



**Chapter 22**



**The Stars Will  
Never Fade...**



# CLASH OF THE TITANS

## (1981)

Perseus and the Gorgon had always been one of Ray's favorites among the Greek myths, but he was never able to develop a cohesive storyline. Then Beverley Cross, a student of Greek mythology, stepped forward. "When *Sinbad and the Eye of the Tiger* opened in America," Cross recalled, "Ray and Charles were in Detroit for the opening [May 23, 1977] because there was a fantasy exhibition and market going on there. My wife [actress Maggie Smith] happened to be working in Stratford, Ontario, at the time, so we met up there. I threw them the idea that instead of doing another *Sinbad*, let's do a Greek classical play. I had always wanted to do *Perseus and Andromeda*. However, although the notices were terrible for *Eye of the Tiger*, Columbia was anxious to do another *Sinbad*. So for a time we worked on a thing called *Sinbad and the Seven Wonders of the World*, for which a treatment had been done in collaboration with Ray. We talked about this for some time until they were eventually won over by my *Perseus and Andromeda* idea. By this time, Ray had got some ideas together, so that was the one. I did the first treatment which was then handed over to Ray who produced a number of drawings, including Calibos, the sea monster, and his idea of Medusa. The Medusa was the one I think that captivated him, and I think it was one of the best sequences he ever did. He seems reluctant to go into anything that he hasn't thought up himself, but he was convinced and came up absolute trumps."<sup>[1]</sup> The costs of this early development phase were covered by the British National Film Development Fund, designed to promote film production in the U.K., although contrary to normal procedure, the BNDFD imposed no stipulation that the production film in the U.K.

*Jason and the Argonauts* had been heavily criticized for its liberal juggling of the classic legends, and *Clash of the Titans* would fair little better. Ray points out, though, that "they don't realize that when you transpose any story to the screen, you have to compose it in such a way that it will build up logically and hold an audience for an hour and a half. For example, in *Clash* we had to introduce Pegasus early in the picture but we couldn't have done that if we had adhered strictly to the myth. In legend, Pegasus came from the blood of Medusa but she wouldn't appear until the end of the film. So we took the liberty of having Pegasus appear earlier, by Zeus saying that Calibos had destroyed his herd of magical flying horses, leaving only the stallion Pegasus. In that way, we could have Pegasus in the story for a reasonable amount of time."<sup>[2]</sup>

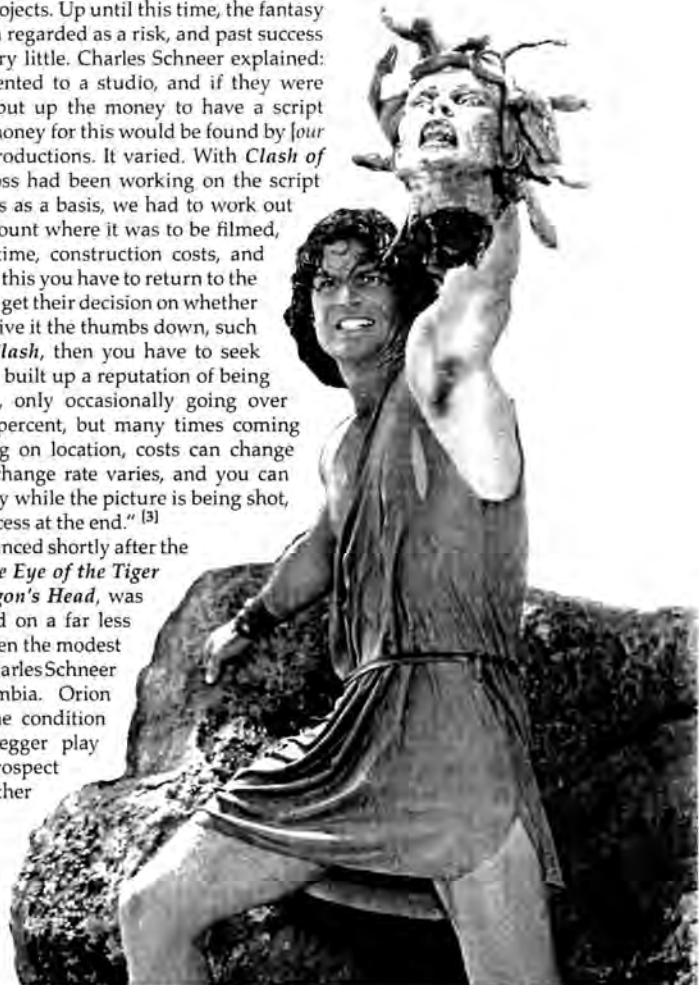
The *Perseus* legend required far more narrative adjustment than *Jason*. For most of the original epic, *Perseus* is alone, apart from an occasional visit from some god or goddess. The script changed the emphasis, with unavoidable scene shifting, towards *Perseus'* quest to rescue *Andromeda* from her terrible predicament. The introduction of peripheral characters broadened the scope and the subsequent interaction made for a more watchable film.



### Setting up the production

It had never been easy for Ray and Charles to secure financing for their projects. Up until this time, the fantasy film had always been regarded as a risk, and past success often counted for very little. Charles Schneer explained: "Often an idea was presented to a studio, and if they were interested, they would put up the money to have a script written. Sometimes the money for this would be found by [our company] Morningside Productions. It varied. With *Clash of the Titans*, Beverley Cross had been working on the script for some time. Using this as a basis, we had to work out a budget, taking into account where it was to be filmed, the length of shooting time, construction costs, and many other factors. After this you have to return to the people with the money to get their decision on whether it will go ahead. If they give it the thumbs down, such as Columbia did with *Clash*, then you have to seek another sponsor. We had built up a reputation of being very reliable with costs, only occasionally going over budget by perhaps ten percent, but many times coming in under. When shooting on location, costs can change overnight, the dollar exchange rate varies, and you can either lose or make money while the picture is being shot, with no guarantee of success at the end."<sup>[3]</sup>

The production, announced shortly after the release of *Sinbad and the Eye of the Tiger* as *Perseus and the Gorgon's Head*, was originally to be mounted on a far less lavish scale. However, even the modest budget put forward by Charles Schneer was rejected by Columbia. Orion became interested on the condition that Arnold Schwarzenegger play *Perseus*, but that was a prospect that didn't appeal to either Ray or Charles Schneer.





For Ray, there were other concerns on his mind. In August, 1977, he received word from America that his mother was unwell.

She was still living at the Pacific Palisades home and Ray felt he needed to be there, so he and Diana flew out for an extended stay. Work still continued on the new project, but Ray chose to hand over the urgent task of producing concept art to another artist. That artist was Los Angeles-based Cathy Hill, who continues the story: "He didn't know any artists in town, so he talked to Forry Ackerman, who was my agent at that time. I went back and forth to that little house over a period of a few months working on production paintings in oil: Perseus and the Pegasus, the Kraken coming out of the sea, a flood scene, and a scene of the Gods moving the little figures around the miniature amphitheater. Ray was a wonderful, gentlemanly man and his wife was very sweet to me also. She would make some tea and he would make some sketches for me to elaborate on. He revised the paintings as I worked on them— often suggesting to make them 'moodier' and more 'dramatic'. I still have one of his sketches of the Gorgon, but it isn't signed. I met Charles Schneer once, and Darlyne O'Brien, another sweet lady, was there a couple of times. She showed me some little art objects she liked to make out of popcorn— very original. I was impressed to meet her, my being such a big Willis O'Brien fan."<sup>[4]</sup>

During this time both Ray and Charles Schneer were still trying to find a studio willing to back the project, and Cathy Hill recalls, "The budget must have been pretty small at that time. I remember that Ray was talking to somebody [on the phone] and said, exasperated, 'I'm not making *Star Wars* here! I don't have Laurence Olivier!' Apparently, things looked up by the time the picture was made. It was a great experience for me, and my first production paintings. Later, I was surprised and happy to discover my painting of Perseus and Pegasus on the *Clash of the Titans* lunchbox."<sup>[5]</sup>

In early 1978, MGM was seeking a suitable property to launch their

revamped production unit and was more than willing to invest the capital and even increase the budget to allow a number of big-name "stars" to enhance the project. By far the largest budget for any Schneer/Harryhausen film, the MGM production was certainly their most prestigious.

It was also a refreshing change for Charles Schneer, after so many years of having to maximize the experience he gained working with restrictive budgets as a young producer in the Sam Katzman unit. However, financial deals with the major studios were changing quickly and radically. Schneer said, "In prior years, we had successful ongoing relationships with Columbia Pictures and Warner Brothers, and as the deals are more or less standard in their terms and conditions, from time to time, depending on who was most interested in our project, we would make arrangements with these distributors. This was the situation that existed at the time with MGM on *Clash of the Titans*. Since then the situation has become a little more muddled."<sup>[6]</sup>



Above: Cathy Hill created the key concept paintings for *Clash of the Titans* shown here, several of which were framed and hung in Ray's office during production.





## Locations Spanning Four Countries

On May 24, 1978, Ray and Charles embarked on a location scouting trip that took them to Sicily, Umbria, Italy, Greece, the southern coast of Anatolia, Turkey, and Tunisia, North Africa. Ray remembers this journey was something of a disappointment, with only a single location at Ostia Antica in Italy matching their needs. Finally, some spectacular locations were found closer to home in Europe, with the live-action photography eventually spanning four countries. In many cases, the script was tailored to fit the chosen locations rather than the other way around. Principal photography was slated to begin in May, 1979, for a Summer 1981 release.

The opening scenes used the rocky coastline of Kinance Cove in Cornwall in the west of England to good effect, and the more calmer waters of Palinuro in southern Italy for all the beach sequences. The Paestum Temple (last seen in the Harpy sequence in *Jason and the Argonauts*) became the lair of Medusa and its guardian Dioskilos, the two-headed dog. Ray had hoped to use many more of the Italian locations they had found during *Jason*, but civilization had moved into the once-remote area of Palinuro and they had to look elsewhere. They did, however, use Rabbit Island just off the coast of Palinuro as the Isle of the Dead, extended optically to include a temple. This was the same island on which Talos straddled the harbor in *Jason*.

Perseus' capture of Pegasus was filmed just outside the village of Guadix in Spain, and the first sight of Bubo and the temple of the Stygian Witches was filmed at Mesa Loc and the mountains

around Antequerra. The Amphitheater at Ostia Antica, just outside Rome, became the home of Ammon the playwright (Burgess Meredith), although not without a certain amount of deception on the part of the producers, as actor Harry Hamlin recalls: "They had gone to the Ministry of Antiquities in Rome to get a permit to film the story there but were told you can't film a Greek story at a Roman ruin; we won't let you do it. Well, they fought and fought, but they just wouldn't give them a permit. Some time later, they went back and told them they were filming *Constantine the Great*, got the permit, and during the time we filmed there all our scripts, trucks and everything else had stickers on them saying *Constantine the Great*." [7]

With no such problems, Valletta, the walled capital of Malta, stood in for Joppa, although the long shots, with added effects, were of the harbor at Cospicua. The market sequences were filmed at Fort St. Elmo and Fort Rocco. The Kraken emerged from an underwater set in Malta's Camino Bay and the dramatic conclusion used rock formations specially constructed in the vast marine tank at Rinella on the Maltese coast. The rest of the live action was completed at Pinewood Studios in England.



Left: Location photos taken at Malta's Camino Bay were later sketched to indicate staging and framing for shots in the finale when the Kraken emerges from the sea.

## A "Classic" Director



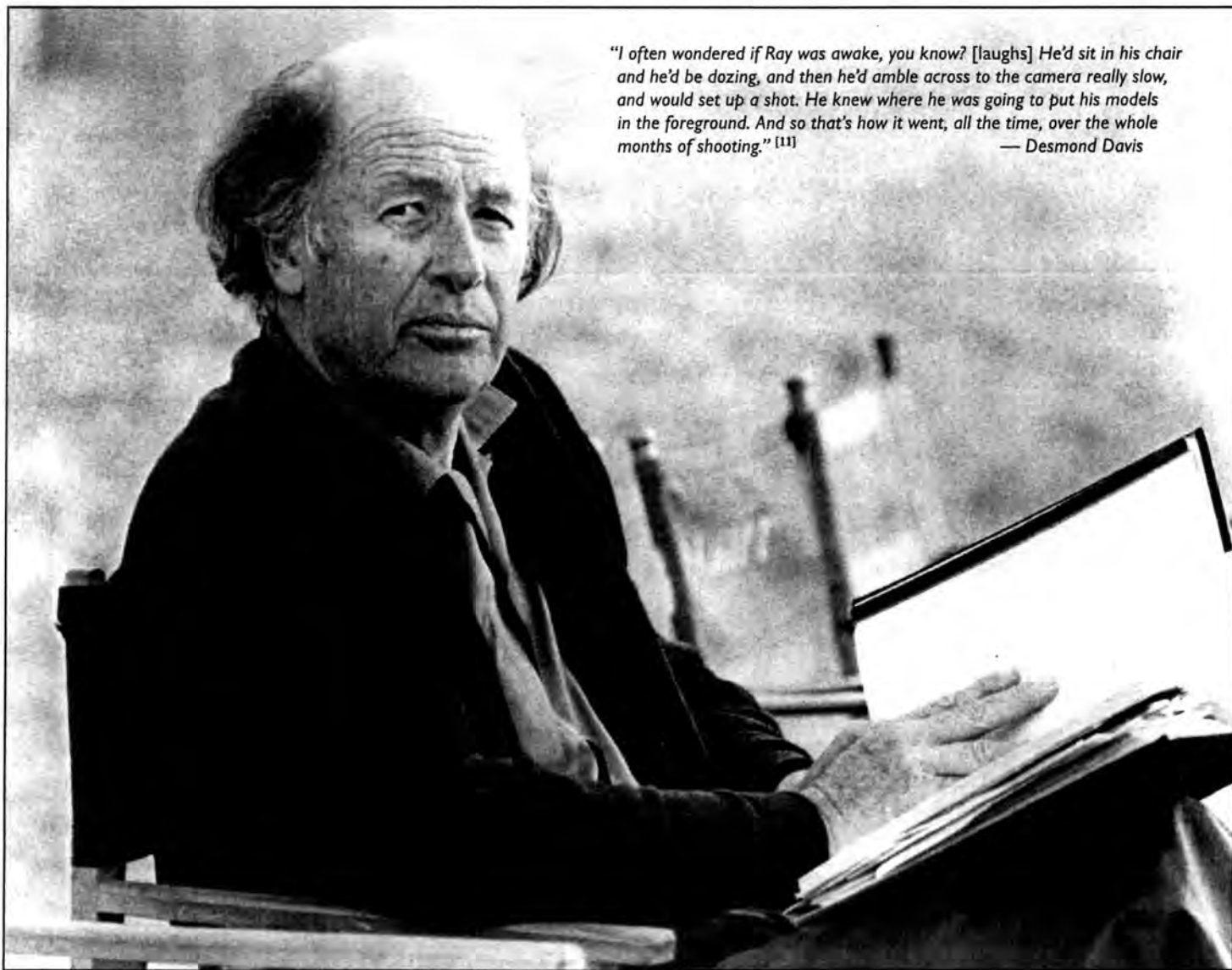
The choice of director was carefully considered and the job fell to Desmond Davis, who had the patience and technical expertise to tackle this type of project. "I suppose my involvement with *Clash* came about because it was such a technical operation," he said. "I had a background in the camera department so I had a fairly good technical knowledge. I think also that Charlie wanted to make an artistic production out of *Clash*. He had a lot more money through MGM after working on shoestring budgets in the early days. At the time, I had been at the BBC working on their Shakespeare productions, so I had a certain classical training. I suggested to them that we tell it like a fairy tale in a more classical Hans Christian Andersen mode, so that the myth would have imposed on it a sort of fairy tale quality. I think that was the change I brought to the original concept. But I knew from the beginning that I was taking on a technical monstrosity, if you will excuse the pun."<sup>[8]</sup>

Davis never had any illusion that this would in any way be considered a "director's" film and he knew that his main concern would be in getting acceptable performances from his actors, which

would match in as seamlessly and as effortlessly as possible with Ray's later animation work. Davis continued, "We sat down with all of Ray's storyboard drawings and discussed what had to be done exactly. A lot of the sequences involved directions by me and Ray, with mixed actors and models. I think on the whole it worked out very amicably between us. He is a very pleasant man, a fact that hides a mass of creativity behind the easygoing façade. It didn't cause any problems working this way. In fact, there were times when I actually sat back and let Ray do it."<sup>[9]</sup>

Once the script was finalized, life became easier for at least one of the production crew, as Beverley Cross explains: "The great thing about these movies is that unless there is an enormous problem, it has to be done exactly as plotted, you can't muck about with it. For a screenwriter it's a great relief because rewriting is mainly a matter of structure, not really dialogue, unless you have to cut something down and get an exit earlier. On all three that we've done with Dynamation, it really has to be the bible. You really can't veer away from it. You're committed to it and the director is committed to it, too. By the time the cameras started rolling, the script was the script."<sup>[10]</sup>

*"I often wondered if Ray was awake, you know? [laughs] He'd sit in his chair and he'd be dozing, and then he'd amble across to the camera really slow, and would set up a shot. He knew where he was going to put his models in the foreground. And so that's how it went, all the time, over the whole months of shooting."<sup>[11]</sup>*  
— Desmond Davis



# Production Design



Paintings by production designer Frank White of the main square of Joppa (left), and Medusa's lair (above).

Below: Costume sketches by costume designer Emma Porteous.



## “More Stars than there are in Heaven”

### The Immortals

The roster of star names assembled for the film harkened back to the old MGM publicity campaign “More stars than there are in Heaven.” Ray’s creatures, so often the true stars of his films, would have their work cut out for them to overshadow this cast, as the talent brought together to play the Gods and citizens of ancient Greece comprised the cream of the English theatre.

Rightfully at the head of this dramatic pantheon was **Laurence Olivier**, acknowledged as the finest English actor of his time, as Zeus, the supreme father of Gods and Men. The milestones of his long and illustrious career are marked with acclaim from both peers and audiences. A knighthood, a life peerage, two Academy Awards, eleven nominations, and an honorary Oscar® were just a few of the honors he had garnered.

