FOREWORD REVIEWS THE INDIE WE LOVE.

The Poe Cinema: A Critical Filmography
Don G. Smith
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Edgar Allan Poe could not have envisioned that his works of literary fiction would continually resurrect themselves long after his death, each time in a guise their creator might not recognize like zombies grafting rotting tissue onto their limbs to live again. Poe's nineteenth century writings have offered sustenance to untold thousands of actors, directors and writers almost since Thomas Edison unleashed his "moving picture machine" on an awed public.

For instance, at least three very different versions of Poe's famous *The Murders in the Rue Morgue* have been made by Hollywood-in 1932, starring Bela Lugosi; in 1954, starring Karl Malden (of all people!); and in 1971, starring Jason Robards. Four American versions of *The Tell-Tale Heart* were made, not to mention two from Great Britain. All told, there have been at least eighty-eight Poe-inspired films, including many made abroad. Some are relatively faithful to their literary parent, while many are shameless attempts to capitalize on Poe's well-known name and bear little, if any, resemblance to his stories and poems.

Smith has reviewed all of the movies and shorts pertaining to Poe's works that still exist, and he provides the reader with basic information about each, such as cast and credits and story line, then adds the critiques provided by movie reviewers both past and present, as well as his own thoughts. Many of the films were promoted with poster art, which Smith liberally sprinkles throughout his book-such as the poster art depicting Vincent Price being throttled in 1960s *The House of Usher*, complete with a quote ascribed to Poe: "I heard her first feeble movements in the coffin… we had put her living in the tomb!"

Smith has been a life-long Poe fan. The reader with an interest in Poe, horror films or the history of cinema will want to consult this book before seeing 1934's Maniac,(which is only very loosely based on Poe's The Black Cat), or wasting an otherwise productive Saturday afternoon watching 1966's *The Black Cat*, which also leaves much to be desired. Opt instead for one of the several Poe films featuring Vincent Price or one of the other Poe vehicles favored by the author.

Alan J. Couture