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**FAMOUS
MONSTERS
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FAMOUS

MONSTERS

**PDC
OFFHILMLAND
MAY 1977**

**YOUNG
MONSTERS
CONTEST
DETAILS IN THIS
ISSUE!**

**OUTER
LIMITS
MONSTERS!**

**KING KONG
CLASHES!**





TH

The \$2 Million 40-Foot Robot that appears briefly on the screen and grabs the lion's share of the Publicity away from the Man Who Really Played King Kong in the Dino Version, RICK BAKER.

ING" KONG

OR

"SWING" KONG

zings & zaps at the
new kong from the throng

LOVE IT HATE IT? There seems to be no middle ground. A representative selection of readers' reactions follows. KONGtroversial is the word for DINO'S KONG.

COLLEEN HAYDEN:

Well, you can stop holding your breath. The new KONG is a hit—with me at any rate. It is doubtful that it will reach the classic stature of the '33 version—and no one should try to compare the two. Look at the recent version. Gone are the marvelous dinosaurs, the marvelous stop-motion techniques of W. O'Brien. The one remaining monster aside from Kong is the giant snake. Intact is the log-over-the-precipice sequence, the natives who kidnap the blond for the wedding march; the ambitious exploiters (in this case a major oil co. looking for a new "gusher" on the island) and of course the abortive fiasco campaign in New York. Leave us not forget the Twin Towers that replace the Empire State Building as Kong's Waterloo.

So what has this film to offer? First we

have a clever updating of the original story, surprisingly wry, tongue-in-cheek-dialog in place of the corn of the 30's version, added dimension (as well as new names for) the characters. As for the blond, Dwan, she is probably more vapid, more brainless than the original Ann Darrow. I'm still trying to decide whether or not Dwan would have been better off screaming her head off thru most of the film instead of spouting such "eloquent" euphemisms as "I'm Libra . . . what's your sign? I'll bet you're an Aries . . ." or "Kong, this isn't going to work, you & me . . ." Added to the fact is that she is a giddy, shapely "starlet." I suspect women libbers in the film industry today will be up in arms about this before long. Dwan has one thing to her credit: her growing sympathy for Kong, a sympathy everyone in the audience feels for the "big ape."

And what of King Kong? Thanks to clever mechanics—and Rick Baker's excellent artwork (let's hear it for Baker!)—we have a "beast" whose facial expressions alternate from childish delight to puzzlement



From the Original **KING KONG**, one of the Many Marvels missing from the New **KONG**: a stegosaurus, built by Marcel Delgado, animated by Willis O'Brien.

to anguish to helpless rage. His movements are easily coordinated, not stiff or mechanized. So lovable & endearing are the human qualities of Kong that we feel a helpless rage at the cruel usage he is subjected to. By the time the helicopters are blasting Kong off the towers, the theatergoers were quite willing to blast the *copters*. As I said before, compared to the original, M.C. Cooper can rest easily in his grave. By itself, however, the new **KONG** is great entertainment.

ROBERT AMATO:

I have recently read FM's King Kong Special. After doing so I went and saw the remake of the film. **WILLIS O'BRIEN MUST HAVE TURNED OVER IN HIS GRAVE!!!!**

Tho it was superior to some or most of the Japanese Kong films, the dialog stunk horribly!!! The original Kong film is one that should never have been done over. It was a classic for generations and always will be.

I was terribly disappointed when there was only one other animal besides Kong! Aside from these facts, the only good parts of the film were

the natives' scenes & the recreation of the twin towers.

MICHAEL BUCHANAN BUNCH:

Loyal FM readers screamed to Dino De Laurentiis "Don't rape the ape!" And he didn't. He had the ape rape Jessica Lange instead. The music (if you can find any besides beating congos & Swahili chants) was in the wrong places. There was no warning music telling you Kong was coming. Max Steiner's music score made the original great. Dino depended entirely on his mechanics who built that electronic giant. And he really included dinosaurs alright! 60 seconds of a fight with a snake. Boy! But don't get me wrong. The movie in itself was OK. Better than your average ape on the loose bit. The best parts were scenes of Kong attacking New York. But in no way does Dino's Kong match the one, the only, the amazing **KING KONG** of 1933.

M. FISHER:

Being a reader of FM since issue #10 I am finally compelled to sit down & write over a

very serious matter. It concerns the new KING KONG (all copies of which should be seized & burned). The film is so vile, foul & offensive it's beyond belief. There isn't anyone involved in the film that possesses even an ounce of talent. He looks worse than Konga and even more ridiculous than the Japanese Kong. At least when *that* premiered in 1963 it was laughable. Please, if you can wake up the nation, KNOCK THE NEW KONG, I DON'T CARE IF YOU DO *KNOW* THE JERK WHO PLAYED HIM—IT WAS *RIDICULOUS*.