**Claire Bloom** played Hera, wife of Zeus, Goddess of Marriage and Maternity. Trained at London’s Guildhall School of Music and Drama, at age 17, as a member of Peter Brook’s Shakespeare season at Stratford-upon-Avon, Bloom played Ophelia to Paul Scofield’s *Hamlet* (1948) before being chosen by Charles Chaplin to star in *Limelight* (1952). Her numerous films include Olivier’s *Richard III* (1955), *Look Back In Anger* (1958), *The Chapman Report* (1962), *Charly* (1968), *A Severed Head* (1970), *A Doll’s House* (1973), *Crimes and Misdemeanors* (1989), and *Mad Dogs and Englishmen* (1995). Lately, she has devoted much of her time to the stage, appearing in London’s West End in *Rosmerholm* and *A Doll’s House*, and gave a performance as Blanche in *A Streetcar Named Desire* that playwright Tennessee Williams acclaimed as “the best he has seen.”

**Maggie Smith**, who was married to screenwriter Beverley Cross, was the winner of Academy Awards as Best Actress for *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie* (1969) and as Best Supporting Actress for *California Suite* (1978), was Thetis, goddess of the Sea. From her first stage appearance in *Twelfth Night* (1952) with the Oxford University Dramatic Society, Smith emerged as one of Britain’s best actresses. As a member of the National Theatre she played Desdemona to Olivier’s *Othello* (1964) and also appeared in *Miss Julie* (1965-66) and *Hay Fever* (1964). She starred in a memorable revival of Noel Coward’s *Private Lives* (1972-73) in London’s West End and played the lead in Tom Stoppard’s play *Night and Day* (1979-80). Her film credits include *The V. I. P.s* (1963), *Travels With My Aunt* (1972) and *Death on the Nile* (1978). More recently, she has played the recurring role of Professor McGonagall in the series of *Harry Potter* films (2001-2011, ongoing).

**Ursula Andress** played Aphrodite, Goddess of Love, and has been described as “the most beautiful woman in the world.” Born in Switzerland, Andress was spotted in Rome by Marlon Brando, who introduced her to an executive from Paramount. Offered a contract, she moved to Hollywood but it was her spectacular emergence from the Caribbean Sea in *Dr. No* (1962) that made her internationally known. Since then she has starred with Frank Sinatra in *Four From Texas* (1963), with Elvis Presley in *Fun In Acapulco* (1963), *What’s New Pussycat* (1965), *The Blue Max* (1966), *Casino Royale* (1967), *Perfect Friday* (1970) and the television miniseries *Peter the Great* (1986).

**Susan Fleetwood** (Athena) was a British classical actress trained for the stage at RADA (with a scholarship) where she won the school’s coveted Bancroft Gold Medal in 1964. Daughter of John Joseph Kells Fleetwood, an officer in the RAF, she was educated at 16 different schools, including Egypt and Norway. After RADA, she was one of the actors who formed the Liverpool Everyman Company in 1964, and between 1965 and 1967, she played Lady Percy in *Henry IV*, Gwendolyn in *The Importance of Being Earnest*, Alison in *Look Back in Anger*, and Lady Macbeth in *Macbeth*. She succeeded Judi Dench as Portia in the Royal Shakespeare Company’s 1972 production of *The Merchant of Venice*, and became an Associate Artist of the RSC. In addition to *Clash*, notable films included *Young Sherlock Holmes* (1985), *White Mischief* (1988), and *The Krays* (1990). Her older brother, Mick Fleetwood, was Fleetwood Mac’s drummer. Susan Fleetwood battled ovarian cancer for nearly a decade, but continued to perform throughout until she succumbed to the disease in 1995 at age 51.



Laurence Olivier



Claire Bloom



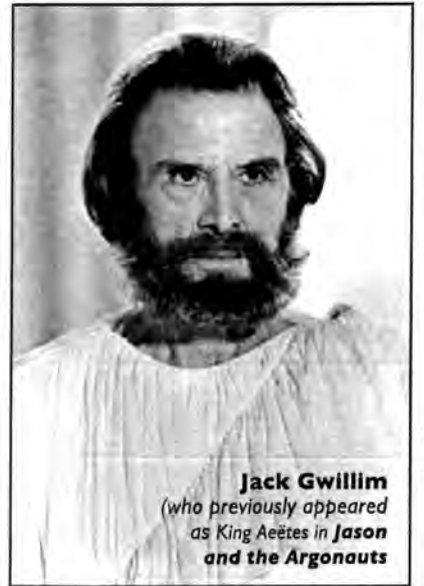
Maggie Smith



Ursula Andress



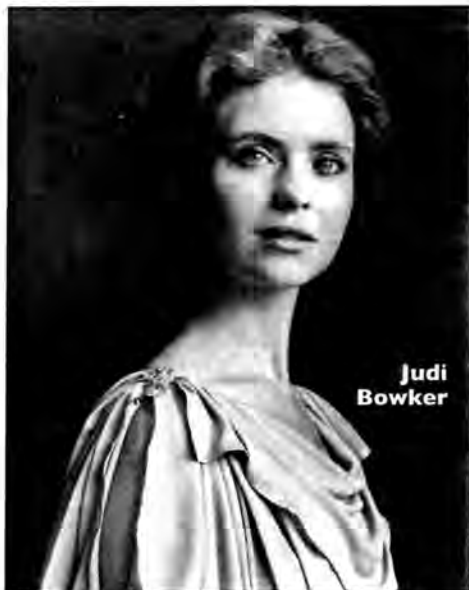
Susan Fleetwood



Jack Gwillim  
(who previously appeared  
as King Aëtes in *Jason  
and the Argonauts*)



## The Mortals



Judi Bowker

The delicate-looking Judi Bowker was ideally cast as the classical beauty Andromeda. With no formal training and little experience, Bowker made her film debut at age 16 as Sister Clare in Franco Zeffirelli's *Brother Sun, Sister Moon* (1972), followed by the television series *The Adventures of Black Beauty* (1972) and TV movies of *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1973), *In This House of Brede* (1975), *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1976), and *Count Dracula* (1977). With Britain's Royal National Theatre, she appeared in productions of *Macbeth* and *The Cherry Orchard*.

Burgess Meredith as the playwright Ammon, a part, incidentally, that Beverley Cross remembers he had initially written for Sir John Gielgud. "Gielgud had agreed to do *Clash*, but MGM was worried that if too many of the British high-profile actors were featured, the film would become classified as a 'Shakespearean extravaganza' and would lose the American audience, and so he was passed over. Consequently, he went on to win an Oscar® in 1981 for his role in *Arthur* with Dudley Moore."<sup>[12]</sup> In a distinguished career that spanned 50 years, Meredith had been equally successful as a writer, director and actor. In 1921, he made his first stage appearance playing the lead in *Peter Pan* in a school production, and a brief 12 years later was hailed as "the most thrilling young actor of his day" when making his Broadway debut. He has won numerous awards including Academy Award nominations for *Day of the Locust* (1975) and *Rocky* (1976), and an Emmy® for *Tail Gunner Joe* (1977).

Desmond Davis recalled that "Burgess was quite cantankerous. He had this unique method of testing out his directors by amazing harassment. He'd walk on the set, ignore everybody else, and come up to you, whatever you were doing, in the middle of something else—except shooting—and say, 'Now, what do you want me to do in this scene?' So that required you to go through everything with him. Then he'd start a huge argument about wanting to do this-and-that. What it required, I discovered very rapidly, was massive patience and a moving wall technique. What eventually happened was, after about ten or twenty minutes he would then do everything you wanted him to do in the first place, and it all worked out fine. He just loved to go in and test you. He was a very nice man and there was no malice intended; it was just that he wanted to make his mark. He did have terrible problems with his lines, sometimes requiring many takes, but he was perfect for the part."<sup>[13]</sup>

Meredith also hosted and narrated the documentary *Clash of the Titans, Man, Myth and Titans*, a behind-the-scenes look at the filming of *Clash*, for which he and Schneer spent the week of March 4, 1981, in Athens with director Mark Schneider, cameraman Vincent Cohran, and a Greek crew. Meredith later said, "I was mightily impressed by Mr. Harryhausen, and have never forgotten the extraordinary work he did on *Clash of the Titans*. In fact, I remember I wrote to him about it at the time."<sup>[14]</sup>

Siân (pronounced "Shawn") Phillips made a suitably vain Cassiopeia, ambitious Queen of Joppa. Daughter of a Welsh farmer, Phillips studied at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art, where she won the Bancroft Gold Medal. She spent several years in repertory and has appeared on London's West End stage. Her first film appearance was an uncredited part in *The Longest Day* (1962). She made her biggest impact in television, winning critical praise as Livia



Burgess Meredith



Siân Phillips



Tim Pigott-Smith

in the award-winning series *I, Claudius* (1976) and since starred as Mrs. Pankhurst in *Shoulder to Shoulder* (1974), Boadicea in *The Warrior Queen* (1978), Beth Morgan in *How Green Was My Valley* (1975), *Crime and Punishment* (1979), *Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Spy* (1980), David Lynch's *Dune* (1984) and *Ewoks: The Battle for Endor* (1985).

Tim Pigott-Smith (Thallo), who is a splendidly staunch ally to Perseus, has appeared in films and TV series such as *The Day Christ Died* (1980), *'Tis A Pity She's a Whore* (1980), *Winston Churchill: The Wilderness Years* (1981), *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* (1982), *True Adventures of Christopher Columbus* (1992), *Remains of the Day* (1993), *The Four Feathers* (2002), and *Gangs of New York* (2002).

Almost unrecognizable in the roles of the Stygian witches were Freda Jackson (who had played the Gypsy witch Tia Zorina in *Valley of Gwangi*), Anna Manahan, and Flora Robson. Miss Robson (correctly pronounced as in "to rob a bank"), a prolific actress in the 1940s, was Oscar®-nominated for *Saratoga Trunk* (1947), and was famously known for her roles as Sister Philippa in Michael Powell & Emeric Pressburger's *Black Narcissus* (1947), and as Queen Elizabeth opposite Errol Flynn in *The Sea Hawk* (1940). *Clash of the Titans* was her final role, and she died in 1984.



Flora Robson



**Harry Hamlin**  
as *Perseus*

The days of using studio contract players must have seemed to Ray and Charles Schneer a million miles away, but even with this array of fine British and American acting talent, the remaining problem was to find a young actor for Perseus who would not look out of place in such distinguished company.

From the outset, it had been decided to cast an American actor to keep the production international, as well as to cater to the vast American market. Director Desmond Davis first traveled to New York and "saw what seemed to be every young actor in the city, probably around 200. We were interviewing for days and still didn't see anyone that we liked. So we moved on to Hollywood and saw many more. The problem is that American actors don't go to drama school. There is no RADA [Royal Academy of Dramatic Art] Central or Drama Centre like here in London. Mostly, they go to private teachers, very much Stanislavsky-based. To me, all the people we saw were, first of all, too modern. When you're casting a period picture, you

need to bear that in mind. They all wanted to play cops, detectives and spacemen. All built like giants and all very energized. I didn't want Perseus to be a renegade cop. I kept turning down people who were physically right, good-looking and everything, but not 'right.' In Hollywood we were literally reaching the end and Charlie was saying, 'Will he do? Will he do?' I said, 'No, Charlie, we've got to find someone who can play with actors like Laurence Olivier and Maggie Smith. Otherwise, he is going to stand out and look too modern.'

"Finally, Harry Hamlin walked in, and as often happens in casting, I knew he was right. It turned out that Harry had done Shakespeare with a company in San Francisco. He was as near as you can get to an American being classically trained, having a good theater background and having done some movies. He spoke extremely well. Most of the American actors who came in thought that what they needed to show was a sort of energy, there would be a tour de force of terrific energy. When Harry came in with this more classical background,

very quietly spoken, very knowledgeable, he just got the part immediately. I thought it turned out to be some of the best acting that Harry has ever done." [15]

Hamlin had made his film debut in *Movie, Movie* (1978), drawing critical praise for his performance, a not inconsiderable feat as his fellow actors were George C. Scott and Trish Van Devere. A graduate in theater and psychology from Yale University, Hamlin had studied with the American Conservatory Theater (A.C.T.) in San Francisco before becoming a professional member of the company in 1976. He appeared in *Equus* (1976) and *The Bourgeois Gentleman* (1976) with the A.C.T., and as a result of the success of his first screen appearance, was cast as the lead in the NBC miniseries *Studs Lonigan* (1979). Harry Hamlin adds, "I didn't formally audition for the part. I went to the studio and met Desmond Davis and we talked for maybe an hour or so. They took some Polaroids of me and before I left the studio I was taken for a fitting, so in the meeting they had determined that they wanted me for the picture. It was that quick." [16]

It was a wonderful and unusual experience for Davis, even as a director accustomed to working with some of the finest British actors. He continued, "The cast, of course, was quite amazing. Laurence Olivier seemed to have shrunk with age and the costume he wore was massively padded to make him more imposing. But he was wonderfully helpful. The part for him was just money in the bank, but like all professionals, he treated it with great seriousness, and was very commanding and extraordinary to work with." [17]

Physical effects technician Brian Smithies had worked with Olivier on *Dracula* (1979) a few months before when the actor had been extremely ill. Smithies recalled that "Olivier was a joy to work with, although his physical condition was not good. During the first few weeks of filming at Pinewood, I asked him for his autograph, and he said to me, 'Why do you want my autograph? Actors have had their day. The real stars of the movies now are the special effects.'" [18]

At the start of filming, director Davis briefed the actors. "I said I wanted a magical quality but that no one should play it tongue-in-cheek or try to overplay or over-characterize their part. I said that you can use a heightened sense of characterization that would suit a fairy tale, but not to the point of caricature. So that was the way we worked. Judi Bowker was deeply religious, a Christian Scientist I believe, and she tried to turn us all towards the same course. She was the most amazingly beautiful girl I had ever seen. Strangely ethereal, she seemed to float around. She was very distant, didn't get close to anyone on the set. She was another good piece of casting, always knew the lines and her part, and looked liked a fairy-tale princess. With Laurence Olivier, it was quite the other way around in that I was interviewed by him to see if I was going to be allowed to direct him. I didn't mind a bit because he was so awfully nice. Harry Hamlin used to call Ursula Andress 'the Red Sea,' because whenever they walked into a restaurant in Rome they would say 'Full'— then suddenly they would see Ursula and bodies would part like 'the Red Sea' and a place would be found.

"It was Flora Robson's last role and she had come out of retirement to do it. I had worked with her before on a television film and I suggested her for one of the witches. She had to wear those horrible prosthetic eyes. She was almost blind anyway, but she loved playing a witch." [19]

## On Location Around Europe



Production commenced on May 14, 1979. The start date had been pushed back a short time because Ray had been in California the preceding few months as his mother's health had begun to deteriorate. Martha Harryhausen passed away on April 23, 1979, in Santa Monica, California, at the age of 90.

Right from the beginning, Desmond Davis was

aware that Ray would be heavily involved with many of the live action sequences but he never found this a problem. "I had to accept this as part of the challenge and a limitation on my part of the film. He would set up his camera with the full gate, and that's it [the "full gate" refers to an aperture plate in the camera slightly larger than normal "Academy" framing to allow exposure of the full area of the frame]. I think we

divided it quite fairly between me looking after the actors, and as soon as the models or back projection came into it, he took over. It had been immaculately planned out by Ray, each absolute position, the framing and so forth, leaving a certain section of the screen empty for him to put in his creatures. So again you had to work very closely with the camera operator to keep the actor on the extreme right, for example. It was a continuous operation.

