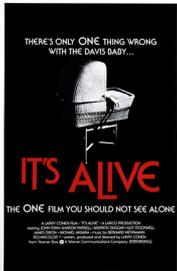


Larry Cohen speaks; appearing live in Chicago

Written by Brian Kirst
Tuesday, 01 June 2010 13:21



Horror and science fiction auteur Larry Cohen is well-known for incorporating social and political polemics in his enjoyably gritty grindhouse features, and he'll be discussing them when he appears on Friday, June 11 at Chicago's Terror in the Aisles 5. This Killer Children Triple Feature will include Cohen's 1974 cult fave IT'S ALIVE.



The filmmaker believes that killer-mutant-baby flick is more relevant now than ever. “Today we’re reaching an age where DNA can be detected before a child is born,” he tells Fango. “Parents will be able to be told if a child has criminal tendencies, and it can be terminated. That day isn’t far away, and in IT’S ALIVE, which recently celebrated its 35th anniversary, I had a message about birth control and the various products that can affect an infant as it grows in the mother’s body.” Cohen is sure to reveal more about the production and thought processes behind IT’S ALIVE (and perhaps offer some thoughts on the recent remake starring Bijou Phillips) during the Q&A following the film at Terror in the Aisles 5, which takes place at The Vic (3145 N. Sheffield Avenue); see more details below.

In addition to his revered status among genre buffs, Cohen should perhaps be known as the best complicated-actor’s director of all time as well. “Actors who are known as the most difficult, I always find incredibly easy to work with,” he says. “I know Michael Moriarity has a reputation, but I love working with him. We’ve collaborated multiple times. He’s just fabulous—one of the best in America! On the set of THE AMBULANCE, on which I also got to cast the wonderful James Earl Jones, I had such a good time with [rumored troublemonger] Eric Roberts. He would come to work every day and say, ‘What do you want me to do today, boss?’ Then he would hug and kiss me at the end of every shoot.”

In the hall of irascible characters, Cohen is justifiably proud of having cast famed cult director

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Samuel Fuller (of *THE NAKED KISS*, *SHOCK CORRIDOR* and *WHITE DOG*) in 1987's *RETURN TO SALEM'S LOT*. "I knew him from LA and Paris," Cohen recalls. "That was a long four-week shoot in Vermont and he was an old man, but he was tireless. He never once tried to direct a scene, and was an inspiration to all who were shooting with him. Old Sam always showed up fresh as a daisy!"

Veteran stars and genre regulars often turn up in the filmmaker's fare: "Ronee Blakely [from *A NIGHTMARE ON ELM STREET*, and an Oscar nominee for *NASHVILLE*] was in two of my films. In [the Cohen-directed] *PICK ME UP*, which I thought was one of the best of the original *MASTERS OF HORROR* series, I liked Fairuza Balk [*THE CRAFT*, *THE ISLAND OF DR. MOREAU*]. She was a good actress." Reaching back into the annals of Gothic horror, Cohen also recalls of the incomparable Bette Davis (*WHAT EVER HAPPENED TO BABY JANE?*, *THE NANNY*, *HUSH...HUSH*, *SWEET CHARLOTTE*), "On the set of *WICKED STEPMOTHER*, she smoked 10 packs of cigarettes a day, and I should know because I paid for them! She would have the packs opened and have all the cigarettes put into cups for her, so she could just reach in and grab them as she gestured and moved around." Here, Cohen turns bittersweetly curious: "Can you imagine how many women Bette Davis helped kill, though? She personified the glamorous image of smoking for years—and countless people die a year because of that."

This pointed examination is just a small example of the social consciousness that underlies a great deal of Cohen's work—when it's allowed to flow unencumbered, that is. The notorious *CAPTIVITY*, for which Cohen wrote the first drafts, was supposed to be a reflection on privacy, instant celebrity and the perils of modern media. However, as Cohen explains, "It was shot in Russia and [director] Roland Jaffe was going to make a quality film, but it just got out of hand. They shot additional horror scenes and it was butchered in the editing. But, I've had 46 movies made that I wrote and 21 of them, I've directed. You ultimately just don't worry about the things you can't own." What Cohen truly owns in the long run are his long series of inventive features, beloved by many, that chronicle cultism (*Q*), media-sponsored addiction (*THE STUFF*) and other pertinent matters with freakish zest and a true sense of exploitative fun.

TERROR IN THE AISLES 5: KILLER CHILDREN TRIPLE FEATURE!
All Ages! - June 11, 2010 - Doors open at 7pm - Trailer Trash: Vintage Trailers at 7:30pm

<p>IT'S ALIVE THE ONE FILM YOU SHOULDN'T SEE ALONE</p>	<p>THE CHILDREN</p>	<p>GRACE</p>
8:00pm It's Alive with special guest LARRY COHEN in person!	10:00pm The Children Midwest Premiere!	Midnight Grace Midwest Premiere!

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Brew & View @ The Vic - 3145 N Sheffield Ave - Chicago IL 60657
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Terror in the Aisles 5: Killer Children Triple Feature will also be showing Tom Shankland's THE CHILDREN and Paul Solet's GRACE. Tickets are \$10 for presales and \$12 day of the show. Doors open at 7 p.m., and the movies begin at 8 p.m. Presale tickets can be purchased [here](#) , and further information about the festival can be found [here](#)

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