by Michael Gingold
Friday, 15 June 2012 09:14

YTribeca

(200 Hudson Street), with showings of COMMANDO tonight at 7:30 p.m. and tomorrow at 7 p.m., and ROLLER BOOGIE (starring Linda Blair) tomorrow at 9:30 p.m. The filmmaker himself will be on hand for tomorrow’s double feature, giving a Q&A after COMMANDO and introducing BOOGIE. He has fond memories of his collaboration with Schwarzenegger on the former: “He was great. He was very cooperative, easy to work with and really had a lot of talent. I was trying to get humor into his whole performance, because he was really funny in real life, and I said, “Let’s try to make that the character, where you have a dry wit, like in a James Bond movie.”

As 92Y’s promotion for the screenings points out, COMMANDO was the Austrian Oak’s first major role in which he wasn’t a fantasy character à la Conan and the Terminator. “Right,” Lester says, “so that was the challenge, which was great—just to get him to be himself and have this character going, just this strong man.” COMMANDO pitted Schwarzenegger against another big guy with a fantasy background: Vernon Wells, who was the mohawked villain in THE ROAD WARRIOR, “and he’d worked for [COMMANDO producer] Joel Silver on some other pictures. He was a bad guy for Joel in WEIRD SCIENCE with Bill Paxton just before COMMANDO.”

In 1989, COMMANDO scriptioner Steven E. de Souza wrote a COMMANDO II script that was revised by Frank Darabont, but it wound up not getting made and Lester wasn’t involved at any point. “I never read it, and was never attached,” Lester recalls, “although I did try to buy the remake rights to COMMANDO. I was sitting right next to the head of 20th Century Fox last year on a plane, and I offered \$2 million for the remake rights. He said, ‘Why would you want to do that one?’ And I said, ‘Well, because it’s all over the Internet; there’s fan clubs, people love it, they know every line in the movie, it’s a classic on AMC, they play it every week...’ He said, ‘Oh! Give me a call.’ Then we landed, and he announced a remake two days later [*laughs*]!”



Mark L. Lester talks new creatures (with exclusive pics) and “COMMANDO”

Written by Michael Gingold
Friday, 15 June 2012 09:14



e}