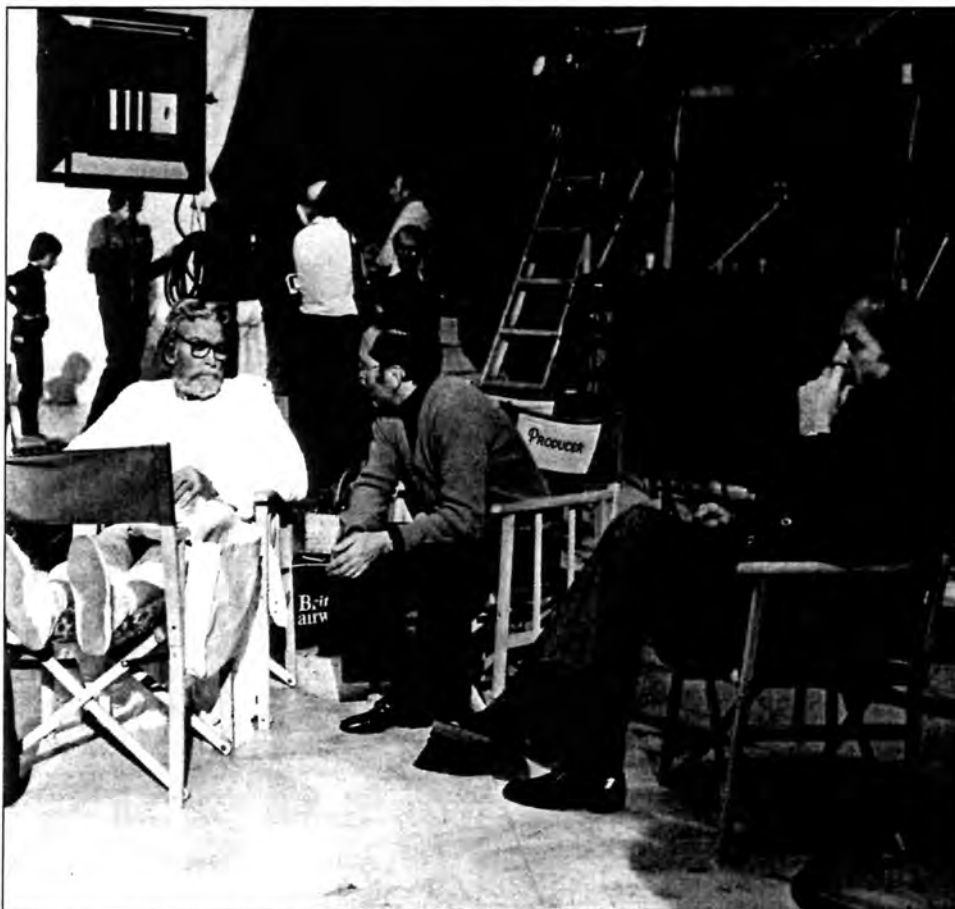
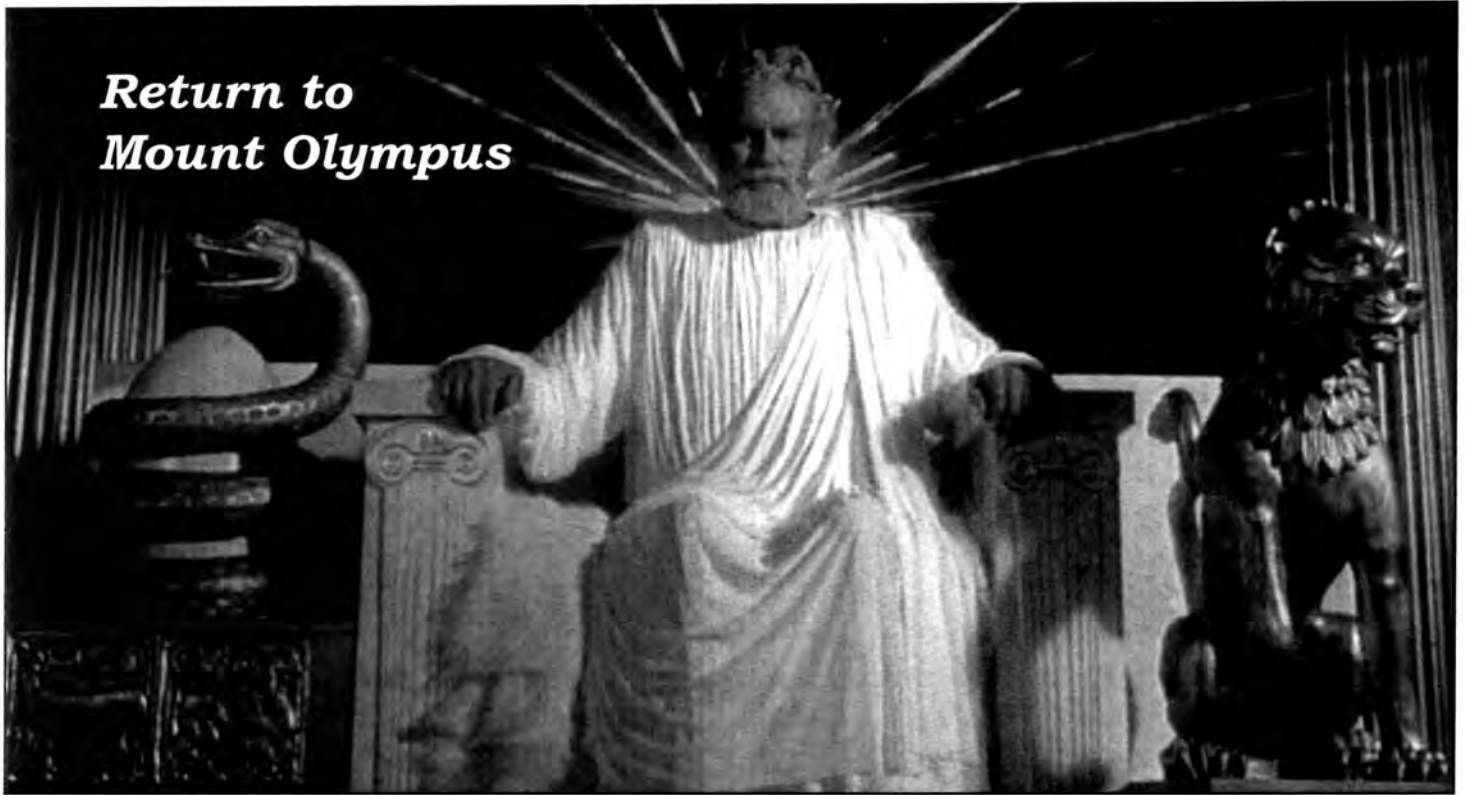
"One of the great pressures on a director is that the film has to remain totally on schedule. We had to leave Gozo on an absolute definite date to get back to Pinewood where the sets were ready, so we were chasing the clock all through the shoot. And, of course, problems would come up that would put you behind, so you would discard some setups." [20]

Cinematographer Ted Moore had previously filmed *The Golden Voyage of Sinbad* and *Sinbad and the Eye of the Tiger*. Desmond Davis remembered that Moore "was a massively talented man who would sit in a director's chair, look at the light on his hand and quote the aperture [*f-stop lens setting for exposure*] without using a meter, and always be spot on. He was a war hero who had been in charge of a Mosquito squadron [*made up of the Royal Air Force de Havilland Mosquito B Mark IV Series 2 DK338 fighter-bomber aircraft*] that did a low-level raid on a Gestapo headquarters in Holland. They flew just above ground level down a street and blew out part of the building so that captured resistance fighters could escape." [21]



Left: As usual, Charles Schnee was always on the set making sure that everything ran smoothly, and even with the larger budget available on *Clash*, as Tim Pigott-Smith realized, he saw no reason to change his method. "He had a reputation for being very tight when it came to money, but I know this isn't strictly true. He would always push for the best deal, but he was absolutely straight when he thought wrong was being done." [22]

## Return to Mount Olympus



"Olivier brought authority to it, didn't he? And you know the opening sequence where Zeus is on his throne? We used a laser behind him to have those 'lines of power' coming out of his head. That was a laser projector. We had one company that was developing them, and we got them down to Pinewood and they fired up this machine that sent out these marvelous rays. It looked very good, very good indeed." [24] — Desmond Davis



Three weeks were spent at Pinewood filming the Mount Olympus scenes before the crew left for location, eventually returning to Pinewood to complete the filming.

Although not entirely necessary, for the one scene where Zeus talks directly with Perseus as a reflection in the shield, Laurence Olivier insisted that Harry Hamlin be on the set. Hamlin had to

stand on a ladder to give Olivier an eyeline from where he was sitting on his throne. It was the only time they worked together. Some time later, after Olivier and Hamlin had met again during a dinner party at director Franco Zeffirelli's house, Olivier sent Hamlin a letter that took the form of an apology, stating, "[*Clash*] was such a frivolous piece, but I had so many mouths to feed." [23]



Above: Maggie Smith and director Desmond Davis. Smith spent a day on her own with Ray and Roy Field for the talking statue and several other shots. Roy Field tells the story: "It was a very tricky effect, and in fact, I never got it quite to my satisfaction. Maggie Smith was fitted with a skullcap and we placed her in a head brace so that she wouldn't—and couldn't—move. I had to shoot just her face and match all the different angles used in the live action. Some, I must say, didn't work. We tried all different methods to make it work, which often made it worse. Despite her discomfort, Maggie didn't complain once, which is what you often find with the better artist."<sup>[26]</sup>



"[Olivier] was sort of near the end of his career, really, and he was quite a tetchy person. You had to treat him with, um, care... [laughs] and not be very worried if he growled at you, you know. He was getting rocky on his lines, too, but we were patient and it was fine. And Brit directors have this particular problem. When faced with one of the 'theatrical knights,' the protocol is that you must use the prefix 'Sir' until released from the obligation. So, I always addressed him as 'Sir Laurence,' expecting him on the first day to grandly say, 'Don't worry about that, old boy, call me Larry.' But the moment never came, so I was obliged to always use the mouthful 'Sir Laurence' throughout, even when delivering notes!"<sup>[25]</sup>

— Desmond Davis



Above: Camera operator Mike Roberts assists Laurence Olivier in the exact placement of the figure of Perseus in the arena. When the Mount Olympus shoot was just about to wrap, and after Olivier had left, it was thought that a similar insert of Zeus' hand placing the figure of Calibos in the arena was needed to precede the transformation shot. So Ray "lent a hand" and made a brief cameo (left).





The first location shoot was the capture of Pegasus, filmed near the village of Guadix in Spain. The location unit was basically an English crew but also employed local technicians in Spain, Italy and Malta. Apart from the few shots that used closeups of the head and front legs of a live horse, every shot involved the animated Pegasus. As always, Ray was on hand with his storyboards, but for Harry Hamlin, and to a lesser degree, Burgess Meredith, it was an early taste of the difficulties with working on a Dynamation film and the problems of interacting with an unseen presence.

Filming on location is never without its problems. In Italy, for instance, the scorpion sequence was filmed over several days in hot, cloudy conditions. The setting for the first appearance of Bubo as well as the mountain retreat of the Stygian witches, was the valley of Antequerra in southern Spain. The area is still fairly remote and the crew had difficulty transporting cast and equipment. They were unable to use any form of motor-driven vehicle owing to the lack of roads. Desmond Davis recalls, "In tribute to John Ford, we called it 'Monument Valley' because it was a one-time glacier with these high rock pinnacles. We surveyed the location and found it was impossible to get any transport in, not even Land Rovers or jeeps, because there were no roads or trails. The alternative would have been extraordinarily expensive and that was to have a number of helicopters fly people back and forth. So in the end we hired pack mules. We had all our Mitchell cameras, lights, costumes and everything on a pack train of mules. In the morning we used to assemble at the entrance to the valley, and like those old-time western prospectors, we'd set off down the valley with our pack mules. It was really wonderful, because the more difficult the conditions were, the closer a unit pulls together. At night we would reload the mules and walk back again. It was wonderful seeing this mule train from the dawn of time carrying this quite sophisticated equipment."<sup>[27]</sup>

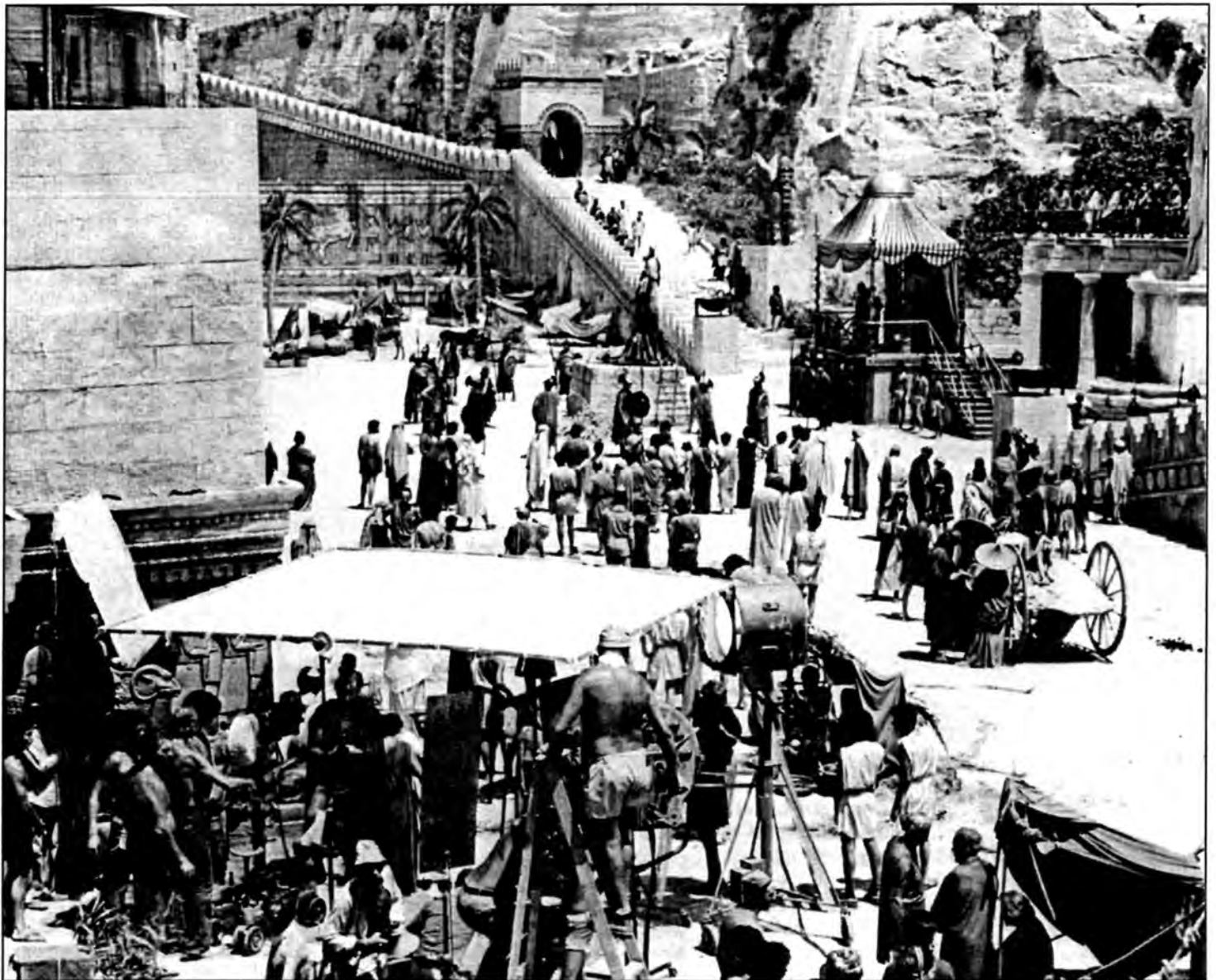


Judi Bowker remembered working with Desmond Davis: "He was enjoyable to work for. Of course, when you're doing a film like that – I think it was going to be Ray Harryhausen's last big number, that was the thing – it's almost, to a certain extent, curtailed, because everything involving the models was so minutely prearranged. The actors almost had to fit into that, rather than the other way round. So there were one or two difficult moments, where something really didn't make sense, and it

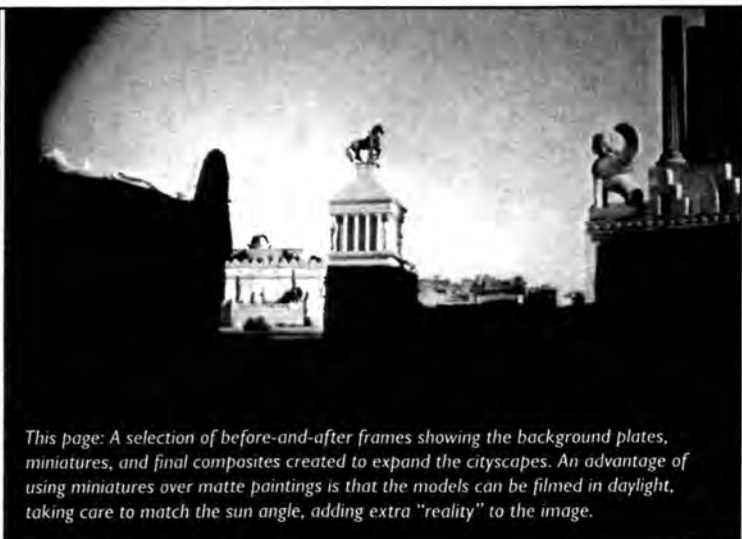
was difficult to go along with what the model was going to do. But everything was resolved, because [Harryhausen and Davis] were both very nice men, so any conflict was sorted out without problems. There were never any kind of tantrums, or temper. You know, [Franco] Zeffirelli – that production [Brother Sun, Sister Moon] was full of marvelous outbursts, very amusing to watch if you didn't happen to be on the receiving end of it. But nothing like that on Clash of the Titans. It was all very civilized."<sup>[28]</sup>



"We had a huge set built of the gates of the city that was nearly as large as the Marble Arch in London [around 40 feet]," said Desmond Davis. "A whole cavalcade of people had to walk through this triumphal arch. We finished the scene and the following day the crew went to strike the set. It had totally gone. Stolen overnight. Somebody must have taken it away by truck. Of course, there were bits of it left, but essentially it was gone. The production company hadn't bothered to put any security on it because it was so big and everybody thought it was safe. The thieves must have wanted it for its beautiful plaster moldings."<sup>[29]</sup>



It was Brian Smithies' responsibility to get suitable "plates" for the miniature composite shots. To get a satisfactory angle for the full view of the witches' temple, the riggers built a platform on the cliff edge over a vertical 2000 foot drop. Smithies continues, "The wind was coming up the cliff and buffeting the whole platform and making it quite pointless to have a steady camera. We filmed each shot when we thought it was calm, and, unable to see any rushes, hoped that the shots would be usable. When we returned to England, I began putting the sequence together [optically], adding the temple and spire. The miniature was perfectly static, having been shot on stage, but the background plate was dancing around everywhere. So I had to make a three- or four-way split on the matte and 'rock-and-roll' on different parts.<sup>[30]</sup> I couldn't do this on the parts where the action or the actors were, so I had to use that bit as it was shot, and 'rock-and-roll' on the surrounding area to try and disguise the movement or unsteadiness of the plate in the grass where there was wind."<sup>[31]</sup>



This page: A selection of before-and-after frames showing the background plates, miniatures, and final composites created to expand the cityscapes. An advantage of using miniatures over matte paintings is that the models can be filmed in daylight, taking care to match the sun angle, adding extra "reality" to the image.



Ray returned to the Paestum Temple in southern Italy for the encounter with the two-headed dog, Dioskilos, at the entrance to the lair of Medusa. Of course, this was not the first time Ray had returned to previously used locations. The town council in S'Agaro, Spain, renamed part of the beach "Playa del Dynamacion" in honor of Charles Schnee for having shot three films in the same area.

Paestum is a popular tourist spot and there was always a large crowd of people watching the film unit at work. Brian Smithies remembers one memorable incident: "We were filming the Dioskilos sequence at Paestum and we were using this huge cutout of the two-headed dog.



This thing was pranced in front of the camera so that the stunt men and actors could rehearse the action, shooting some footage of it for Ray to give him a proportion in size in various positions. They would then shoot it without the cutout. The tourists watching the filming would hear the assistant director say, 'OK. Standby. Turnover [roll camera],' and this big wooden cutout of a dog come prancing about forwards and backwards, these men fighting it with swords. The crowd would then see that go away and then, 'OK... Standby... Turnover...!' and they'd see the actors fighting 'nothing.' So, of course, the tourists must have thought, 'What kind of bloody film is *this*?' They all had a look of total puzzlement."<sup>[32]</sup>



Above: The interior Medusa set was filmed during the height of summer in the same aircraft hanger in Malta previously used for *Sinbad and the Eye of the Tiger*. The midsummer sun, the lights, and the heat generated by the torches lighting the dark recesses, pushed the set temperature to uncomfortable extremes. The sweat that appeared on Perseus' face was not only because of his frightening foe.