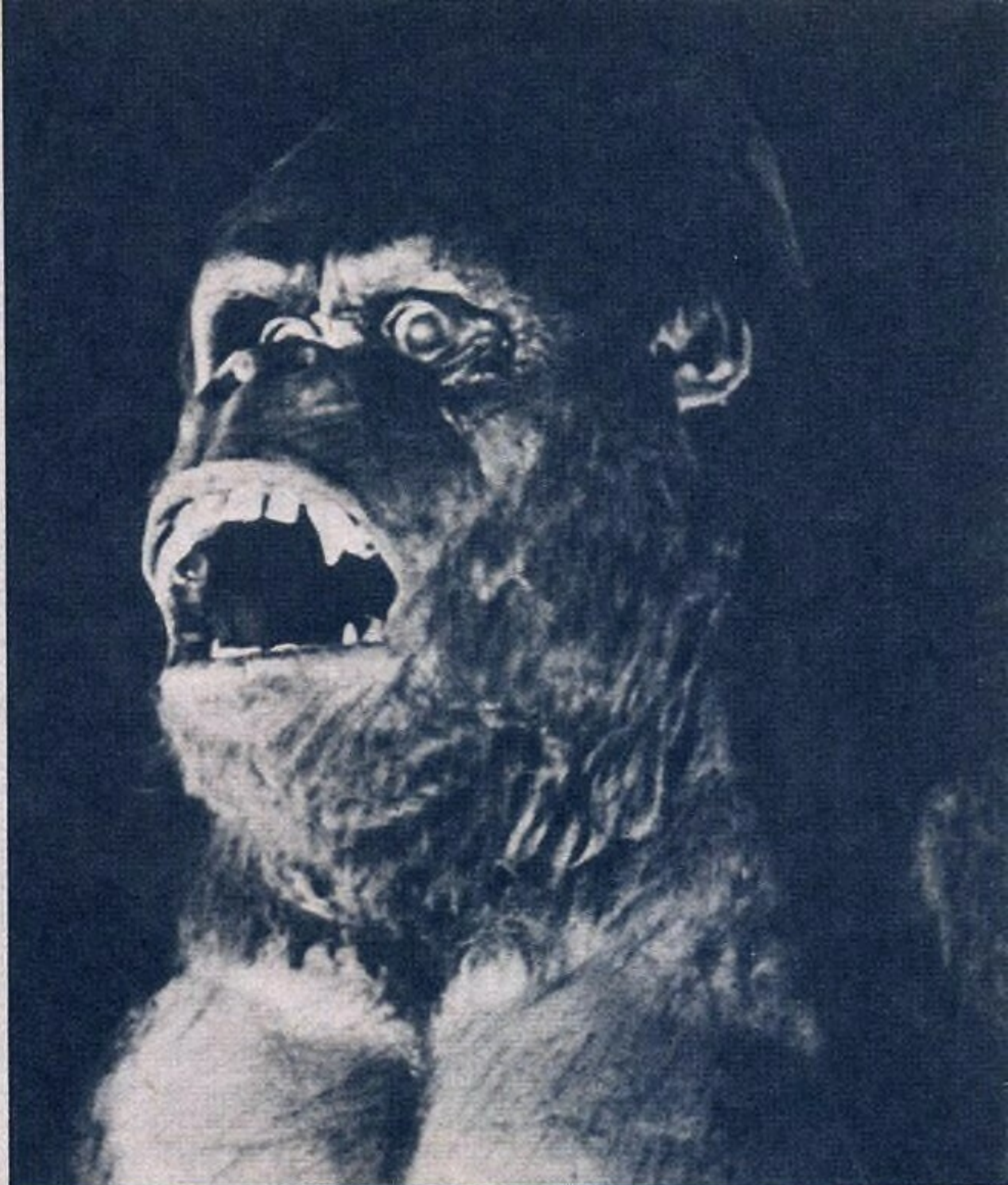
P.S. Will there be a serious remake by Harryhausen or Danforth? Have they seen the new one, what do they think? Keep us posted.

EDITORIAL RESPONSE:

