

Film Screams!

Bride of Frankenstein 1935

Friday, October 3 - Thursday, October 9, 2008



Film Information

Directed by
James Whale

Language
English

Running Time
75 minutes

Film Notes

In 1922, Hollywood studios joined together to create the Motion Picture Producers and Distributors Association (MPPDA, later to become the Motion Picture Association of America) as a way to avoid the government censorship that they feared was around the corner. The studios placed Will H. Hays, former postmaster general, in charge of running the MPPDA. Hays compiled a list of guidelines and subjects to avoid, a list that had to be revised with the introduction of sound. The studios formally adopted the revision in 1934, which became known as the Production Code, or Hays Code.

It was not until June 13, 1934, with the creation of the Production Code Administration (PCA), that the Hays Code was actually enforceable. From that point forward, the PCA, headed by Joseph I. Breen until his retirement in 1954, controlled which scripts could be produced and which completed films could be released to the public. Any movie lacking the PCA seal of approval risked incurring the disapproval of the Catholic Legion of Decency,

whose influential boycotts were enough to doom a film.

The original FRANKENSTEIN (1931) was made during the period where the Hays Code didn't have any real weight, but BRIDE OF FRANKENSTEIN started development just as the new rules had taken effect. Director James Whale seemed to relish the challenge. Though fifteen minutes of the film were cut before its release (including all close ups of Elsa Lanchester as Mary Shelley), and many parts never made it past the script stage (such as the Monster mistaking a crucified Christ for a creature like himself), it is still surprising that other elements left in the film eluded censorship.

—**Andrew Bouska,**
Series Curator



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More Information

Written by

William Hurlbut
John L. Balderston

Featuring

Boris Karloff
Colin Clive
Elsa Lanchester
Valerie Hobson
Ernest Thesiger
Gavin Gordon
Douglas Walton

Cinematography by

John J. Mescall

Film Editing by

Ted J. Kent

Original Music by

Franz Waxman

Art Direction by

Charles D. Hall

Country of Origin

USA

“Dear Mr. Breen,

Herewith are the proposed changes, which deal with your letter of Dec 5, and also your letter of Dec 7th. As, however, the former letter is fuller, I think it best to send on the letter I had written immediately after the conference, as in your letter of December 5th there are several points about God, entrails, immortality and mermaids which you did not bring up again, and I am very anxious to have the script meet with your approval in every detail before shooting it.

All best wishes,
Yours sincerely,
James Whale”

—Letter to Joseph I. Breen,
Production Code Administration,
December 10, 1934

Also Recommended

- Frankenstein 1931 (Dir. Whale)
- The Old Dark House 1932 (Dir. Whale)
- The Invisible Man 1933 (Dir. Whale)
- Young Frankenstein 1974 (Dir. Brooks)
- Gods and Monsters 1998 (Dir. Condon)