Brian Smithies remembered a firsthand experience with Charles Schnee's cost-cutting methods while on location: "In Malta, there were four of us servicing three units: main unit, second unit, and the underwater unit. At that stage, we were hampered by having only one vehicle between us. The rumor went round that there was a budget cutback and Charlie was summoning everybody to the office and saying, 'Right. We have got to get rid of some of the local labor. Art department is only allowed one car, send that person home...' and so on. Then I was called and Charlie looked at me and said, 'Brian, I have been watching the way you and your boys have been working and I've been very impressed, but I can see you're

really up against it.' I said, 'Yes, we are' and he said, 'Well, what can we do to help you?' I said, 'Well, we could really do with two more men.' And he said, 'Right, you've got them.' He called accountant John Palmer in and said, 'Okay, John, Brian here needs two more people. How much are the air fares?' John said, 'Two hundred pounds!' [approximately \$1,000.00 today]. Charlie went a bit quiet, then said, 'How much the hotel?' 'That's about two hundred a week each,' replied John. Charlie went a bit quieter, then said, 'What about expenses?' 'About fifty pounds a week each,' concluded John. Charlie turned around and looked me straight in the eye and said, 'Brian, I think we'll forget about the two extra men. How about another car...?'"<sup>[33]</sup>



Colin Arthur made a 15-foot complete figure for the live action underwater filming. "I made the large model of the Kraken in my London home. I was doing a conversion, knocking down a wall, which gave me the extra space I needed to construct the figure. Charles was treating me financially exactly how he had on my first picture with him. In the end, he asked me if I could take the model to Malta. I told him that I would if he paid all my expenses. I would show him the receipts, then when I got there he would double it so I could get back.

"I owned a Winnebago motor home, the type of vehicle that would pass anything except a petrol station. I had the head of the Kraken resting on the top bunk with the rest of the body stretched out the length of the motor home. I drove down to Paestum to join the rest of the crew, and did a lot of running around. Meanwhile my expenses were going up and up. Eventually, we went off to Malta, with an extra load of smoke oil that the effects people had asked me to take. I got stuck in customs for two days until the production people extracted me. Charlie nearly had a seizure when he saw my expenses bill, but it was paid in full."<sup>[34]</sup>

Originally, it was planned to use the 15-foot model of the Kraken for many of the shots involving water. Every effort was made over a two-day period to film acceptable footage in Camino Bay in Malta. But despite being weighed down with lead pellet, the awkwardness of the handling of such a large rubber figure proved impossible to overcome.

Colin Arthur explained: "Egil Woxholt had done so much underwater shooting that he

thought he knew it all. When we put the Kraken in the water, it floated like a ping pong ball. 'Well,' he shouted, 'put some holes in it and fill it with lead pellet.' I told him not to do that— just put a net over it and sink it to 30 metres, then bring it up and do the same thing again a few times. It was like a bath sponge, and would soak up the water. I had made a provision to add weights, but only to stabilize it. But no, they cut holes in it and filled it with lead. Well, it went crashing to the bottom in an area called The Meadow in Gozo. Bubbles were still coming up, so down went the divers and they took out some of the lead, and it came up to the surface again. They then put less lead in, but down it crashed again. This ritual was performed several times until it behaved beautifully, since by now it had soaked up the water! So the camera went down to film, and the cry went up— 'Colin! We can see its guts!' Well, yes— they had been cutting holes in it with a Bowie knife. I had never been diving before, but I put on all the gear, got a long length of nylon and a needle, and went down and started sewing. I was down there for some time. When I finished, I started swimming up to the surface when hands grabbed hold of my legs. I just didn't know that if I had gone straight to the surface I would have gotten the bends."<sup>[35]</sup>

At the end of the day, the 15-foot Kraken model was left overnight on the beach in Malta. When the crew arrived to resume filming in the morning, they found that the model had been stripped of the hundreds of pounds of valuable lead pellet ballast.

In the end, only the scenes of the Kraken leaving its cage, shot by Egil Woxholt, were usable.



The production once again made use of the marine tank in Rinella, Malta, where they had filmed *Sinbad and the Eye of the Tiger*. Using the tank was not without its own problems. Harry Hamlin recalled: "I had to fall off Pegasus. They built a scaffold from which I had to throw myself off. The tank in Malta was designed so that you can see the Mediterranean in the background, and it looks like an endless sea. But, depending on how the light hits it and the time of day, the color of the sea changes. So they had huge tanks of dye that they would mix into the water with paddles to match the color of the sea. The water had been in the tank for an undetermined time— some said *years*. There was a bevy of nurses standing on the dock, and after I went in the water they would pull me out quickly, towel me down, then spray some kind of disinfectant into every part of my body because they were afraid I would pick up something from the water."<sup>[36]</sup>



The opening scenes of *Acrisius* casting the chest containing Danae and the infant Perseus into the sea were, in fact, the last shots to be filmed. Desmond Davis explained that "during post-production, we went down to Cornwall many weeks after the picture had shut down, and we got the crew back again. It was simply impossible to get the stormy sea in the Mediterranean. We anxiously watched the weather forecast, then went down to Cornwall in October and got a force ten gale. So here we had another problem— not keeping sand and dust out of our lenses, but sea spray. We were just wonderfully lucky that the storm didn't subside. Because the usual thing is that just when you get your cameras set up, the weather changes."<sup>137</sup>



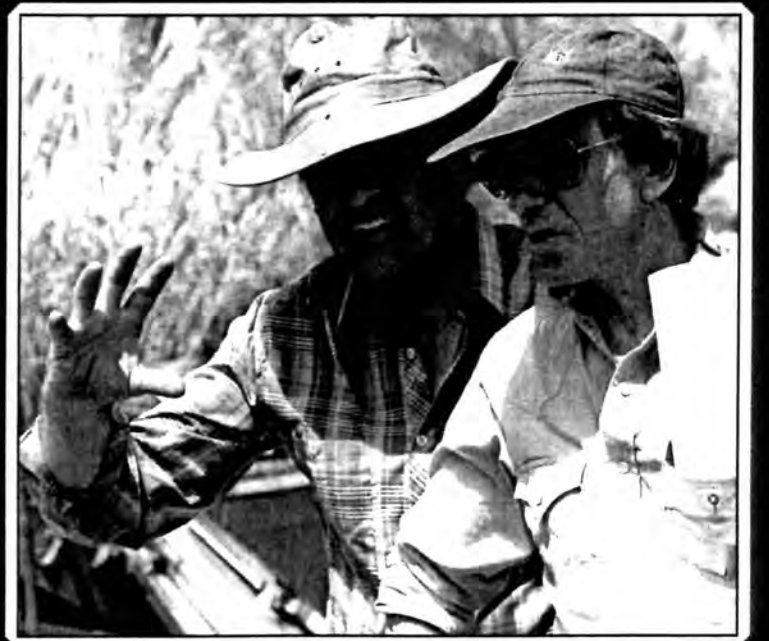
Below: Live animals were used in the scene with the Stygian Witches: "On the set of the witches' lair we had live rats," said Desmond Davis, "so we had to close off the set so that they wouldn't escape. At first, the cast and crew were a little tacky about these things, but after a few days the rats became very friendly, and would walk up to you, go up on their back legs and beg."<sup>138</sup>

Above: Danae was played by Vida Taylor, a popular "Page 3" men's magazine/ pinup model in the U.K. at the time, who provided brief, tasteful nudity in a couple of shots for the sake of more contemporary audiences. Taylor had previously appeared in Larry Cohen's film *God Told Me To* (1976), notable for being the film composer Bernard Herrmann had started just before he died.





## Production Scrapbook





Judi Bowker remembered working with Burgess Meredith: "We both found it extremely hot! [laughs] We used to commiserate with each other, as we both got exhausted by the heat. We were in Spain in the height of the summer, and Malta, and working in this tank where they had the monster and all the rest of it. It was sunk into a valley, as it were, and the sun used to beat into this little concrete pool that we were all in. I also remember him rushing off to find the local restaurants. There was no status about him, which is wonderful, and again, not that common. He was just friendly and open and warm, and completely 'unstarry,' and lovely to work with, I mean completely. There are some people – I don't know really how to say it – you can look into the eyes of your fellow actor, and you totally believe that they're who they are, and you're who you are, and it makes playing scenes like that very easy." [39]



Ray's original intention was to have Calibos entirely animated and also mute. Beverly Cross and Desmond Davis argued that for the continuity of the story, the character would have to speak dialogue, a very difficult proposition for an animated puppet in a realistic setting. Desmond Davis recalled that "Ray wanted to do Calibos entirely with animation. I told him that it absolutely wouldn't work, and that one of the major problems with the previous films was trying to make animated characters 'act.' My point was that you can get animated characters to react, but not act, which is quite a different thing. You can get them to give a look, but speech never looks realistic. We had a long battle over that and Ray finally gave way."<sup>[40]</sup>

The thought of someone in costume dragging a reptilian tail behind himself was unthinkable to Ray, and eventually everyone agreed that the full figure of Calibos would be animated, but closeup dialogue scenes would be played by an actor in prosthetic make-up. Mixing puppet and live actor was a bold step and it would require careful planning to convincingly carry off the illusion to an increasingly effects-aware audience. Neil McCarthy was cast in the live action role, partly because his defined bone structure suited Ray's conception of Calibos' face (McCarthy can be seen *sans* makeup, if a bit younger, as a supporting actor in *Where Eagles Dare* [1968], and is in the first shot with actors, inside the airplane right after the opening titles, seated to the right of Clint Eastwood). The Calibos makeup was designed by Colin Arthur, previously a key artist on *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968), among others, and supervised by Ray to match the animated creature.



Below: Effects supervisors David Knowles (left) and Brian Smithies make final adjustments to the radio-controlled Bubo.



Below: Camera operator Mike Roberts gets up close and personal with his hand-held Arriflex during the fight between Perseus (Harry Hamlin) and Calibos (Neil McCarthy) as assistant director Tony Wayne (right, in leather jacket), looks on.





# High-Speed Miniatures



Before the final live action in Cornwall had been filmed, Ray returned to Pinewood to prepare the effects stage. The first effects work involved miniatures, high speed photography and hundreds of gallons of water for the destruction of the city of Argos. One full city miniature was made for the long shots. The model had a painted sky background and was then later combined with live action footage of the sea matted into the foreground. Larger sections of the city, around five-feet high, were built to break away with the force of water spilled onto it from dump tanks. To prevent the miniature buildings from being flattened by the first rush of water, the collapse was controlled by steel rods that were inserted inside the structures. These were gradually removed to allow the columns to topple and the walls to fall.

Ray supervised two cameras rolling at 96 frames-per-second on the back lot at Pinewood. The whole operation went fairly smoothly, and only required a couple of retakes.

The actors seen swept away and crushed by the onslaught of the water were added later by blue screen traveling mattes. To give the impression that

the tiny human figures were being engulfed by the water, additional hand-drawn "rotoscope" mattes were animated to conform to the leading edge of the cascading water, eventually obscuring the live figures (a far cry from old Hollywood when the filmmakers would have filmed this sequence live, dumping gallons of water on the extras and keeping their fingers crossed that they would survive). This footage was sent to Hollywood for final compositing under the supervision of Frank Van der Veer because the Rank Organization had closed down their traveling matte facilities in England.

During the furious flood, the process is quite acceptable. However, close examination of the sequence reveals pronounced fringing around the human figures. The fringing is ironic, considering that one of the reasons Ray and Charles moved to England in the early 1960s, was to use Rank's superior sodium light traveling matte process.



21. ANOTHER ANGLE INSIDE CITY DAY (H.S. 212-74) Tons of water cover the streets, smashing the columns of temples, sprawling statues and covering terrified screaming people. (People on 21 - Min. 2.0.)



22. 22 - MED. CLOSE ANGLE (DUMP TANK HALTS FOOT and BUILT SETS) Men and women are dashed against stairways and walls by the crush of water.



23. 23 cont. As the flood destroys all. Running people are covered by water.



24. 24. Second camera to get closer shots.

Right: Storyboards for the destruction of Argos.

Far right: A portion of the miniature of the city of Argos. As with most "movie sets," close scrutiny reveals a certain crudeness to the buildings, but at the proper distance and with the proper lighting, the illusion is quite successful.

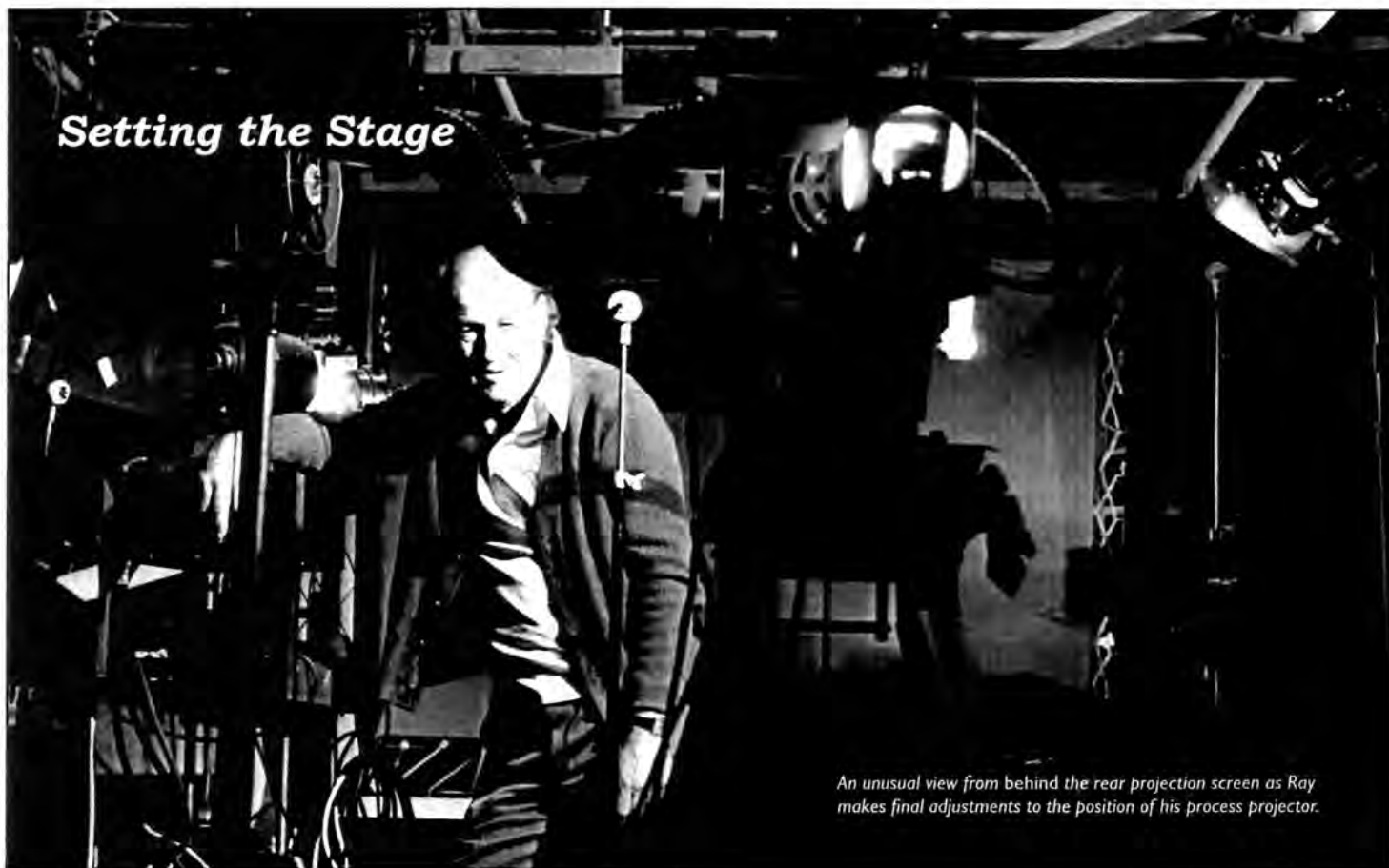




*Cathy Hill's painting of the destruction of Argos (left) was realized quite faithfully in the final film (below). This shot includes a composite of blue-screen citizens fleeing for their lives, soon to be obscured by crashing waves and debris. Note the edges of the platform supporting the miniature at the bottom of the frame (obscured by normal masking in projection and video transfer).*



## Setting the Stage



An unusual view from behind the rear projection screen as Ray makes final adjustments to the position of his process projector.

In March, 1980, Pinewood Studios purchased a full-page ad in the *Hollywood Reporter* featuring a photo of “the gods” on Mount Olympus (complete with handy key to identifying the A-list actors), announcing that the film had been at Pinewood “for over a year and will continue for the rest of this year with Ray Harryhausen’s special effects.” Clearly, there was still much left to be done...

Many sequences in *Clash* would rely on Ray’s tried-and-true rear screen process, though the inherent technical problems remained: “Several eight-foot-wide rear projection screens had to be especially made for me with minute grain for the close animation shooting,” explained Ray. “This is not a problem when shooting rear screen on a large scale, but when you come in close, as we do with the animation setup, you need finer grain. The [animation] camera is often only two or three feet from the screen. ‘Hot spot’ [a brighter center of the image in line with the source, fading off towards the sides of the image] was occasionally controlled by suspending a cardboard disc behind the screen [in the projection beam] but that would have a tendency to throw the center of the picture out of focus because the light is going ‘around’ it. You have to place the projector a long distance away and use a nine or ten inch lens to minimize the ‘hot spot.’ More often, I would have my optics changed to give a more even light.”<sup>[41]</sup> To meet Ray’s requirements, John Lawton, the director of London-based company Harkness Screens, which made the translucent screens, had to revert to methods no longer used in the industry: “We had to produce a rear projection screen by our original method,” he said, “which is quite old now, which is to use a clear PVC material and then spray it with a coating to create the correct amount of diffusion. The process was revived specifically for *Clash of the Titans*. Fortunately, we still had people familiar with the method.”<sup>[42]</sup> (For more details on the techniques involved in manufacturing rear projection screens, see the *Valley of Gwangi* chapter.)

Previously, Ray had completed each animation segment before moving onto the next to maintain continuity with the animated character, but Bubo, Pegasus and the Vulture added up to an enormous number of “airborne” shots, mostly as blue screen elements that would be composited later.



### Animation Cameras and Projectors

Ray’s principal process projector was known as ARKO #4 and had been built for **Mighty Joe Young** by Harry Cunningham. Ray had acquired it as partial payment for his work on **The Beast From 20,000 Fathoms** in 1953, and with its perfect accuracy, could see no reason to replace it. When multiple setups were needed, Ray purchased ARKO projector #5 from Wes Thompson (who had upgraded the machine with a new lamphouse in preparation for Universal’s aborted **The Legend of King Kong** in 1977), along with the projector Ray had purchased from Willis O’Brien’s widow, Darlyne, after Obie’s death in 1962. Obie had built this projector when preparing **Black Scorpion** and **The Giant Behemoth** in the mid-1950s by converting an optical printer movement that had seen service on **King Kong**.

