

Two loud shots in the dark

by M. McCarthy

The Murder Mystery Film Series is being presented by Dalhousie Cultural Activities at the Rebecca Cohn Auditorium concurrently with Murder in the Classroom, a ten-week lecture series sponsored by the office of Part-time Studies and Extension. Monday, Sept. 22 saw the first two screenings of the series, **The Hound of the Baskervilles**

and **A Study in Terror**, both based on the arch-typical detective Sherlock Holmes, created by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle.

A Study in Terror (1965) features our own John Neville (currently appearing as an instructor at Dalhousie and artistic director for Neptune Theatre) as the Super-sleuth Holmes. Playing a young and physical Sherlock, Neville's

steely-eyed glance, ease of bearing and manner, and powerful voice enhance his excellent portrayal of the master of logic and deduction. He engages in several exercises of perception which keep Donald Huston, as Watson, suitably awed throughout. "We have just set the stage for the final curtain," Holmes tells his cohort. "Ah," replies Watson, "I was wondering what we were doing."

The movie gets underway quickly with a lady of the night offering a passerby a "bit of fun". Fun, for him, turns out to be murder with a surgeon's knife. A lord's crest and a missing scalpel from a box of surgical instruments send Holmes after Jack the Ripper. Foggy London and a wonderful array of minor characters, both stuffy upper and bawdy lower, furnish the environment for a complex trail of implication, involving a mentally incapacitated heir to a peerage, his blackmailing prostitute wife and her lover, and a police surgeon protecting the ill man. Five victims fall in the thick evening mist before Holmes finally catches the real killer (none of the above) in a dramatic and spectacular ending set in the inferno of a blazing apartment, where after a fierce battle, the Ripper is enveloped by a collapsing, flaming four-poster bed and burns to death.

Robert Morley made a brief but appreciated appearance as Holmes' older brother, who regrets the "sad day mother gave you (Sherlock) that violin."

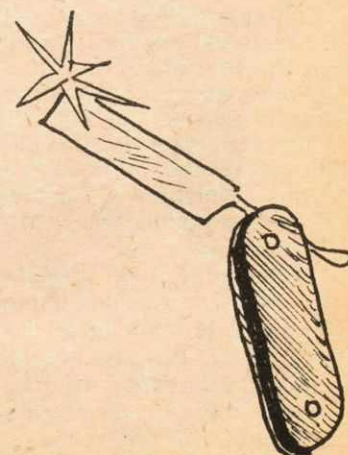
The Hound of the Baskervilles (1939) features Basil Rathbone as a much more austere Holmes who engages, however, in a lot more baiting of the inept Dr. Watson (Nigel



Bruce), who responds with amusing indignation and stodgy impotence. The movie takes place in the wonderfully dreary, ominous and very foggy moors at Dartmoor in Devonshire. The black and white filming enhances the eeriness as the characters grope their way across the murky marshes in search of a murderer and a mysterious hound, who's spine-chilling yowls make the perfect

background for an evening terror-stricken run across the moor. Rathbone uses his great facility for characterization to show Holmes' talent for disguise, and his economic appearances and use of language assure you that here is a master at work who will certainly solve the mystery with all dispatch. This he does, with the aid of a three century-old portrait of a man who's current descendant bears a striking resemblance to him (it's all quite elementary, really). Oh, yes, and the boot which disappeared and then reappeared was returned because it had no scent for the hound to pick up (all clear now? Good).

Two thoroughly good movies to start off the series, making us look forward to the next screening on Monday, the 29th, when **Murder On The Orient Express** (Albert Finney) and **The List of Adrian Messenger** (George C. Scott) will be featured.



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Upcoming Movies

At the Rebecca Cohn Auditorium, there will be a showing Friday 26th at 8 p.m. of **Magical Mystery Tour** and **Let it Be**, the first made for T.V. Beatle fantasy, and the latter a semi-documentary of the making of their last album. Sunday at 8 p.m. **The Marriage of Maria Braun** will be screened. A Werner Fassbinder film about a couple separated first by the army and then by prison, it is in German with English sub-titles. Monday 29th sees **Murder on the Orient Express** and **The List of Adrian Messenger** being shown at 7 p.m.

Experimental films ranging from the French Dada film **Anemic Cinema** to the cine-poem **Glas** and a 1976 Canadian work about two Acadian fishermen in Yarmouth Co. will be shown at the MacAloney Room, Tuesday at noon, and in the Art Gallery at 8 p.m., Wormwood Cinema shows **Germany in Autumn** the 26th-28th, and then the Safe Energy Film and Video Festival moves in for a week.

The Oxford has **Smokey and the Bandit II**, the Hyland shows **My Bodyguard**, and **Cheech and Chong's Next Movie** is esconced at the Casino. From Friday 26th on are **He knows you're Alone** at Paramount 1, **Willie and Phil** at Paramount 2; **Middle Age Crazy** (recommended) at Scotia Square and Penhorn 2; and Bette Midler's **Divine Madness** at the Cove. At Downsview, there is **The Happy Hooker Goes to Hollywood** at #1, **Blue Lagoon** (recommended) at #2, and both **Rocky** and **Rocky II** at #3. The **No Nukes** movie starts at Penhorn 1, with **The Big Brawl** showing at Penhorn 2.