

Short Review: “House of Frankenstein” (1944) by Dr. John L. Flynn



House of Frankenstein (1944). Universal, b/w, 71 min. Director: Erle C. Kenton. Producer: Paul Malvern. Screenwriter: Edward T. Lowe. Cast: Lon Chaney Jr., Boris Karloff, Lionel Atwill, John Carradine, J. Carroll Naish, George Zucco, and Glenn Strange.

The second of the monster team-ups, this one featured an all-star cast of villains, but bore little resemblance to “Frankenstein” (1931) or “Dracula” (1931) or any of the Universal monster classics. When the film opens, mad doctor Karloff has just taken over a traveling circus, and intends to use the freaks in the show, including Lon Chaney Jr. as the Wolf Man, former stuntman Glenn Strange as the Frankenstein monster, and John Carradine as Count Dracula, to exact revenge from those who did him hard. But his plans go awry, and he and the monsters disappear, seemingly forever (?). Flawed and faded by today's standards, this was perhaps the best of the monster rallies, but that’s really not saying much. If you want to enjoy a monster rally, rent the originals, and play them back to back. Followed by “House of Dracula” (1945) and “Abbott and Costello Meet Frankenstein” (1948).

Copyright 2014 by John L. Flynn, Ph.D.