Brian Smithies was working on the miniature

composites for **Clash of the Titans** and remembered this vintage camera/projector rig with fondness: “A one-horsepower motor worked both the camera and projector. A huge solenoid with a steel bar ran from the box standing on a lamp stand into the side of the camera [in above photo at left, without drive shaft connected to camera], which we had mounted on a tripod with a chain to the floor to stop it from shaking. You pressed the button and this machine turned over, and the whole bloody studio shook. You had to wait several seconds for all the vibration to calm down before you did the next frame. I referred to it as a ‘steam-powered camera’ but it was beautifully made with a hand-machined brass interior and was minutely accurate.”<sup>[43]</sup>

Now, with its use on **Clash of the Titans**, the “Obie” projector had spanned the careers of the two top names in model animation.

## The Winged Fantasy

While Ray's mythological creatures usually border on the grotesque, Pegasus is an exquisite entity, at once strange and beautiful—a classical image that defies logic, but nevertheless, seems to be a believable character. It is one of the few creatures that we *wish* could exist...

Pegasus presented two major problems: the illusion of flight and the physical nature of the flying action. While on the ground, living counterparts could be used for reference. But how would a horse fly?

Ray considered several options. He watched the flying horse in *The Thief of Bagdad* (1940), which consisted of a real horse filmed on a treadmill with a natural galloping action. The winged horses in *Fantasia* (1940) were nearer to Ray's concept, but he felt the mixture of gallop and straight-legged glide would look awkward and unnatural. He shot several tests of the flying action, but when Jim Danforth joined the animation team Ray delegated the flying sequences to him. Danforth is also an admirer of the *The Thief of Bagdad*, and without having seen Ray's tests nor discussing it further, decided that the galloping motion would work best. Ray did not direct him otherwise, and upon viewing the rushes, concurred.

How Pegasus "flew" was not the only problem, as Ray explains: "Apart from the question of flight, much thought was given to how a creature such as this would land. The first action I tried was back feet first, and this proved to be the most aesthetically pleasing. The wing structure was over the shoulders, so therefore the hindquarters, when it started to land, would come down first, as that portion of the body had no support. The length of the wings, as opposed to the weight of the body, was also an important consideration."<sup>[44]</sup>

Two models of Pegasus were built, one measuring 9" high to its head and a smaller model for distant flying shots. They were covered with the fine-haired hide of unborn lamb, with the wings made of pigeon feathers and duck down. Two larger wing sections were also made, animated, then added later by blue screen behind the live action Perseus for closeup flying scenes. Except for two short cuts, Pegasus was supported from beneath by an adjustable blue pylon.

Ray also built a fully articulated animation figure of Perseus for the long shots involving horse and rider, as well as for other minor animation scenes.

During the animation phase, Harry Hamlin had to return to England to do some post-production work and had an opportunity to watch Ray working on a scene featuring Pegasus. As a souvenir of his visit, Ray gave Hamlin the slate he was using that day.



Perseus astride Pegasus as animated by Jim Danforth in one of the blue screen flying shots.

## Wanted: Animator

It became clear very early on, that with Ray's other production duties and the enormous amount of effects work (around 200 animation setups), the animation duties would be too much for one pair of hands. Ray's first thought was to contact Jim Danforth, who apart from being a fine animator, was also a skilled sculptor. In fact, Danforth, once deemed as the natural "successor" to Ray in the specialized field of model animation, has since become regarded as a superb all-around effects artist. Danforth was inspired from an early age by the films of Ray and Willis O'Brien, and eventually used his talent and determination to follow this interest into the profession.

Danforth began his career in 1958 with Clokey Films on the television program *The Dinah Shore Show* (1956-1963) and moved onto the children's show *Davey and Goliath* (1960-1967). Later he joined Project Unlimited, an effects company working in both TV and feature films, and began his feature film career in 1960 as an effects assistant on *The Time Machine*. Danforth followed up with animation and effects for such Project Unlimited contracts as *Jack the Giant Killer* (1962), *The Wonderful World of the Brothers Grimm* (1963), and *The 7 Faces of Dr. Lao* (1964).

In 1968, Danforth took charge of the effects work on Hammer's *When Dinosaurs Ruled the Earth* (1970), which, after the success of *One Million Years B. C.*, was intended as a project for Ray. However, they were unable to secure his services because he was tied up with animation on *The Valley of Gwangi*.

Danforth had been in constant touch with Ray since their first meeting in 1958, and normally would have jumped at the chance of working with his long-time hero, but there were problems, as he explains: "In 1977, during the time that I was producing and directing the ill-fated *Timegate*, Ray came to visit my shop. He said that he was preparing two films and he asked me if I would be interested in possibly working with him on one of these projects. I said, 'Yes,' of course. After the funding for *Timegate* was pulled, I went to work on Ed Pressman's production of *Conan*. Shortly after starting design work on *Conan*, I was invited to the Beverly Hills Hotel to meet with Charles Schnee and Ray. It was Thanksgiving weekend and Charles wanted me to tell Pressman on Monday morning that I was quitting *Conan* to come to work on *Clash*. I said I couldn't do that, but Charles gave me a copy of the script to read and set up another meeting for Monday. I found the screenplay for *Clash* to be so disappointing that I didn't want to commit a year or more of my life to the production, and so I declined the assignment. As fate would have it, *Conan* didn't get funded by Paramount as Ed had hoped, so he joined forces with Dino DeLaurentiis. I and several other members of the original *Conan* team moved on to other assignments."<sup>[45]</sup>

Jim Danforth's unavailability meant that Ray had to look elsewhere. Ray had called upon Janet Stevens to sculpt the animation figures of Medusa and the Kraken, but he still needed another animator.

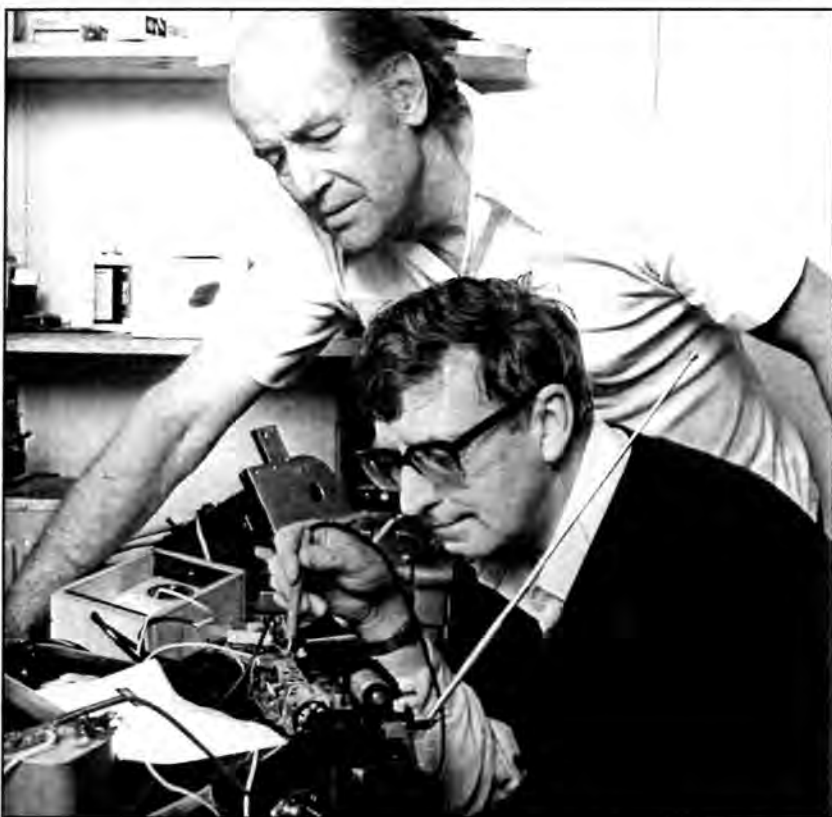
Charles Schnee continued making inquiries while at the MGM studios in Los Angeles. Given the growing band of young American animators, all inspired by the work of Ray Harryhausen, this was the most likely place to find a skilled model animator. One of these, Harry Walton, recalled how his name came to be put forward by a long-time friend, and Ray's former employer: "George Pal recommended me to Charles Schnee to assist Ray Harryhausen on *Clash of the Titans*. I had been in contact with George since working on the animation for the *Tool Box Ballet* sequence in *The Curiosity Shop* TV program in 1971. I had several meetings with Mr. Schnee in his temporary office at MGM—all thanks to George! You know, when I was that young, not only was I very interested in animation and visual effects, but I had many other things going on in my life as well. I know that Jim Danforth was Charles and Ray's first choice to assist on *Clash of the Titans*; I don't know if Charles Schnee was interviewing any other animators in California besides me, but I imagine he probably was. My first daughter had just been born in 1979, and I'm pretty sure Charles detected my aura of hesitation about going to England."<sup>[46]</sup>



Above: Ray Harryhausen and Jim Danforth enjoy the high-spirited hijinks of a feathered friend.

Below: Previously, Danforth was nominated for an Academy Award for his superb stop motion animation and visual effects in Hammer Films' *When Dinosaurs Ruled the Earth* (1970). Here, Danforth (right) watches with interest as assistant Roger Dicken refines the clay sculpture of the Plesiosaur.





While the search for an animator continued in America, Ray could hardly have guessed that the answer to his problem lived barely three miles from his London home. Steven Archer had heard through two former colleagues, Gus Ramsden and Dennis Bartlett, that Ray was looking for an animation assistant, so Archer gave Ray a call. Archer, a huge Harryhausen fan since *Jason and the Argonauts* in 1963, had been making animation films as a hobby for a number of years using plasticine models. Ray visited Archer at his home and was shown two of his Super 8 efforts, *Jack and the Beanstalk* and *The Evil Wizard*. The latter featured a cyclops, a dragon and an Ymir, based on some of Ray's old creations.

Archer did have some previous experience in the film business, having begun his career as a cinema projectionist before securing a job in the sound department at Twickenham Studios in Middlesex. Through friend and colleague Steve Pickard, he briefly met Ray in 1976 when Ray was finishing his animation for *Sinbad and the Eye of the Tiger*. The meeting had an enormous effect on Archer, who decided there and then that he wanted to enter the field of special effects. As he recalls, "A friend of mine had heard that there was a job on offer as an assistant to Cliff Culley who was running the matte department at Pinewood. The work involved touching up matte paintings for the titles of films such as *The Pink Panther Strikes Again* (1976), *Ride a Wild Pony* (1976) and *Candlehoe* (1977). The position only lasted three months, but it was a step in the right direction. Despite an all-out effort to find further work in the same field, I eventually had to return to my old job as a projectionist until the fateful day I received the call that would lead to a dream come true."<sup>147</sup>

Ray was impressed with Archer's animation films, particularly that they were in the difficult medium of plasticine. But he was considering a number of other people, so he asked Archer to come to the studio (being set up at Pinewood) to do further tests. Archer continues: "It was about a month before I nervously made my way to Pinewood, where I found that they were preparing the stage for the effects work. Areas were sectioned off with studio flats and within one of these was a projector, screen, camera, and in one corner, Ray's office. Ray produced some of his models from a plastic bag and said, 'I've a couple of your friends here.' He had brought along Trog and the sabre-tooth tiger from *Sinbad and the Eye of the Tiger* and the Brontosaurus from *One Million Years B.C.*, which I found I couldn't use because it had an American thread in the tie-down section of the feet."<sup>148</sup>

Ray told Archer to use his imagination, but to concentrate on the creatures walking and looking round. Archer worked with Trog during the morning and the sabre-tooth tiger in the afternoon.

At the end of the day, though, Archer felt unsatisfied, mainly because he had been distracted by the constant movement of people just walking past, busy preparing the studio, or standing there and watching him. In addition, he found using the actual models from Ray's films very nerve-wracking.

Naturally, Archer wanted to impress Ray so he asked if he could do another test, and Ray agreed. He went back the following week and animated one of the ghouls and the baboon from *Sinbad and the Eye of the Tiger*. This time, Archer was familiar with the setup and felt more relaxed. Ray was about to leave for location shooting and was not able at that time to make any firm decision, but told Archer to stay in touch.

It would be nearly a year before production manager George Marshall called Archer to tell him that a meeting had been set up with producer Schneer in London. It would turn out that the meeting was just a formality. He was told by Schneer that Ray was very impressed with his test and wanted him on the film, and that he was to start within the month.

By coincidence, when Willis O'Brien hired Ray for the animation on *Mighty Joe Young*, Obie was 60 years old. When Archer began work on *Clash*, Ray was only a few months shy of the same age.

Top: Ray and Steven Archer discuss the actions of *Dioskilos* for Archer's next shot.

Middle: Technician Les Schofield re-wires a camera motor as Ray looks on.

Bottom: Steve Archer, Jim Danforth, Ray Harryhausen and Les Schofield prepare to head out for Saturday lunch.

## Perseus' Romantic Rival

A frequent criticism of many stop motion films is that they become a series of set-pieces: a creature appears, is fought and defeated, and the story moves on. With *Clash*, and previously in *Sinbad and the Eye of the Tiger*, Ray had somewhat overcome this formula by featuring an animated character throughout the scenario. In this case, Calibos had had a relationship with Andromeda before his mutation and thus is a rival to Perseus for her affections. The evil deeds he performs are motivated by his continuing love of Andromeda and the need to maintain contact with her for as long as possible.

By never showing the "human" Calibos, it is left to the imagination of the audience to picture him before he was mutated by the vengeful Zeus. For his transformation scene, Calibos' clay figure is placed in the miniature amphitheater by Zeus. By clever cartoon animation, Calibos' shadow metamorphoses into something which remains basically human but has a reptilian tail, one satyr-like cloven-hoofed leg and tiny horns protruding from his head.

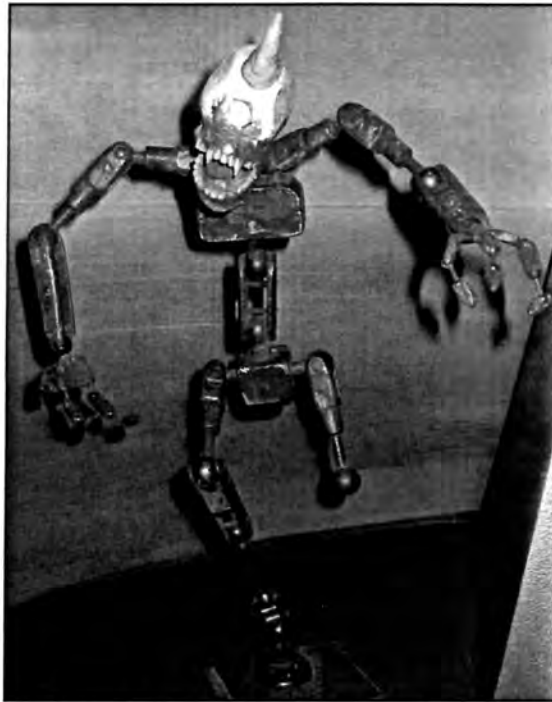
Ray took the integration of puppet and live action to new levels by designing two set-pieces in which the animated Calibos would engage in hand-to-hand combat with Perseus, and later, Thallo. The fight in the swamp between Calibos and Perseus was entirely animated by Ray and was the closest contact between live actor and animated figure he had ever attempted. The close interaction between the actor and the animated Calibos required perfect registration of model and rear screen, and the live actor had to avoid any jarring action that would be difficult to match a frame at a time. Despite the intricacy of matching each movement of the model to that of the live-action man, the two figures look as though they are locked together.

Fighting hand-to-hand with the animated Calibos fully tested the actors' ability to pantomime. Tim Pigott-Smith remembered having to mime being pulled backwards by a whip wielded by the animated Calibos. He kept missing the mark where he was meant to stop, as he was unable to see it while moving backwards.

"The big sequence I did specifically with Ray was about a day-and-a-half shooting," Pigott-Smith recalled. "I had to be got by this whip. So the props people came up with this big leather bullwhip and I said, 'I think that could be a little unpleasant round my neck.' And they said, 'Oh, no, don't worry, it'll be fine.' So I got this bullwhip round my neck and it was misery, absolute agony, so I said, 'No more.' So they said, 'No problem—we've got a felt one.' But, of course, it looked like felt and acted like felt. So Ray said, 'Don't worry, I'll Dynamate the whip in. You just mime it.' He went on, 'Right. What I would like you to do is take hold of the whip as it comes around your neck. Calibos will then come up behind you and put his arm around your neck. I want you to take hold of his arm, okay, he will stab you in the back with his trident.' All this, of course, you're entirely on your own, one wide setting of the camera, then one closeup. Nobody's there at all—no Calibos, no props, nothing. 'He'll stab you in the back, then lower you slowly to the ground, backwards. If you could do that without jerking,' says Ray, 'it would help.' I said, 'No Ray, I'm one of the actors. That's a model you're thinking of.'

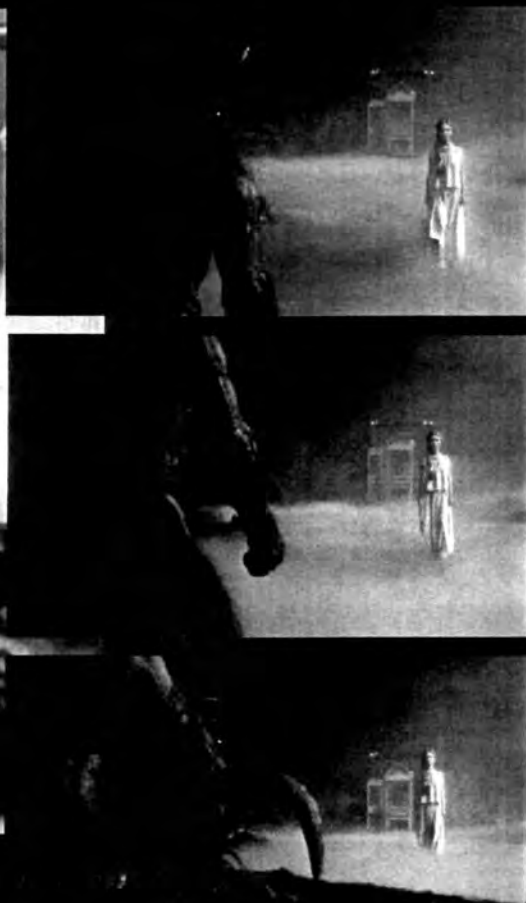
"But what he did, I noticed in this sequence, is to almost totally obscure my movements with the model, which is clearly the best way of doing it. You're aware of what is happening to Thallo, but you don't really see it. It was fascinating to do, of course, but very, very slow because of the precision with which he had to work so that he would have a proper piece of film to take back to his studio to work with."<sup>149]</sup>





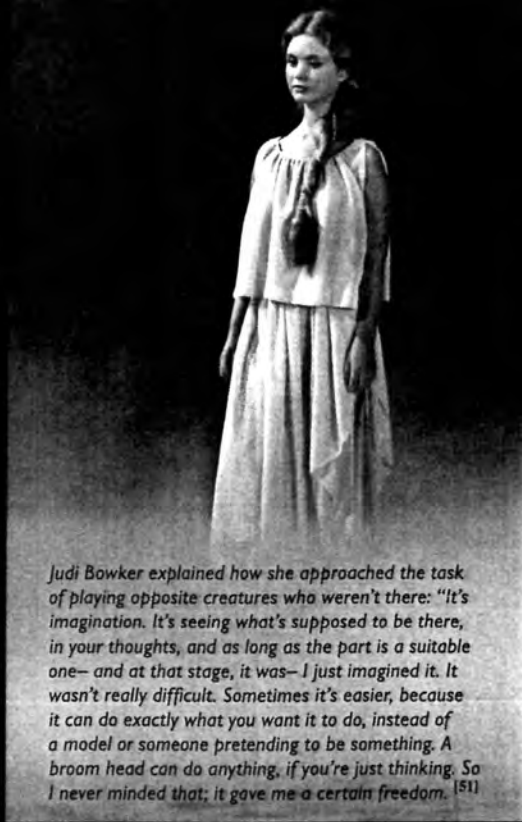
A smaller Calibos model about 8" tall was made for the long shots with Pegasus, but the primary Calibos model was constructed over the armature of Trog from **Sinbad and the Eye of the Tiger** (left), making Steve Archer's "audition" footage the last time Trog would be animated. Further continuing Ray's cost-conscious policy of utilizing existing resources, Calibos' non-human leg used one of the legs of the Cyclops from **The 7th Voyage of Sinbad** (middle), which is why the armature seen on display is one-legged.





