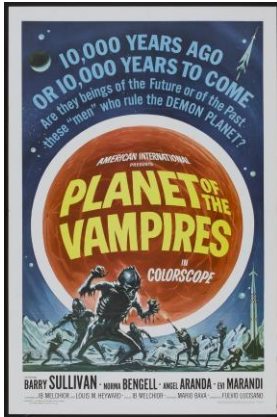


Short Review: “Planet of the Vampires” (1965) by Dr. John L. Flynn



Planet of the Vampires (aka Demon Planet) (1965). Italian/Spanish, 85 min. Director: Mario Bava. Producer: Fulvio Luciana. Writers: I.B. Melchoir, Callisto Casulich, Antonio Roman, and Bava. Cast: Barry Sullivan, Norma Bengell, Evi Marandi, Angel Aranda, Fernando Villena, and Franco Andrei.

Surveying the planet Aura, the lead rocketship of a two-ship expedition mysteriously vanishes, and the second (led by Sullivan) sets down to investigate. They soon discover the ruins of their sister craft as well as the bodies of her crew. Sullivan orders his men to bury the dead astronauts; but, shortly after burial, their bodies begin to rise from the grave and attack the others for blood. Ultimately, Sullivan learns the inhabitants of the planet have lured his crew to Aura to possess their bodies, take their ships, and thus roam the galaxy as “space vampires.” Bava’s first foray into the field of science fiction has the visual pace and styling of a classic horror film, even though the alien sets are made from cardboard, the performances from wood, and the plot cribbed from “It! The Terror from Beyond Space” and a dozen other films. Some day, we’re also hoping that some bright moviegoer will explain how the titular monsters have survived all those years with blood on their planet being in such limited supply.

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