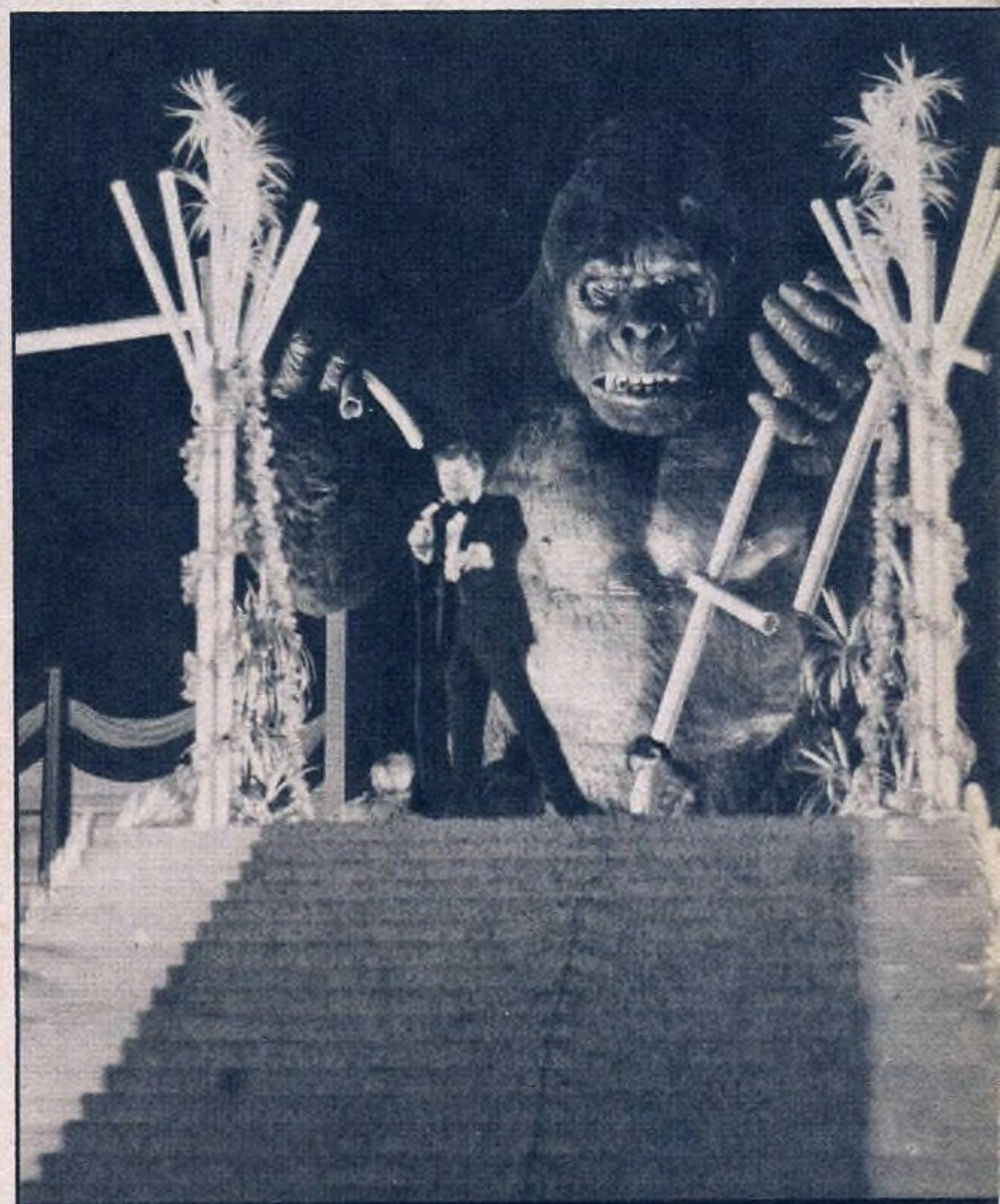
The "jerk" who played Kong was Award-winning Rick Baker, a most conscientious monster-maker whose unusual talent has contributed significantly to the visual shock of *THE EXORCIST*, the believable appearance of the Schlockthropus and the triumph of makeup of TV's Miss Jane Pittman, the courageous elderly black lady. The Editor is indeed a friend of Rick Baker—and proud of it—but does not rush to his defense simply on general principles. From what I've heard, Rick could write a book about the way he would have wanted Kong to look—and act—but they wouldn't listen to an expert. As we go to press we don't know Danforth's reaction to *DINO KONG* but Ray Harryhausen has seen it and is sick about it. He found the first hour exciting but said when he thought of *MIGHTY JOE YOUNG* ("which was a miracle") and how little was made of it compared to all the fuss about *DINO KONG*, it made him feel like he wanted to give up and become a plumber. (Don't do it, Ray! I'm sure most of us would rather do our own plumbing than have you give up animating!) Speaking for myself—Forry Ackerman—I can well understand the despair of wizards like Baker & Harryhausen (probably Danforth too—perhaps we'll have a statement from Jim by the time of our next issue) who, for the price of this fantastically promoted production, could have made a feature & several sequels which I am convinced would have been infinitely superior in plot, dialog, action, excitement, music, sense-of-wonder & what-have-you. Instead of half our readers loving the new KONG and half hating it, instead of some moviegoers feeling they got their money's worth and others feeling ripped off, the picture could have been so artistically and financially successful that DeLaurentiis could have opened his own bank with the profits and the film could have picked up as many Oscars, Hugos, Trixies, Radcliffes, Nebulas, Hall of Fame & Other Awards as King Kong could scoop up in 2 hands!

