

Cave Women on Mars

A Film by

Christopher R. Mihm

Cave Women on Mars is the third film offered by Christopher R. Mihm. Long time movie buffs will see similarities to 1953's *Cat Women of the Moon* and *Queen of Outer Space* from 1958. (That one was pretty good, as it was written by Charles Beaumont and starred the beautiful Zsa Zsa Gabor, very much in her prime in the late 1950s).

Before getting to the film, I would like to comment on Chris's filmmaking philosophy, something he has touched on a couple of times in the audio commentaries I have heard so far. His films are based in the 1950s and he makes them as seriously as possible, although there is a measure of humor added. Professor Jackson's stilted dialogue is a nice example of that. But, basically they are filmed as close as possible to 1950s B-film production values without causing unwanted scorn. Chris has us laughing with him, not at him and it has been a nifty trick to pull off.

Since this article is written on Chris's behalf, I trust he will not sue me for sharing with you the promotional statement on back of the DVD. Chris himself explains what *Cave Women* is about:

It is the future: 1987. Humanity has finally left the confines of its home world. When the two-man crew of the Mars-1 spaceship lands on the surface of the red planet, they are astonished to find it strangely Earth-like. After deciding to split up and scout around, Lieutenant Elliott stumbles across an amazing discovery -- primitive, matriarchal warrior women! He is promptly taken prisoner by the Martian beauties and led unwillingly across the Martian landscape. While his commanding officer, Captain Jackson, searches for his lost comrade, Lieutenant Elliott encounters unimaginable excitement in the form of fierce monsters, exotic vistas, strange magic and most unexpectedly . . . true love! An astounding adventure unlike anything you have ever experienced. Cave Women on Mars is not to be missed!

Cave Women on Mars runs for 73 minutes and is filmed in glorious black and white. Josh Craig is back for a dual role as Professor Daniel Jackson and his son, Captain Jackson, commander of the Mars-1 spaceship. Josh shaved his head and grew a goatee in order to change his appearance and not look so much like his "father" in the film. Daniel Sjerven plays Lieutenant Elliott, and he reminded me of Eric Fleming as Captain Patterson in *Queen of Outer Space*. There were several fine parts for the ladies in this film. Brooke Lemke, Alana

Bloom, Rachel Grubb and Emily Fradenburgh played native Martian women in opposite, warring tribes, and none of them had much use for men. Stephanie Mihm played the High Priestess. Emma Danbury, Elizabeth Kaiser, Michael Kaiser and Chris himself rounded out the cast. Chris provided the voice of the HAL-like computer.

I was particularly impressed with Rachel Grubb as the “bad girl” Hagra. Her sultry sex appeal and over-the-top performance leaves a man confused as to whether he should stay far away from her or attempt to get much closer! All of the females in *Cave Women* were fantastic but Rachel just sticks in my mind.

As you would expect, the storyline was very 1950ish. Mars-1 lands on Mars and soon the captain and lieutenant meet up with very unfriendly women. Much of the film was shot in the same location as Chris’s first two films and the monster from *The Monster of Phantom Lake*, (Michael Kaiser), even makes a cameo appearance. But, we learn that the women have never known love and Eina, played by Brooke Lemke, falls for the handsome Lieutenant Elliott. I won’t give the away the ending, but you can probably guess it if you know your B-film history, especially if you have seen *Queen of Outer Space*.

The scene where Lieutenant Elliott was bound “tightly” with a rope harkened back to the days of the Republic serials. Try as he may, he could not escape from the well-knotted rope he was bound in. But, when Captain Jackson rushed in to save him, it seemed all the good captain had to do was rub the knot lightly with his thumb and forefinger to cause the rope to fall away!

The production values of Chris’s All For George Productions are surprisingly good considering his tight budget limitations. (Who else but Christopher Mihm would use hard candy as buttons on a spaceship control panel?). I was interested in his comments concerning such things as lighting, audio and set design. The DVD contains bloopers, a gag reel, a special effects featurette, an alternate scene, a teaser trailer, a full trailer, previews and a photo gallery. Josh Craig, Chris Mihm and Dan Sjerven provide a very interesting audio commentary. View Chris’s films on a theater big screen if you possibly can, but his DVD’s are well worth the modest price. You definitely get your money’s worth.

Of the first three films, this one is my favorite. Chris has learned his craft on the job by doing, and in *Cave Women* it definitely shows.

You know by now that I am reviewing the Mihm films in chronological sequence. So, I suggest you get the popcorn ready, for next up is *Terror From Beneath the Earth*.

I’ll see you in the Mihmiverse!