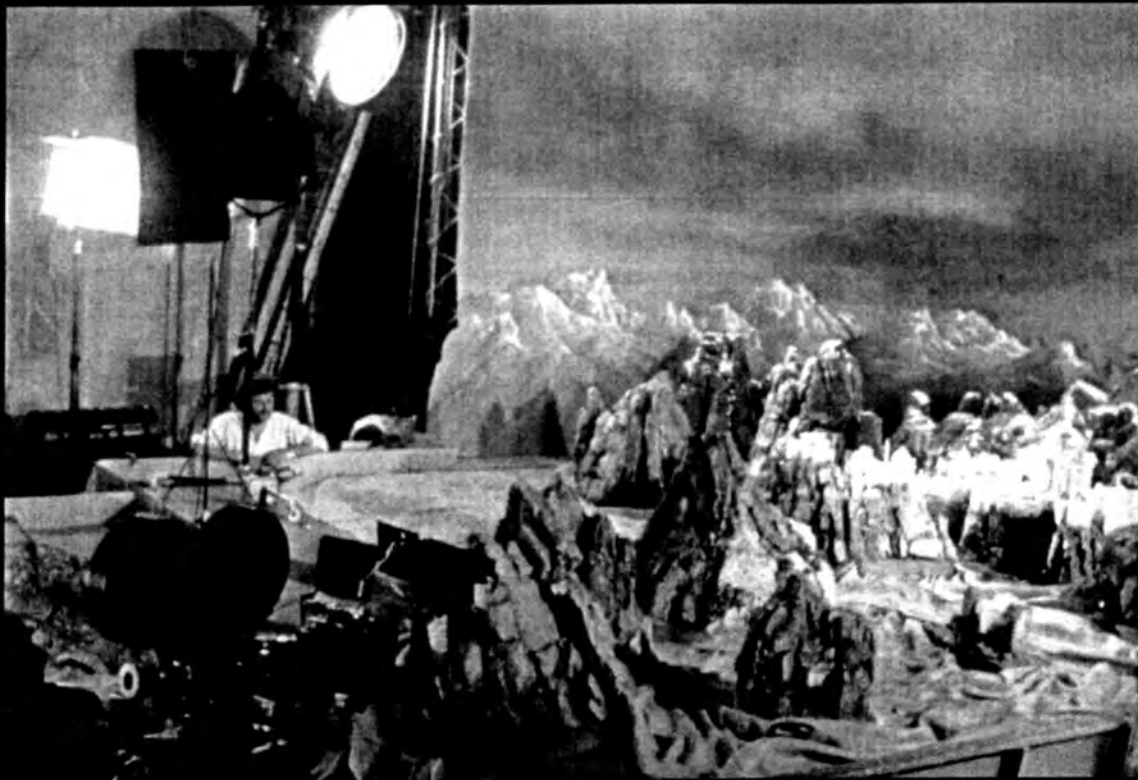
Above and right: The reveal of Calibos involved an elaborate "crane" rig that allowed Ray to pivot an animation platform vertically to match the elevation movement in the live action background plate. The result is especially effective as the perspective in the live action changes as well, rather than a simple flat-plane vertical move.

The swamp lair of Calibos was shot on one of several sets constructed at Pinewood Studios, while the rest of the crew was on location. Live alligators were used to give the murky atmosphere movement, although were less threatening than one might suppose. Desmond Davis relates, "In the big swamp set, we used real alligators that at first glance looked quite vicious. However, during breaks, the lady who was in charge used to hold them on her lap and stroke their snouts."<sup>150</sup>



Judi Bowker explained how she approached the task of playing opposite creatures who weren't there: "It's imagination. It's seeing what's supposed to be there, in your thoughts, and as long as the part is a suitable one—and at that stage, it was—I just imagined it. It wasn't really difficult. Sometimes it's easier, because it can do exactly what you want it to do, instead of a model or someone pretending to be something. A broom head can do anything, if you're just thinking. So I never minded that; it gave me a certain freedom."<sup>151</sup>





*This page: Tracking in on the elaborate miniature of the exterior of Mount Olympus. Additional elements of hazy mist and fog were added later, optically, to enhance the actual ground fog on the miniature itself.*



## Jim Danforth Joins the Team

As time went by, Ray and Steve Archer were both having problems with unsteady background plates, and the animation schedule fell further and further behind. Ray had also lost a full day's worth of animation of Calibos when the background image gradually darkened during a sequence due to a failing projector bulb, unfortunately unnoticed until the following day's rushes.

As luck would have it, Jim Danforth had just left the production of *Caveman* and called Charles Schmeer to see if there was any work available. Ray immediately called him back and said, "Yes." Jim Danforth recalls the experience: "I spent three months in England assisting Ray by animating the flying scenes of Pegasus, about two-thirds of the Dioskilos sequence, and two or three cuts of the large, closeup version of the Kraken. This was a very different setup than the one I had been privileged to glance at 22 years earlier when I visited Ray at his *7th Voyage of Sinbad* studio. The *Clash* effects production occupied an entire sound stage at Pinewood Studios. Black drapes divided the stage into smaller, adjustable shooting areas. A blue screen was hung at one end of the stage, and nearby, a small, walled room had been made into Ray's office. Just outside Ray's office was a curtained editing area. Ray divided his time between animation, editing, publicity and production and

effects supervision. Ray's supervisory style was very relaxed, leaving me much freedom to set up and light my animation scenes and to make the split mattes. The only difficulty I had was due to the fact that I had joined the production after it was well along, so I didn't know exactly how the sequences were laid out as far as the editing was concerned. The Dioskilos sequence used straightforward projection composite techniques which permitted the live action scenes to be pre-edited prior to animation. This made the sequence easy to understand. The Pegasus flying sequences, however, were done as blue screen composites. In many cases the backgrounds had not yet been selected and so there was not a complete pre-edited version of these sequences. This made it difficult for me to get a feeling for the pacing of the animation. Ray's editing pulled all this together and in several instances improved upon some of my less successful attempts."<sup>[52]</sup>

Ray executed all the Pegasus "capture" sequences, but only two Pegasus flying shots: one landing, and one take off. In both of these, Pegasus had his legs tucked under him, like a bumble bee. All the other flying shots (including the shot in which Pegasus rears up after landing on a rock), were animated by Jim Danforth. There is no perceivable difference in style between the two animators and the sequence works extremely

well. The dark, cloudy skies make the white figure of Pegasus stand out, even in the distant shots. The creature's movement is dynamic yet graceful, a worthy testament to the talents of the two animators.

Although Jim Danforth had known Ray for many years, he had never actually seen him animating until *Clash of the Titans*. "I had always known that Ray was an extraordinary animator, but working with him made me even more aware of his phenomenal animation talents. His animation seemed effortless. I never saw him making any elaborate preparations— he would just switch on the lights and start to shoot. Ray also seemed to understand the essence of each puppet's character and its characteristics. These weren't just rubber-covered armatures, they were the *actors* in dramas of Ray's own devising."<sup>[53]</sup>

The punishing effects schedule meant that the animators had to work a six-day week, but the weekend was a little more relaxed, as Jim Danforth recalls: "Ray always made Saturday a little more of a 'fun' day. The crew would pile into Ray's Jaguar and he would drive us to a little fish and chips shop for a pleasant lunch, followed by an ice cream dessert at the shop next door. During the week, Ray's schedule of meetings kept him pretty busy, but occasionally we would join him for lunch at one of the nearby pubs."<sup>[54]</sup>



Above: Jim Danforth and Ray Harryhausen in January, 2005, with a photo of Ray taken just after he completed *The 7th Voyage of Sinbad* in 1958.

Below: Ray's assistant Simon Selby slates a blue screen test.



For a time during animation, there was a problem with unsteady background plates due to inaccuracies in the raw stock sprocket holes. In normal live action this is not perceptible, but in visual effects it can be disastrous. Desmond Davis explained that "Kodak had to supply special stock with perforations cut by a die that hadn't been used for longer than a week. Kodak guaranteed their perforations on the negative film to be accurate to .001 of an inch, or something like that, but Ray needed a higher tolerance. If the perforations were even slightly inaccurate, it would throw his system completely out of register."<sup>[55]</sup>

The accuracy of the film stock was a problem that opticals technician Roy

Field had to sort out, as he explained: "I had the wrath of Eastman Kodak thrown at me because I criticized the accuracy of the registration, saying they were below national standards. Their top man, Role Zavada, came over and I showed him and he was dumbfounded. To give him his due, he said from that moment he would collaborate with us, which I think was a very sensible approach, because otherwise the problem could have gone on for years. We sat down and talked about the problems and he even sent me sample rolls of film to test. They instigated a whole research program and improved their methods. Later they began changing their methods of manufacture, they told us, which hadn't happened before."<sup>[56]</sup>

# A Loathsome Courier



The nightly abduction of Andromeda's spirit to Calibos' lair introduces another flying creature, a giant vulture, and its arrival at Andromeda's bedroom balcony is enhanced by the sound of the beating of its huge wings and piercing screech. Beverley Cross originally envisioned a giant bat or marsh hawk, but Ray wanted a creature that was not only extremely ugly but something associated with death. Although not a mythical creature, this airborne scavenger fits in well with Calibos' swamp location and is certainly repulsive to the human eye.

The model was about a foot high and very detailed for the extraordinary closeups of its head and neck. A model with about a nine-inch wingspan and made entirely of rubber over a simple armature was used for the distant flying shots. These blue screen animation elements were later combined with aerial backgrounds supplied by a company called World Backgrounds (which also provided the sweeping aerial photography seen in the opening title sequence).



**VULTURE SEQUENCE**

**Sh. 131. EXT. BALCONY (OPTICAL)**  
The ASTRAL ANDROMEDA walks slowly towards the window. The VULTURE enters from the left and becomes more visible.

**Sh. 132. EXT. BALCONY (OPTICAL)**  
The VULTURE moves nervously on the balcony as he sees ANDROMEDA walk towards the golden cage. As she approaches the cage door opens by itself.

**Sh. 133. EXT. BALCONY (OPTICAL)**  
The VULTURE moves nervously on the balcony as he sees ANDROMEDA walk towards the golden cage. As she approaches the cage door opens by itself.

**Sh. 134. EXT. BALCONY (OPTICAL)**  
The VULTURE moves nervously on the balcony as he sees ANDROMEDA walk towards the golden cage. As she approaches the cage door opens by itself.

**Sh. 135. EXT. BALCONY (OPTICAL)**  
The VULTURE moves nervously on the balcony as he sees ANDROMEDA walk towards the golden cage. As she approaches the cage door opens by itself.

**Sh. 136. EXT. BALCONY (OPTICAL)**  
The VULTURE moves nervously on the balcony as he sees ANDROMEDA walk towards the golden cage. As she approaches the cage door opens by itself.

**Sh. 137. EXT. BALCONY (OPTICAL)**  
The VULTURE moves nervously on the balcony as he sees ANDROMEDA walk towards the golden cage. As she approaches the cage door opens by itself.

**Sh. 138. EXT. BALCONY (OPTICAL)**  
The VULTURE moves nervously on the balcony as he sees ANDROMEDA walk towards the golden cage. As she approaches the cage door opens by itself.

**Sh. 139. EXT. BALCONY (OPTICAL)**  
The VULTURE moves nervously on the balcony as he sees ANDROMEDA walk towards the golden cage. As she approaches the cage door opens by itself.

**Sh. 140. EXT. BALCONY (OPTICAL)**  
The VULTURE moves nervously on the balcony as he sees ANDROMEDA walk towards the golden cage. As she approaches the cage door opens by itself.

## Athena's Messenger

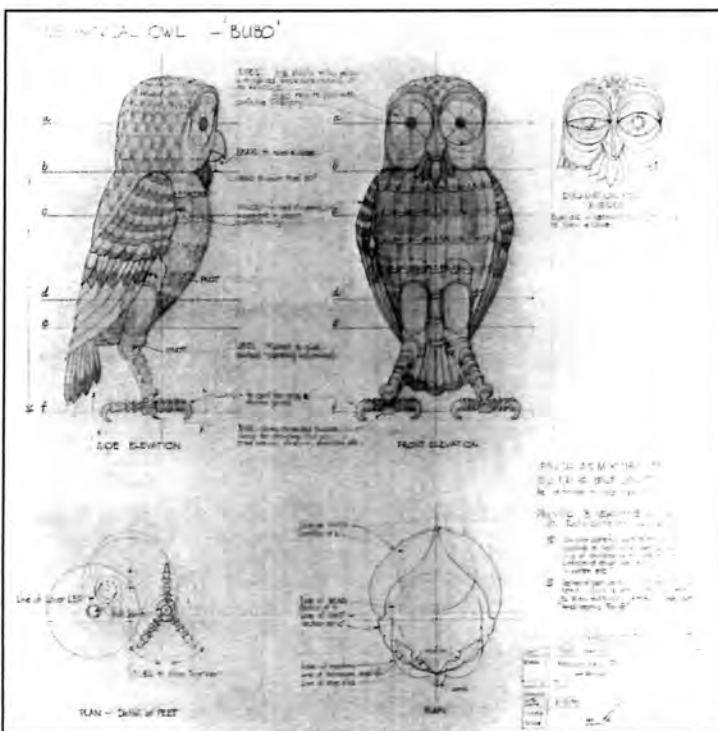
**B**ubo was the closest Ray came in any of his films to using an animated model as comedy relief. Three models were built to portray the wise owl on the screen: a life-size model for the live action scenes that was completely remote controlled with spinning eyes and head and moving wings and legs, operated by floor effects supervisors Brian Smithies and David Knowles; the four-inch version animated for the bulk of the rear screen work; and a one-inch tall model used mostly for the distant flying shots.

Bubo has been roundly criticized as a knockoff of *Star Wars'* R2D2 but Ray "really couldn't understand the comparisons. The character looks and behaves quite differently, and it had been in the script for some time. Some have mentioned the sound it makes, but what other sound would a mechanical owl make? It could hardly be expected to talk." [57]

The symbol of the owl has appeared on Greek coins since ancient times, and Beverley Cross thought it would be the ideal character to guide Perseus and his group. There was an unexpected problem with the name, as Ray remembered: "One horrendous incident during the production was that Harry Hamlin found out that Bubo was also a term known during the Bubonic Plague for a boil underneath the arm. Thankfully, the name was, in Greek terms, also associated with the owl." [58]

For Bubo's first appearance, filmed on the sparsely vegetated plains of Antequerra, Ray positioned two prop trees. Ray admits he was heavily influenced by Salvador Dali's painting "The Persistence of Memory" (1931), featuring a tree prominently in the foreground.

Archer experimented extensively to try and give the stiffly-moving Bubo more character, and actions such as flexing each wing separately while testing for breakage after an encounter with Calibos' whip enhanced the owl's personality.





*Roy Harryhausen and Steven Archer prepare Bubo for his closeup. Despite the limitations inherent in such a mechanical creature, Archer was able to instill a range of quirky gestures that imbued considerable personality into the little guy.*



## A Sting in the Tail

*The three scorpion models were each about a foot and a half long, kept to a size on screen that wouldn't make them appear too overpowering. The severed appendages of the model scorpions were detached from the armature and suspended on wires during animation.*

The scorpion fight begins the final chapter in an almost unrelenting stream of animated episodes that extends from the first sight of the partially hidden two-headed dog Dioskilos, through the encounter with Medusa to the death of Calibos. This continuous section lasts a full 15 minutes.