P. INEZ:

I demand that Dino DeLaurentiis release the *original* KONG to the public. Maybe that act



"Night & Day, You Are the Dwan!" King Kong sings to his absent Doll Baby.



To judge from the expression on Kong's face, Here Come De Judge!



When Robo-Kong did his thing for the throng, FM's Editor & Photographer came along to the MGM Studios backlot for the above shots behind the scenes.

could repay in part the thousands of movie fans who loved the original and were led by DeLaurentiis & his staff (in all the publicity reports) to expect a remake of that classic with some semblance of sincerity to it and got *his* miserable KONG dumped on them.

FAMOUS MONSTERS, please don't give this alleged movie maker's alleged KONG any more space in your magazine.

BILL HART:

My wife & I both loved the new KING KONG. We have seen the original, which we liked very much, but we feel the new version is far more realistic & has greater emotional content. Any further coverage you give this film will be greatly appreciated.

DOUGLAS D. SEIFERT:

Great! Rick Baker as Kong is great, the plot is good, acting above average and special effects wonderful. I am a Kongophile to the greatest extent and I say that without a doubt KING KONG by Dino DeLaurentiis is the fantasy movie event of the century.

MARK R. FRIZZELI:

The new Dino DeLaurentiis production of KING KONG is quite a disaster. I really didn't expect anything and I got less than that.

In the original 1933 version Kong was an animated model. Created by Marcel Delgado and put thru his antics by Willis O'Brien, Kong possessed a fantastic realism complimented by his inhuman quality. The sets were elaborate

layers of painting on glass, created by such artists as Mario Larrinaga & Byron L. Crabbe, thus the illusion of depth was achieved. The story is packed with such excitement as Kong's many battles with prehistoric creatures, to his final battle with the biplanes at the top of the Empire State Building in New York City. The entire production is truly a triumph of artistic creation & technical achievement in the cinema.

In the new 1976 version Kong is not an animated model but is only a human in an ape suit. Complete with thick padding & humanlike gestures he looks like a refugee from an old Three Stooges flick. The sets, along with everything else in the picture, suffer badly. Their gaudy colors, along with their empty lifeless look, give them the depthless appearance of a vacated department store window display. Unlike the original version, Kong does not win his title as "King" by battling prehistoric monsters. In the new version he fights only one creature, a giant rattlesnake. The snake, along with its oversized plastic-looking teeth & loosely stuffed body, resembles a souvenir from a department store gumball machine. The production in its entirety is highly inferior to the 1933 classic, from the first appearance of Kong to his unleashing on what seems to be somewhat of an empty New York City. The final scene of Kong fighting off the helicopters is an absolute loss due to its unsuccessful night time effect & ludicrous attempt at pathos of having Kong remain alive for moments after he falls to the street below.

Probably the film's "biggest" misconception is the so-called 45 ft. mechanical model. As it



A King without a Crown, looking down from 40 Foot Height.

turns out it is seen for brief seconds in the break-away scene in the city and judging by its overall stiff lifeless appearance & limited motion the less we see of it the better.

The often publicized \$25 million budget is hardly displayed in this production with its lack of high quality special effects, many poor sets, bleeding matte lines & thin cast. As I was watching it I was reminded of the terrible low budget Japanese monster films I've seen.

SGT. JOHN L. JACOBS:

It was better than I thought it would be but not as good as I'd hoped for. One thing I particularly did not like was the way Kong was made to walk. He didn't walk like an ape but like a man; erect is not natural for *any* ape. Some of Kong's facial expressions were downright pitiful.

I'd like to point out some good things about

the movie. One scene I was really pleased with was when Kong was smashing his way thru the ancient gate on the island. Also, the eyes of Kong were what a gorilla's eyes should've looked like.

GREG BOOZELL:

One of the best films I have ever seen. Altho nothing can compare to the stupendous 1933 version, I still think that there's something to be said for the Dino production. The movie used many of the same elements which made the 1933 version such a great classic. Mr. DeLaurentiis gave Kong the same type of feeling that RKO's Kong captured so many years ago. He kept Kong from becoming just a mindless monster (à la Japanese).

