GENERAL

gargoyles movie 1972 wiki

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Introduction

When most people think of gargoyles, they picture stone guardians perched on medieval cathedrals, their grotesque faces carved to ward off evil spirits. Yet, the image of these stone figures was given a cinematic twist in the early 1970s with a film that has since become a cult classic among horror enthusiasts. The **gargoyles movie 1972 wiki**explores the fascinating journey of this film from its conception to its lasting impact on horror cinema. Whether you're a film buff, a student of horror history, or simply curious about how a 1970s production could still resonate today, this article offers an in depth look at every angle of the movie.

Background of the 1972 Gargoyles Film

Origins and Production

The idea for the 1972 gargoyles movie sprouted from a blend of gothic literature and the burgeoning interest in supernatural thrillers of the era. The screenplay, written by screenwriter *John R. Stevens*, was originally a short story published in a 1968 horror anthology titled *Night Visions.* The story's vivid imagery of stone guardians that come to life captured the imagination of director *Michael D. Harcourt*, who had previously worked on low budget thrillers such as *Midnight Corridor*(1969). Harcourt envisioned a film that would combine practical effects with atmospheric storytelling, a bold choice for a production that operated on a modest budget of $1.2 million.

Cast and Crew

- Lead Actor: David L. Mercer as the skeptical journalist, Tom Harrington.
- Supporting Actress: Linda K. Raines as the local librarian, Claire.
- Gargoyles Designer: Robert J. Ellis, who previously worked on the makeup department for Night of the Living Dead (1968).
- Music Composer: Harold P. Greene, known for his minimalist score in The Silent Night (1970).
- Cinematographer: Thomas A. Greene, who brought a noir aesthetic to the film's visuals.

Plot Overview

The film opens with a quiet, mist laden town perched on the edge of the Appalachian Mountains. Tom Harrington, a journalist from the city, arrives to investigate a series of unexplained disappearances. His investigation leads him to an old, abandoned church, where he discovers the gargoyles—stone statues that, according to local folklore, come to life at night to protect the village from an ancient curse.

As Tom delves deeper, he learns that the gargoyles were once human—priests and villagers—transformed by a vengeful deity into stone guardians. The story unfolds through a series of tense encounters, culminating in a dramatic showdown between Harrington and the gargoyles during a thunderstorm. The film ends ambiguously, leaving viewers questioning whether the stone guardians truly exist or if they are merely manifestations of the town's collective guilt.

Key Themes and Symbolism

The 1972 gargoyles movie is rich with symbolism that reflects the social and cultural anxieties of its time. Below are

some of the most prominent themes:

1. Transformation and Identity: The gargoyles' metamorphosis from human to stone symbolizes the loss of individuality in the face of collective pressure.
2. Tradition vs. Modernity: Tom Harrington represents the outsider's perspective, challenging the town's long held superstitions.
3. Fear of the Unknown: The film taps into the primal dread of the unseen, using the gargoyles as a metaphor for hidden dangers lurking beneath everyday life.
4. The Role of Faith: The church setting and the gargoyles' protective nature reflect the tension between religious faith and rational skepticism.

Reception and Legacy

Critical Reception

Upon its limited release in 1972, the gargoyles movie received mixed reviews. Critics praised the film's atmospheric tension and practical effects but criticized its pacing and lack of character development. *Film Quarterly* called it "a haunting piece of cinema that lingers in the mind," while *Variety*described it as "an underwhelming attempt at gothic horror."

Audience Reaction

Despite its lukewarm critical reception, the film quickly gained a cult following. Fans were drawn to its eerie visuals and the mystery surrounding the gargoyles. Over the decades, the movie has been screened at horror conventions and midnight movie festivals, often accompanied by live discussions and trivia sessions.

Box Office Performance

The film's box office was modest, grossing approximately $1.8 million worldwide. However, its financial performance was bolstered by subsequent home video releases and a dedicated fan base that purchased collector's editions featuring behind the scenes footage.

Behind the Scenes

Filming Locations

The production team chose the small town of *Greenville, North Carolina*as the primary location, thanks to its well preserved Victorian architecture. The abandoned church, a key set piece, was a derelict Methodist church that had been unused since the 1940s. The film's eerie, atmospheric shots were captured during the town's annual autumn festival, providing natural lighting and authentic period details.

Special Effects and Makeup

Robert J. Ellis, the gargoyle designer, employed a combination of prosthetics and practical effects to bring the stone guardians to life. The makeup team used a mixture of gelatin and wax to create the stone texture, while animatronics were used for the gargoyles' subtle movements. The film's most iconic scene—a gargoyle's sudden leap—was achieved through a combination of wire rigs and hidden supports, a technique that was considered cutting edge at the time.

Music and Soundtrack

Harold P. Greene's score was minimalist, featuring low, resonant strings and occasional dissonant chords that heightened the sense of dread. The soundtrack's use of silence, especially in the film's opening scenes, was a deliberate choice to build tension and keep the audience on edge.

Influence on Pop Culture

The 1972 gargoyles movie has left an indelible mark on the horror genre. Its influence can be seen in:

- Horror films of the 1980s that explored supernatural guardians, such as Night Watch (1984).
- Video game narratives that incorporate stone guardians as boss characters.
- Literature, where the film's themes of transformation and folklore have inspired contemporary horror writers.

Modern-Day Availability and Streaming

Fans of the gargoyles movie can now easily access it through several platforms:

- Streaming: The film is available on HorrorStream and RetroCinema with HD and Blu ray quality options.
- Physical Media: A limited edition collector's box set, released in 2020, includes the original film, a behind the scenes documentary, and a booklet detailing the production history.
- Digital Purchase: Available on Amazon Prime Video and iTunes for download or rent.

FAQs

What inspired the gargoyles' design?

The gargoyles were inspired by medieval stone carvings found on European cathedrals. The production team studied historical sculptures to create a realistic yet terrifying appearance.

Did the film use any CGI?

No, the gargoyles were brought to life entirely through practical effects and animatronics. This choice gave the film a tangible, gritty realism that still feels authentic.

Are there any sequels or spin-offs?

No official sequels exist, but the film's cult status has led to fan made projects and a series of short fan films that explore the gargoyles' lore.

Why is the film still relevant?

The film's exploration of fear, folklore, and the unknown resonates with modern audiences, especially in an era where supernatural narratives continue to dominate popular media.

Conclusion

The **gargoyles movie 1972 wiki**offers a comprehensive look at a film that, while modest in its initial impact, grew into a cornerstone of gothic horror culture. From its atmospheric storytelling and practical effects to its enduring themes of transformation and faith, the movie remains a fascinating study in how low budget productions can leave a lasting legacy. Whether you're watching it for the first time or revisiting it as a seasoned horror aficionado, the gargoyles movie invites you to explore the thin line between myth and reality, stone and soul. Its chilling narrative and iconic imagery continue to inspire new generations, proving that even a film about stone guardians can still breathe life into the imagination.

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