Even the most ardent animation fan will occasionally remark that this was maybe too much animation in such a short space of time. However, Beverley Cross explains his reasons for constructing the narrative in this way: "Right or wrong, I was trying to exhaust the audience. But I didn't realize how strong the Medusa sequence would be."<sup>[59]</sup>

The episode had been shot day-for-night, a method not ideal for rear projection plates and the basis for disagreement between Ray and director Davis. Brian Smithies recalled, "There was always a battle royal between the director and Ray, because Desmond wanted to shoot the scene as he wanted to see it in the final film, even though Ray had to do animation in that scene. Rather than shoot full exposure, as Ray wanted so he could play with it optically later, Desmond insisted on shooting with a filter and stopping down day-for-night, which affected the quality of the image after Ray had completed his work. This shows up particularly

in the scorpion fight where the background lacks detail and is one overall color, but this was the case with many other sequences, too."<sup>[60]</sup>

Ray was quite distraught that so much of the background footage was filmed this way, knowing full well that quality would suffer, and it was one of his biggest disappointments during the live action filming. Optical effects technician Roy Field had the unenviable task of doctoring the final film and "spent so much time regrading [color correcting] the film because they didn't like the color. To be honest, it was all a bit of a nightmare and I was never pleased with the final film. You can always add color to a film, but difficulty arises when you try to take away, as the degradation in quality will always become evident."<sup>[61]</sup>

Tim Pigott-Smith, playing Perseus' friend Thallo, remembers that "the sword fight with the scorpions was principally done with Ferdinando Poggi, who had worked with Ray since *Jason and the Argonauts*. He knew very well the technical requirements of the Dynamation technique, and so that was done entirely with him. We spent about a week-to-ten days on location in Italy as he set up the blows. Once we got something ready to demonstrate, Ray would come in and say, 'Perhaps we could do a little more over here, because I prefer that camera

angle.' In fact, very much like a director does a play. When it came to the more intimate sequences at the end of the fight, when I was killed, and when Perseus is on his own with Bubo, Ray was involved working with Desmond Davis."<sup>[62]</sup>

For *Clash*, Ray tried to bring the actors and his animated creatures into much closer contact than ever before. However, for one piece of the action in the scorpion encounter, Ray needed a small amount of coaxing from actor Harry Hamlin, as he relates: "I had looked at the storyboards and had talked to Ray about how it was going to be shot. I wanted there to be some actual interaction with one of the creatures, instead of just slashing at air. I said to Ray, 'As scorpions have tails, why don't we have this scorpion turn around and swipe at me with its tail. I will put my arm up and catch its tail with my left hand and slice off the tail with my sword. He said, 'No, we can't have you touching the thing. It won't work.' I talked to Desmond about it, but the filming of the scene was already intense because they had huge airplane propellers to create wind, and they had no mufflers on so the sound from these blades was deafening. I said, 'Why don't we just do this action and see what happens? Do me a favor and just print it.' I was never sure if it would make it into the film until I saw the rough cut, and it was there."<sup>[63]</sup>



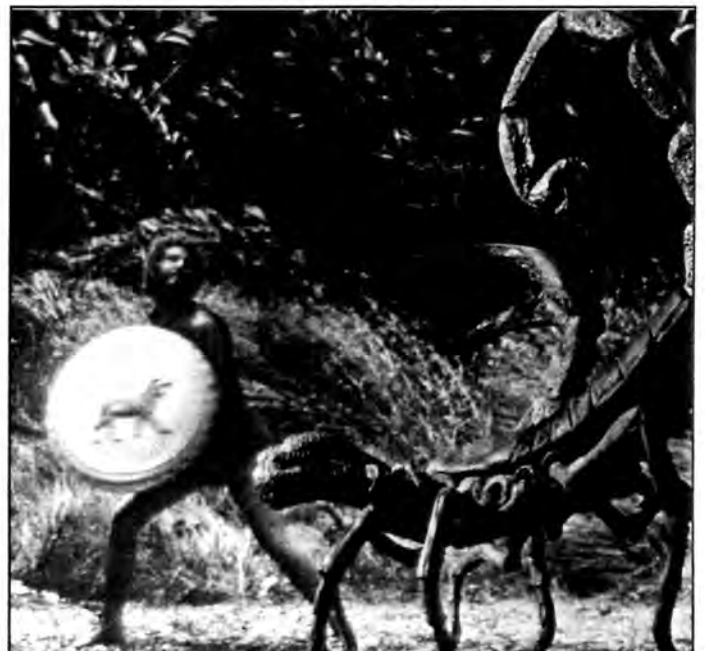
In the editing room, the scorpion sequence was considered overlong, and so was cut substantially. Because of the work involved, Ray was understandably very reluctant to remove any animation footage but at times had to give way, as Desmond Davis relates: "Although my contract was finished, I went into the editing suite a couple of times a week and I saw the material as it was coming through from Ray. The scorpion fight was shortened because I thought it was too long. Ray would fight like hell to keep it all, even to having one frame taken out. But in the end, Charles Schneer was the arbiter. If he thought it was too long, he would tell Ray. Ray would edit his own sequences. He had a Moviola in his studio and he would put it all together and then come into the editing room where the editor would give it a final polish. But he was always there to monitor." [64]

This tightening may account for seeing the death of only two of the deadly arachnids at the hands of Perseus and Thallo, although even in the final script there is no narrative to cover the death of all three scorpions. (Stunt arranger Fernando Poggi, who, as Castor, had been killed by a skeleton in *Jason and the Argonauts*, is the first to die from a sting from one of the creature's tails after being tripped by the whip of Calibos.)

The scorpion sequence was among the first completed by Ray, long before Steve Archer or Jim Danforth arrived on the project. Ray tried to study the movements of real scorpions but found them rather uncooperative and lethargic, and finally had to rely on his own sense of motion.



*The scorpion sequence suffered from poor image quality in the process plates, a combination of overcast conditions on location (resulting in reduced contrast), and the decision to film the plates filtered for "day-for-night." Nevertheless, the sequence is lively, and benefits from Ray's typical energetic animation, reminiscent of the crab sequence in *Mysterious Island*.*





## Guardian of Hell

Ray had wanted to use the two-headed dog since the episode with Cerberus had been dropped from *Jason and the Argonauts*. "In spite of the creature having nothing to do with the legend, I thought that its presence tied in neatly with the Island of the Dead. What better creature to guard the lair of Medusa?"<sup>[65]</sup>

The design of the model caused considerable problems because of the necessarily bulky area where the two heads joined the body. The finished puppet, however, is beautifully constructed and is shown to dramatic advantage in some striking closeups. It was an animation nightmare because of its shaggy fur and required extra careful handling.

The sequence begins as the creature hides in the shadows, slyly stalking its prey. The glint from the creature's eyes was accentuated by placing pieces of reflective screen material in the sockets. With a jolt, the creature leaps out at two of Perseus' men, knocking them to the floor. This scene was to have played out quite differently, with Dioskilos killing one of the men by throwing him into the air. One warrior does die, but only from the force of this original clash.

After animating the opening shots, Steve Archer had an accident one Saturday morning that put him out of action for a few months. Viewing the previous day's rushes, he realized the dog had photographed too large. He began physically moving the camera,

lifting the camera and tripod in one movement just as he had seen Ray do many times. Unfortunately, his hold slipped, causing him to split and break one of his fingers. Jim Danforth took over animation of the dog, while Archer became merely an onlooker for two months. Gradually, Archer was able to take on some light animation work such as Pegasus' wings beating behind Perseus in many of the flying shots. Fully recovered, he moved onto the closing shots of the Kraken, at first using the large half-body model (sculpted by Lyle Conway), but when this proved difficult to use, he switched to the smaller, full-figure model.

The Dioskilos fight contains some beautifully-staged action, but credulity is strained considerably by a rather innocuous-looking snake that has wrapped itself round Perseus' sword, preventing him from retrieving it after it had been knocked from his hand (the ineffectiveness of the threat may be partly due to the fact that in reality the snake is a non-venomous Burmese python). Once Perseus recovers his sword, the end comes swiftly for Dioskilos.

Having pinned one of the men against a wall (snatches of animation of just the model's head, with the jaws snapping at the shield of the warrior, effectively suggest close contact), the creature is struck from behind as Perseus rejoins the fight. As Dioskilos faces its attacker, Perseus plunges

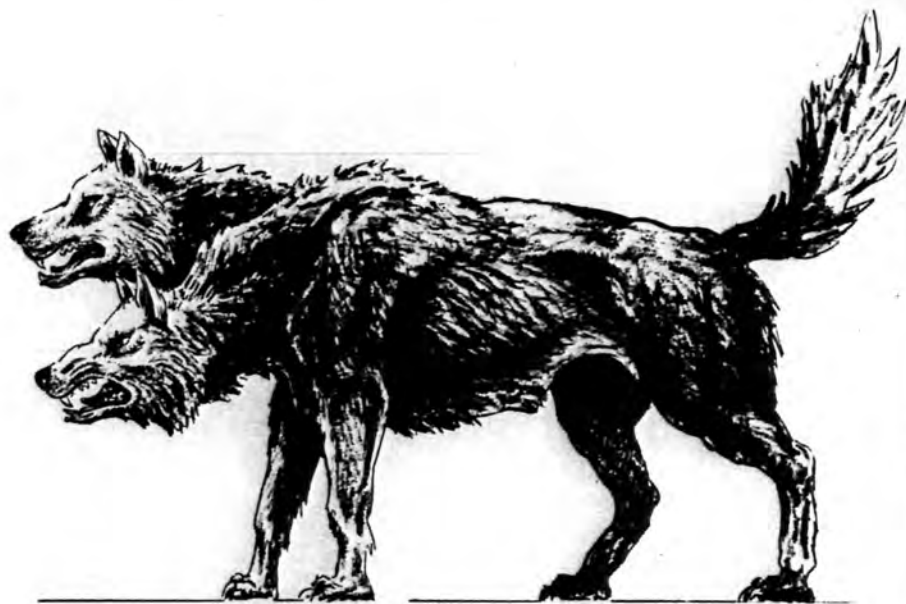
his sword into one of the creature's necks and the head immediately drops to its chest. Jim Danforth suggested that one head should droop when stabbed, while the other continues fighting unabated.

The Dioskilos sequence was severely shortened primarily because the Medusa encounter was to directly follow. Storyboarded shots were deleted or altered, particularly with regard to the creature's demise. Ray explained: "Our original intention was for one of the heads to be decapitated during the skirmish, but we thought that this would draw comparisons—and lessen the impact—of the Medusa decapitation that was to immediately follow."<sup>[66]</sup>

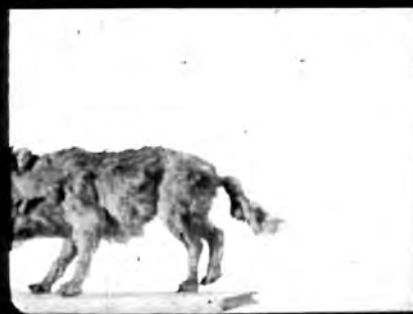
Perseus' sword strikes Dioskilos repeatedly across the remaining head and neck, with blood much in evidence, until it rears up and falls backwards off the raised stone floor. When Perseus leaps down to plunge his sword into the creature's chest for the kill, the setup is similar to the final scene in the Allosaur fight in *One Million Years B.C.* and the death of the sabre-tooth tiger in *Sinbad and the Eye of the Tiger*. In its death throes, Dioskilos tries to regain its footing but slumps down, its head realistically bouncing slightly as it hits the stone floor.

There is much to admire in the Dioskilos episode, particularly in the intricate split-screen composites. Strangely, the ferocity of the animal is lessened by having it bark like an ordinary dog, instead of some kind of unearthly growl.





DIOSKILOS



This page: Actual 35mm frames from various color tests and lineup guides. The camera slates seen in the background plates are included in animation shots to aid in identifying and synchronizing the action when the composite take is cut into the main body of the film.

# *Medusa!*



*Desmond Davis telephoned Ray Harryhausen with congratulations after seeing the Medusa sequence for the first time.*

## The Lady with the Stone Cold Stare

While the Dioskilos sequence had been left in the capable hands of his two assistants, the encounter with Medusa was to be pure, classic Harryhausen animation.

Previously, Medusa had appeared prominently in two films, George Pal's *The 7 Faces of Dr. Lao* and Hammer Films' *The Gorgon*, ironically both released in 1964. For *Dr. Lao*, Tony Randall wore the Medusa makeup. Project Unlimited partner Wah Chang fitted rubber snakes with tiny solenoids so that their tongues could dart in and out. Similarly, Hammer's effects man Syd Pearson rigged up mechanical snakes affixed to a wig worn by actress Prudence Hymen, and the snakes could squirm about as well as withdraw into the wig and extend out again. Both were only marginally effective, and actor Peter Cushing remarked that, "the thing that bothered [director] Terence Fisher a little was that they just could not afford someone like Ray Harryhausen to do all those snakes in her hair, and that bothered him because that was the whole climax of the picture, to see that terrible head with all those writhing snakes. He had to sort of shoot around that quite a bit to get the effect he was after."<sup>167]</sup>

The Medusa sequence was always going to be the highlight of *Clash of the Titans*, so Ray spent considerable time on the figure's design, which had to be both aesthetically pleasing and practical. "While I was researching classic paintings and sculptures, I found that most artists had portrayed her as just a beautiful woman with snakes in her hair. They do say that many beauties have a heart of stone, but we thought that the image just wouldn't be strong enough. So we made her as ugly as possible, although her underlying features suggested that she was once beautiful. I actually based her face on Joan Crawford because her high cheek bones, I thought, gave her a particularly cold stare. We then gave her a snake's body, partly because people have a fear of snakes but also so that we wouldn't have to give her flowing robes, which would have caused quite a few problems during animation. The rattlesnake tail served two purposes: a 'terror' factor with regard to its warning, as well as a good opportunity for the sound man to make her presence known when she wasn't on the screen."<sup>168]</sup>

Imaginative lighting from flickering torches and braziers (with a reactive firelight effect reproduced on the animation stage), and effective use of shadows and reflections, make the sequence one to cherish. This is also in no small measure due to Harry Hamlin's performance, which cannot be faulted.

## Precedents and Inspirations



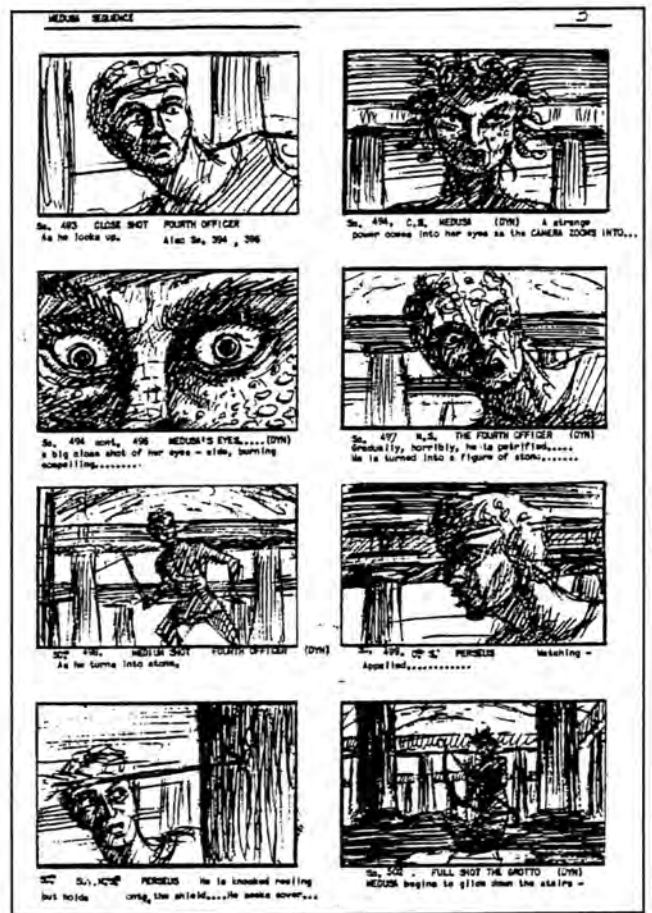
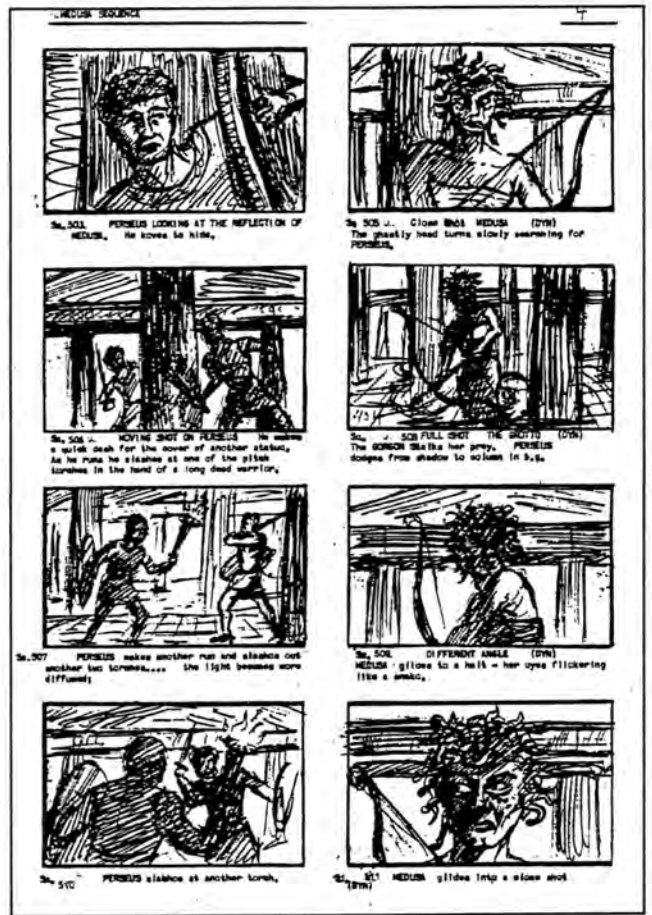
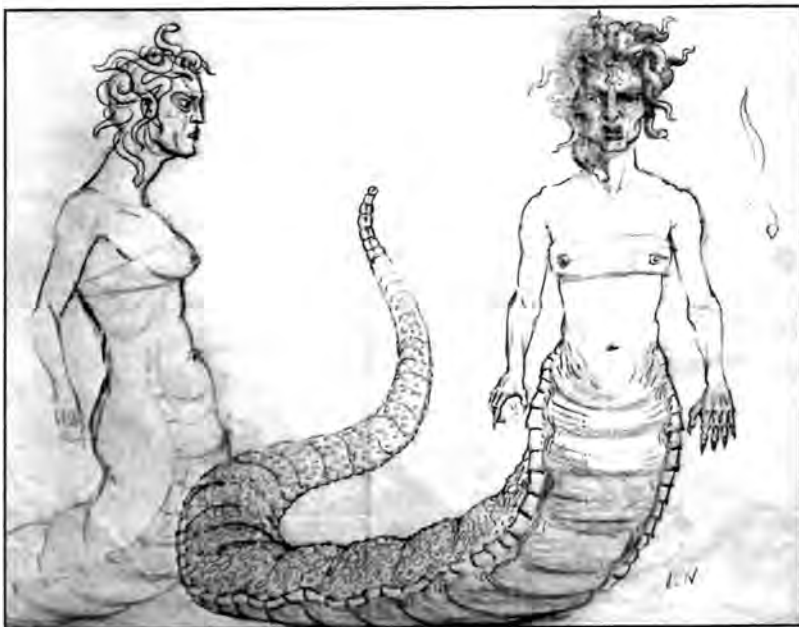
Tony Randall donned the snakes in George Pal's *The 7 Faces of Dr. Lao* (above), and Prudence Hymen cast a deadly spell in Hammer Films' *The Gorgon*, both released in 1964.