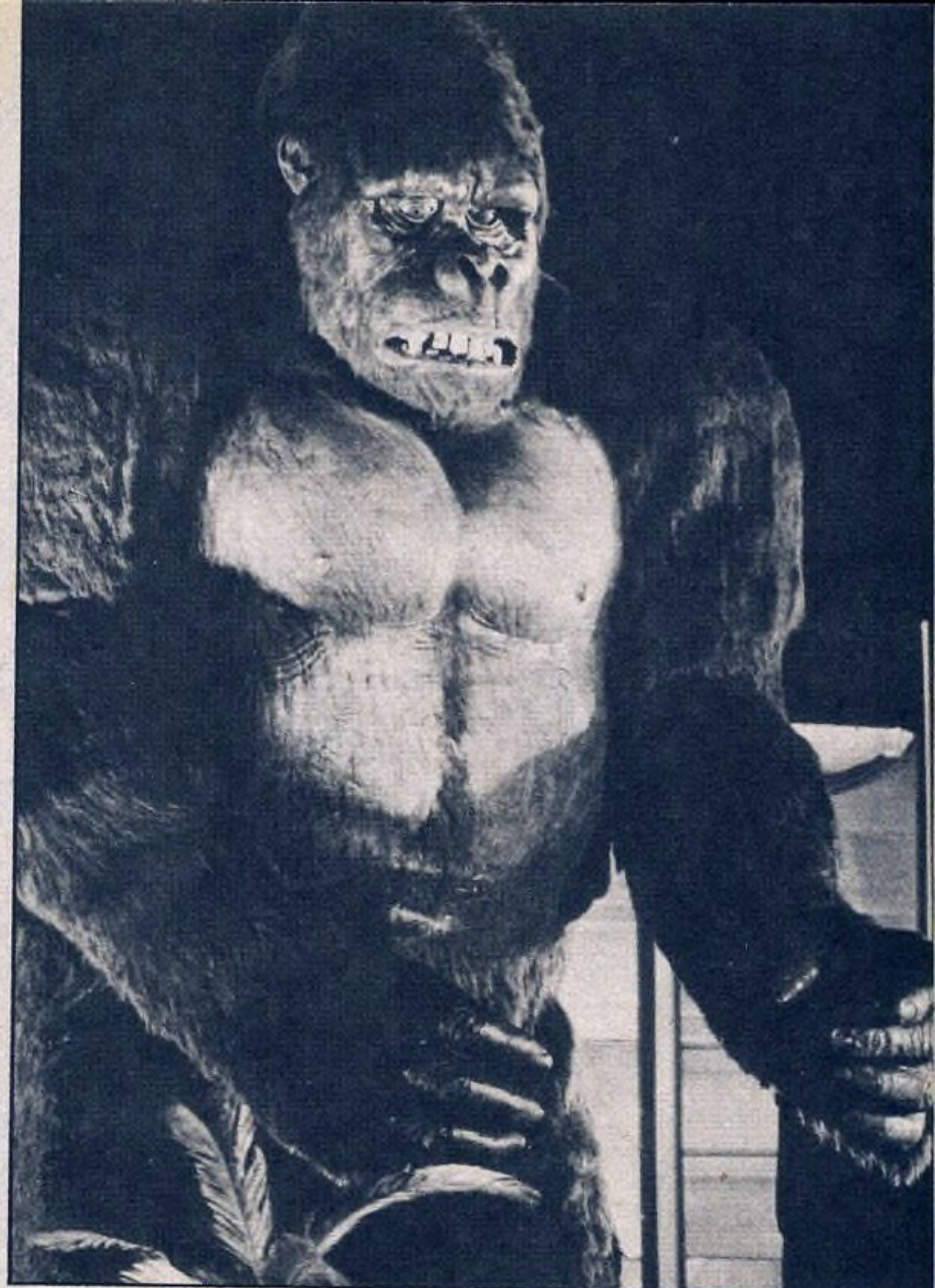
Overall, I feel that the work of Dino DeLaurentiis should not be scoffed at as a cheap remake but looked on as a compliment to the great 1933 masterpiece.



New Kong: RICK BAKER, who probably suffered as much for his art as any part Lon Chaney Sr. ever played. He even wore brown contact lenses for authenticity's sake but they wouldn't let him emulate a gorilla's ambulation. For all he contributed, he got mighty small recognition on the screen and the ignorant press has almost ignored his existence while praising "incredible technical triumphs" & "improvements in special effects after 44 years."



Old Kong: Carmen Nigro in an ape suit? *Don't you believe it!* A Chicago newspaper reporter did an article last Dec. criticizing a handful of "wimps" out in Hollywood who pass themselves off as film experts and try to make the world believe the original Kong was just a foot & a half high animated model and not, as he claims, Mr. Nigro. Well, here's one "wimp" who says Mr. Nigro better get that monkey off his back & that chimp off his shoulder.



In first foto above, fuzzy figures in right lower foreground are (white suit) FM Cameraman Walt Daugherty & Your Fearless Editor Forry the Ackermonger.

STEVE HARM:

Really amazing. The acting and capture of Kong was super. And when Kong mutilated the helicopter atop the World Trade Towers the whole audience cheered.

DAVID BULLBEAR:

A masterpiece of special effects and the best movie all year I have seen. The 40-foot robot was flawless and Kong's final stand atop the World Trade Center was the best scene in the movie. The miniatures and Kong's rampage thru New York were perfect. KING KONG will be a classic for the next 440-years plus.

MIKE MARKOWSKI (OR MACKONSKI?)

Where was the \$24 million supposedly spent on this travesty? It certainly was not in evidence in the awful Godzilla-like background miniatures. The man in the monkey suit à la KING KONG Vs. GODZILLA was bad but after seeing the (blessedly) brief scenes of the mechanical Kong & the most laughable giant snake ever seen in ANY movie, he looked good by comparison! I hate to see a ripoff movie like this make the money it's certain to gross (due to the misleading advertising & the great interest in the original classic); it only encourages other movies of this nature, while a producer like Charles Schneer, who puts out quality movies, doesn't get the support or publicity he deserves.

To give the picture a PG rating is a further travesty. The unnecessary swearing & semi-nude scenes add nothing.

JOHN WALSH:

I loved every minute of it.

STEVEN JAY GERSTEIN:

In the wake of rave reviews for Dino DeLaurentiis' remake of KING KONG, I think equal time should be given to an opposing viewpoint supportive of the original KONG as the greatest king of all.

The original KONG was, and still is, a film classic. The characters were believable because they were based upon real people, including producer Merian C. Cooper & screenwriter Ruth Rose. Kong himself was built to the exact proportions of a real gorilla, enlarged to a height of 18 feet, a size which made for an effective dramatic relationship with the principal players. As animated by the late Willis O'Brien, Kong *was* a real gorilla, in thought & motion. O'Brien made Kong believable, giving him just enough human characteristics to signify the beginning of the "ape to man" evolutionary chain.

My rating for Dino's Kong, however, is below that of the worst Grade "Z" thriller of the 30s & 40s. The principal players overact & under-react. The leading lady, in what has to be one of the most frightening experiences imaginable,

alternates between foul-mouthing Kong and acting as if he were her psychiatrist. As for Kong, an unbelievable 40-ft. tall, neither his proportions nor his physical movements even closely approximate those of a real gorilla. He walks upright like a man and roars without provocation. In his role as king of a lost island & a fearsome creature capable of mass destruction, Dino's Kong in all his beastly rage manages to kill one (1) giant snake, smash a giant gate, tear apart one iron cage & some flimsy spectator stands, wreck one army helicopter & kill approximately 10 people. Hardly an outstanding performance.

The original Kong was ruler of a truly prehistoric & savage jungle. Robert Armstrong & crew, besides tackling Kong, confronted a stegosaurus (which they killed), a brontosaurus (which killed some of them) & a giant lizard, all of which resulted in the death of 12 crewmen. Kong did battle with a Tyrannosaurus Rex, a giant snake & a pteranodon, before smashing thru the giant gate and demolishing the native village, along with several natives. In New York City, Kong wrecked a theater, a hotel marquee, an elevated streetcar & its surrounding structure and an army biplane, while killing several innocent bystanders.

There are several other examples, not the least of which is the meticulous care & planning which went into making the original KONG a memorable film, and the lack of which has made Dino's KONG a \$24,000,000 bomb. Admittedly, Dino's KONG has a few spectacular effects but it has none of the substance nor innovative technical wizardry of the original KONG.

In viewing each film on its own merits, the original KONG comes off as a 100-minute high-paced adventure film, sweeping the viewer along & capturing the imagination. It is a believable fantasy because it is done realistically. And it is complemented by the equally classic film score by the late Max Steiner. Dino's KONG, however, waits too long to inform the viewer of its main theme, then strays in every direction in order to give the principal players some of the worst dialog possible, which makes the film all the more unbelievable. It is 130 minutes of one of the most boring, unsatisfying films ever released. Long after Dino's KONG has been forgotten, much as a bad case of indigestion, the original KONG will still be remembered as one of the great film classics of all time.

The ads for Dino's KONG were right in one respect, because there is still only *one* KING KONG...he's 44 years old & going strong! Long live the King!

TERRY GRAY:

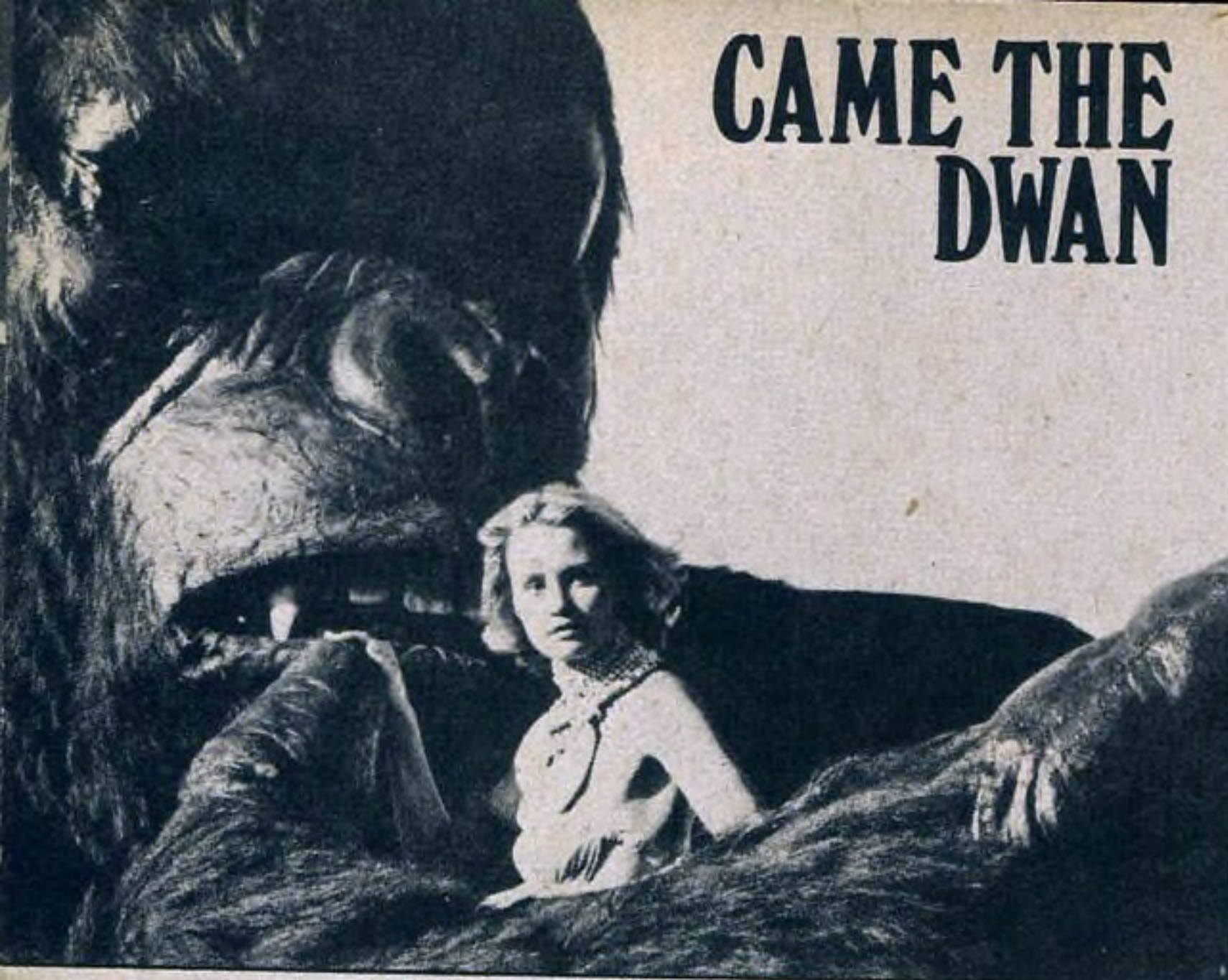
Re: KONG 76. It works, albeit with some detractors. We can remember that DRACULA (1931) too suffered from lack of continuity when Freund's visuals gave way to the stilted London sequences. In KONG 76 the special effects worked. The musical score, tho not a classic, was professional & enjoyable. The humor was perhaps no cornier than some of the original dialog. Grodin



Roar, roar, roar your bot, gently down the stream! This is Robo-Kong, the Mechanical Giant used chiefly for publicity in the '77 version.



40 Feet in the Air, members of the DINO KONG crew work on aerial platform for dizzying scenes.



CAME THE DWAN

If there were anything to palmistry, Dwan should be in a good position to see that Kong's lifeline ends abruptly.

was perfect. Not by any means a great acting job but it was obvious that he enjoyed doing the picture. His enthusiasm showed. Bridges' timing was off the whole picture. He perhaps didn't give a hoot about the picture; it seemed that way. The editing was smooth. The audience I saw it with enjoyed the picture. The eroticism was tasteful, the ending perhaps gratuitously violent. Too much so for my 5-year-old, anyway; ditto for the PG language, tho maybe I'm over-reacting. In many ways, I *dare* to say, KONG 76 surpasses the original. Waiting for the flak.

DAVID QUALLS:

Not since the hideous double feature VAMPIRE LOVERS & WEREWOLVES ON WHEELS have I been so nauseated & bored (at the same time). Apart from one brief scene, I saw no 45-foot robot. Just another guy in an ape suit. It did have a very expressive face, much better than the silly creature in KING KONG ESCAPES, but it was still no excuse. HOW could ANYONE make such a trashy remake of that wonderful movie? The original is such a beautiful picture but the remake is an absurd farce. And the bloody ending was dwelt on long enough to disgust anyone. And oh how I missed Max Steiner's brilliant music! I guess I missed that even more than Fay Wray. That & decent language, Willis O'Brien & the brontosaurus. And excitement. In the new version there was no suspense or excitement. Just boredom.

JIM FULLERTON:

I was very disappointed.

T.W. MEADE:

I certainly am glad Mr. DeLaurentiis did not listen to all of those who said a remake would be a disaster. In my opinion the new KING KONG was fantastic. The special effects were superb. There was nothing phony or embarrassingly obvious about them. I think the scene

where Kong allows Dwan to shower under the waterfall and then dries her with his breath is destined to become a classic. It was very amusing & very touching. I did not care for the bloodiness of the ending until I heard Mr. DeLaurentiis on the *Tomorrow Show* December 20th describe Kong's death as an execution. Saying there was a message in it, of what man is doing to all the beautiful animals of the world. Let us just hope that all of the right people get the message.

BOB STATZER:

The best science fiction film since KING KONG (1933). The original KONG is the best fantasy film around with the new film coming in second. The facial expressions of Kong & his actions in this new film are really touching. The audience in the theater went wild when Kong crushed the helicopters; everyone stood up & cheered & applauded. You could feel the audience's emotions thruout the film, especially at the end; you could feel the sympathy the audience had for Kong.

EUGENE GREENBECK (OR GROERBECK?):

Superior to the original. Kong much more human. Not just a monster. After knocking the men off the log, Kong searched for Jeff Bridges. Washing Dwan off after his doll got dirty, then blow-drying her! Heading for the buildings that resembled home; jumping to the next tower when the men with the flame-throwers burnt him, then throwing things at them to kill them. It goes on & on. The character that Fay Wray portrayed in '33 screamed too much. The exclusion of transporting the King to New York in the RKO original was a big mistake. Paramount knew what could be done with this and they did a great job. King Kong himself came across almost 100% real-looking with his varied facial expressions. The relation in size to Kong & his surroundings was much better than the 1933 classic.

I fully expected the audience to laugh and ridicule the movie. This was not the case, not a snicker did I hear. Everyone took this movie seriously and walked out glassy-eyed & bummed out after Kong's death. Getting this kind of reaction nowadays out of a movie is stupendous in itself. KING KONG 1977 thoroughly satisfied me as it did many people.

DR. QUACKENBUSH:

I would appreciate it if you would pass on my condolences to Ms. Darlyne O'Brien... for this terrible travesty.

DOC LIVINGSTON:

There will never be another FRANKENSTEIN like the Karloff version.

There will never be another DRACULA like the original Lugosi Dracula.

And there will never be another KONG like the fantastic O'Brien creation.



After the Spring, The FALL of KONG. (Paramount 1976.)

But that doesn't mean we can't enjoy the sequels & remakes of these films! Especially the new DINO KONG. It's not the original but, to me at least, it is a classic in its own right!

ROB SKIR:

I have just seen Dino DeLaurentiis' KING KONG. I have no doubt that it will be 1976-77's greatest hit. It was FANTASTIC!!!! How did you feel about it?

FJA RESPONDS

OK, here we go into the wild grue yonder.

Half of my readers will be aghast.

The other will applaud wildly.

Arthur Knight, in his major review, began by saying "Ray Bradbury may never speak to me again but—" and went on to laud the new KING KONG to the 7th heaven.

I can't say that, after expressing myself as I am about to, Dino DeLaurentiis may never speak to me again, because so far he has not spoken to me the firsttime.

Nor listened to me.

He probably won't hear me now, above the clink of the coins that have filled his coffers. What's a cough of boredom when your ballpoint pen runs dry just filling in

all the zeroes after \$1 when you're recording your profits?

Briefly, I hated the new KING KONG.

Loathed it.

Detested it.

Was bored by it & embarrassed by it.

Never want to see it again.

Hope 50 years from now it is a Lost Film that stays lost.

Paid nothing to see it and, considering what I can earn in a couple of hours, felt I should have been paid for my wasted time.

One line in the picture is its perfect epitaph, as far as I'm concerned: "This isn't a farce, it's a tragedy."

In the original we were left with one of the great quotable quotes of all time: "T'was beauty killed the beast." In DINO KONG what are we left with? Three immortal words: "Jack! Jack! Jack!" Which again sums up to me what the picture is all about: jack . . . bread . . . dough . . . lettuce . . . mazoola . . . ironmen . . . greenbacks . . . spondulecs . . . lire . . . MONEY! I've nothing against a product making a profit—that's the Name of the Game—but I was absolutely sickened by the preposterous promotional claims & the ignorance or outright disregard for the facts foistered on the gullible public by the press.

END