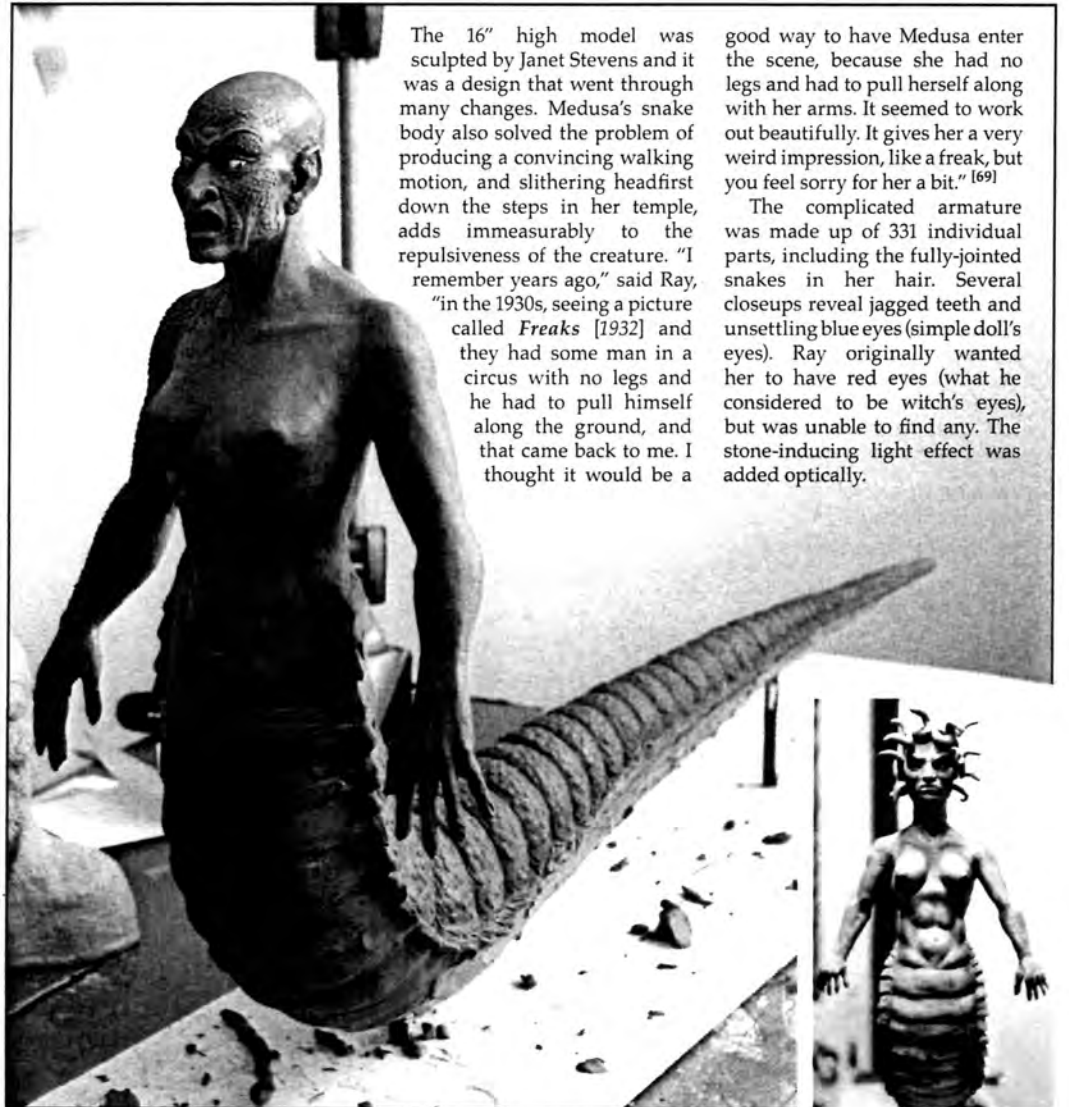
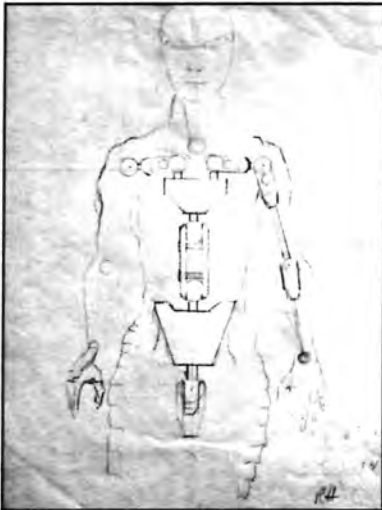


Below: Joan's Crawford's chilling stare inspired Ray's concept of Medusa.



Left: A bare-breasted Medusa caused problems, and at one stage she wore an unnatural-looking brassiere. Eventually, it was decided to reduce the prominence of her nipples and her scaly skin texture helped disguise this compromise.





The 16" high model was sculpted by Janet Stevens and it was a design that went through many changes. Medusa's snake body also solved the problem of producing a convincing walking motion, and slithering headfirst down the steps in her temple, adds immeasurably to the repulsiveness of the creature. "I remember years ago," said Ray, "in the 1930s, seeing a picture called *Freaks* [1932] and they had some man in a circus with no legs and he had to pull himself along the ground, and that came back to me. I thought it would be a

good way to have Medusa enter the scene, because she had no legs and had to pull herself along with her arms. It seemed to work out beautifully. It gives her a very weird impression, like a freak, but you feel sorry for her a bit."<sup>69</sup>

The complicated armature was made up of 331 individual parts, including the fully-jointed snakes in her hair. Several closeups reveal jagged teeth and unsettling blue eyes (simple doll's eyes). Ray originally wanted her to have red eyes (what he considered to be witch's eyes), but was unable to find any. The stone-inducing light effect was added optically.



Medusa's use of a bow and arrow was simplified somewhat from the original concept. Initially, she was to dip the arrowhead in her own poison blood, inflicting instant death to any living target. Live action and physical effects were staged to accommodate this action as described in the script, hence the foaming of the water when the soldier, hit with an arrow in his back, falls into a pool.

At one time it was also considered that Perseus might decapitate Medusa by dispatching a sharp-edged shield in her direction, an idea that caused a major problem on the set. Harry Hamlin recalled, "The day I read the script I called up Desmond Davis, who had returned to London. I told him I wanted to do the film, but I have one major reservation, and that is the way Medusa is killed. In the script, a shield with a serrated edge is thrown like a Frisbee® to cut her head off. In the myth, a sword is used, being the whole reason for the magic sword. I told him I really wanted it to be filmed this way. He said, 'Okay, we'll think about that.' All along I kept asking, 'Have you made a decision about the scene?' and all along I was told, 'Don't worry, it's all been worked out.'

"Got to the day [of filming] and when I arrived on the set they showed me this shield with a serrated edge that was to be used to cut off Medusa's head. I said, 'Wait a minute. I thought we had worked this out and I was cutting off her head with the sword.' This is now eight in the morning. They said, 'No, no, we are going to stay with the script because we've gotten word from the front office in London that we can't use the sword to cut off her head. It would get us an adult rating in England for violence and we would lose the kids in the audience.' I argued that since it was mythology and true to the myth they stood a good chance of getting it through. Anyway, it could be shot in such a way that it would be less horribly violent. They said, 'No, we have to shoot it this way, sorry.' I said, 'Fine, then maybe you can find someone else to play Perseus for the rest of the movie.' I was pretty adamant about it, so I walked over to my trailer and shut the door. It was a very hot day and to make things worse, they turned off the electricity to the trailer. It was getting pretty stuffy in there. Hours went by as they drove to town to send off telexes back and forth to England. Desmond was on my side; it was mostly Charles

who was afraid of the rating. Finally they came to me and said, 'Okay, you win. We will shoot the sequence using the sword. But we've got to do it *now* as we're running out of time.'

"Out of this pressure came this technique that Desmond came up with on the spot—instead of shooting from different angles to build tension, he would move the camera in closer, stage by stage, until there was a closeup on my face. I just can't imagine what the scene would have been like if I would have done the shield thing."<sup>[70]</sup>

The final decapitation scene required perfect timing between the animation and the background footage, and the head of the model was lifted on wires for a few frames. Such a magnificent creation deserves a full theatrical demise, and it duly receives one as the headless body writhes around, its tail snaking into the air. When the body comes to rest, red ooze spills from the exposed neck (a mixture of the blood substitute "Kensington Gore" and wallpaper paste), an image which often extracts disgusted cries from audiences.

Ray would spend over three and a half months on the animation, pouring his vast experience into creating a truly eerie, nerve-tingling exercise. To make this episode even more significant, something that truly encompassed all of his talents, Ray even cut the sequence together, with the full approval of both Charles Schneer and editor Timothy Gee. "If I had ever thought about the amount of work that was to take place in any of our films at the beginning, I don't think I would have ever begun. I try to close my mind to the fact that we have so many shots to do. There were over 400 individual setups in *Clash*. I just take the first step, and do the best I can."<sup>[71]</sup>

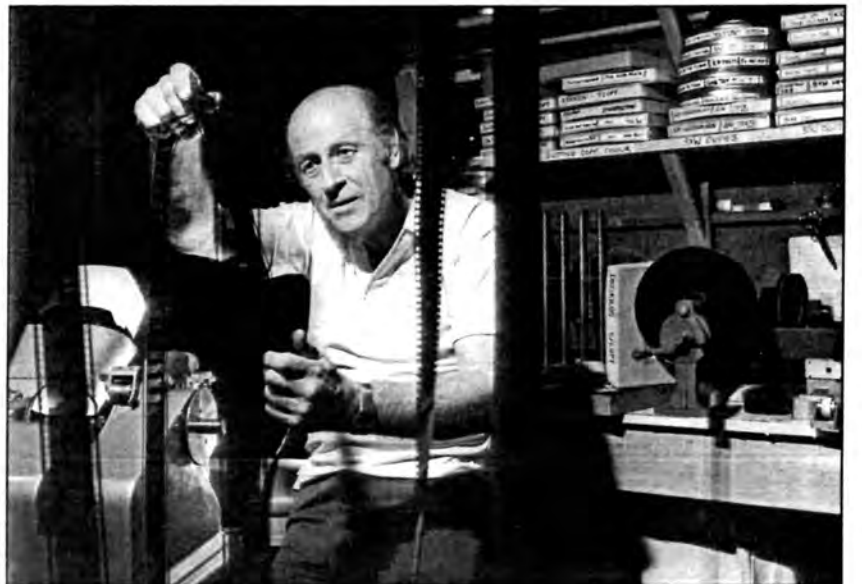




Above: Shots from a documentary in which Ray recreated the Medusa setup to show how the animation process worked.

Left, middle: A comparison of the full size Medusa head (left) and the animation model.

**A**t the end of the live action filming at Paestum, Harry Hamlin put forward another idea: "There is this great image that everyone is familiar with from the Cellini statue of Perseus with the head of Medusa. I brought it up with Charles several times that it should be included in the picture. Then, on the final day of shooting at Paestum, I said to Desmond that this is the place to do it. Desmond said, 'Okay, but you only have five minutes to do it, as everyone is packing up.' So they set the camera up, got the head and my cape, just as it began to rain. They just shot it, turned the camera with no sound or anything. I just lifted the head up. I only did it one time—it was quite an amazing moment that I shall never forget. I got chills all through my body when I did it. The setting was perfect, the timing was perfect, and the image was recreated." [72]







*A Visit to Ray's Office*



## Release the Kraken!



The finale was originally planned to be an animation sequence that would overwhelm even the magnificent Medusa episode in scope and dramatic impact. What finally reached the screen is only a pale realization of good intentions, diminished by unfortunate circumstances and a lack of time and resources. Beverley Cross explains: "We were running out of time, so the final scenes of Andromeda chained to the rock with the Kraken rising up, had to be shot in bright sunlight under a rather nice blue Mediterranean sky. Originally, Ray wanted to film that with a stormy sky, but you could wait forever to get those conditions in Malta. That should have been a thundering dark sky, but they just didn't have the time to do it. It would have been a huge, spectacular ending. It's a great shame."<sup>[73]</sup> Ray

also expressed his disappointment: "It would have changed the whole aura of the ending if we had had storm clouds and a tormented background behind the Kraken, but that was a luxury that we didn't have at the time. I suppose I should have taken time and altered the background, but that would have meant doctoring a great deal of the film we had shot, and we just didn't have the time, budget, or resources at our disposal."<sup>[74]</sup>

The name Kraken has nothing to do with Greek mythology, having come from medieval legends. The creature, which is never described in the original Perseus and Andromeda legend, was designed as a merman with a face loosely based on the Ymir of *20 Million Miles to Earth*.

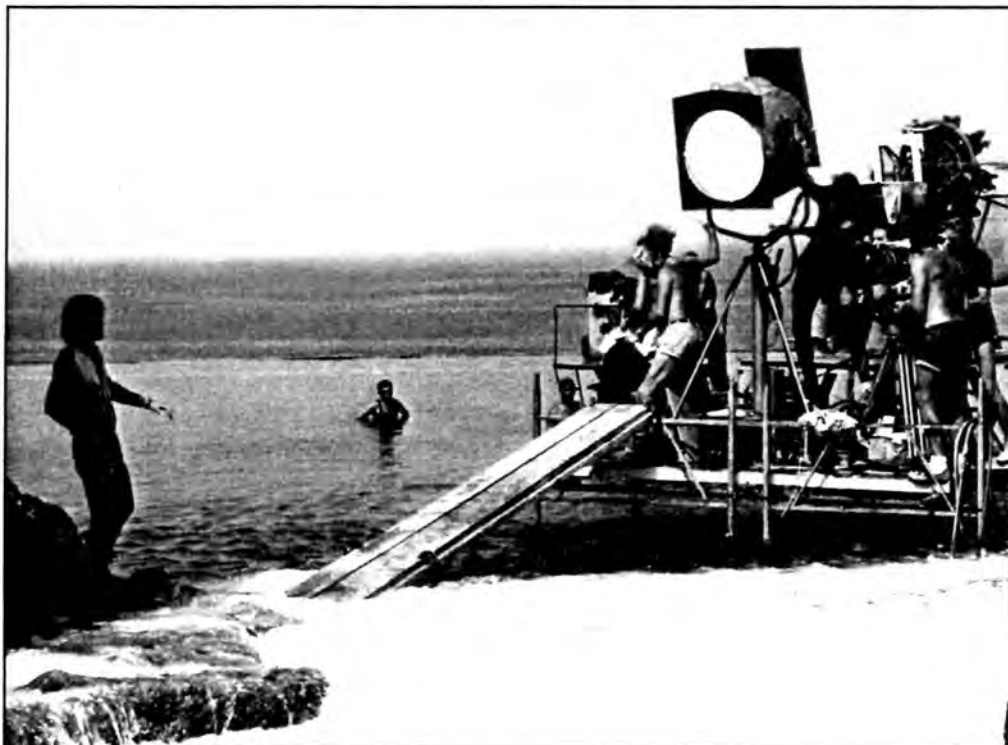
Andromeda was chained to a rocky outcrop built in the marine tank in Malta, and Desmond

Davis once again had problems getting convincing reactions from the cast to the huge, unseen monster. As he explains: "The tank in Malta had a natural horizon and the government in Malta made sure that all shipping was kept away from the area to give this clear view, although we did have one incident of a huge crane appearing in the shot. We had to get all these actors to react to the creatures and Tony Wayne, the assistant director, got a huge pole and put a flag on top of it and he became the moving eyeline. I remember Tony running up and down in a *tour de force* of directing the cast saying, 'Right over here! Up here! Over there!' and all these poor people would be reacting to a piece of flag on top of a pole. It is one of the great difficulties of doing a special effects picture, asking so much of the cast who never saw the damn monster."<sup>[75]</sup>



Beverly Cross cleverly brought the Pegasus legend into line by having the flying horse, thought killed moments before, spring from the sea at the spot where Medusa's head had been thrown. During the live action filming, the act of throwing the head wasn't as simple as it appeared. "The head was very heavy," remembered Harry Hamlin. "It was like throwing a

bowling ball. This was a heavy, wet object, that had all this real meat hanging from it. They had this big bucket of meat standing by and every time I threw it, the diver would swim and get it and Tony Wayne would shout, 'All right, get the meat on the head, let's get going.' They had to staple the meat to the bottom of the head to make it look like it had been severed." [76]



Judi Bowker recalled one change from the original script: "The only thing I remember having any disagreement about in the script was the scene, originally, where Andromeda is led off to be sacrificed. I remember that she was crying and screaming and flinging herself about, and generally making a huge fuss about it, and my feeling was that this woman is a princess, and she would never do that. However terrified she was, she would go with some sort of dignity to her probable death, and I'm glad to say I won the day. That would've been a stink [laughs]. I just found that didn't ring true to me and I thought, no, this isn't what she'd do. Especially then, with all their training and way of being." [77]



Right: Working from Ray's sketches (above), Janet Stevens sculpted one full model around three feet long. Around 1998, Stevens' mother died of a heart attack. Janet was returning from the funeral when, in a bizarre and tragic coincidence, Janet herself suffered a heart attack and died.



Lyle Conway sculpted a half-figure from the waist up, intended for closeups, but used very little. A separate Kraken was made for the disintegration scene (filmed at 96 frames-per-second) once it had been exposed to Medusa's stare.

Ray, Steve Archer and Jim Danforth all worked on the Kraken episode, and although it's not a "classic" animation sequence, it does contain several dramatically and technically brilliant moments. Bubbling sea heralds the Kraken's arrival on the scene and its hands emerge from the water one at a time, slapping onto the rocks. Bubo swooping to retrieve the cloaked head of Medusa from the waves is smoothly accomplished, as is the delivery of the bundle into Perseus' hands.

The difficulty of contact between two animated figures is multiplied when one animation element is filmed rear screen and the other filmed blue screen. With no working reference, position and timing become tricky. Two such shots occur in this last episode. First, Bubo is apparently blown by the breath of the gigantic Kraken onto the rocks. Second, and far more complex, the Kraken strikes Perseus astride Pegasus as they glide in front of his face. The match is perfect in both shots.



Above: Steve Archer animates the Kraken. Jim Danforth's three-month term ended just as Ray and Archer were completing the final few animation cuts of the Kraken. Once complete, Archer remained with Ray to pack up the equipment into storage. Archer would venture out on his own to complete impressive work on **Krull** (1983), **The Neverending Story** (1984), **The Gate 2** (1985), and considerable television work.



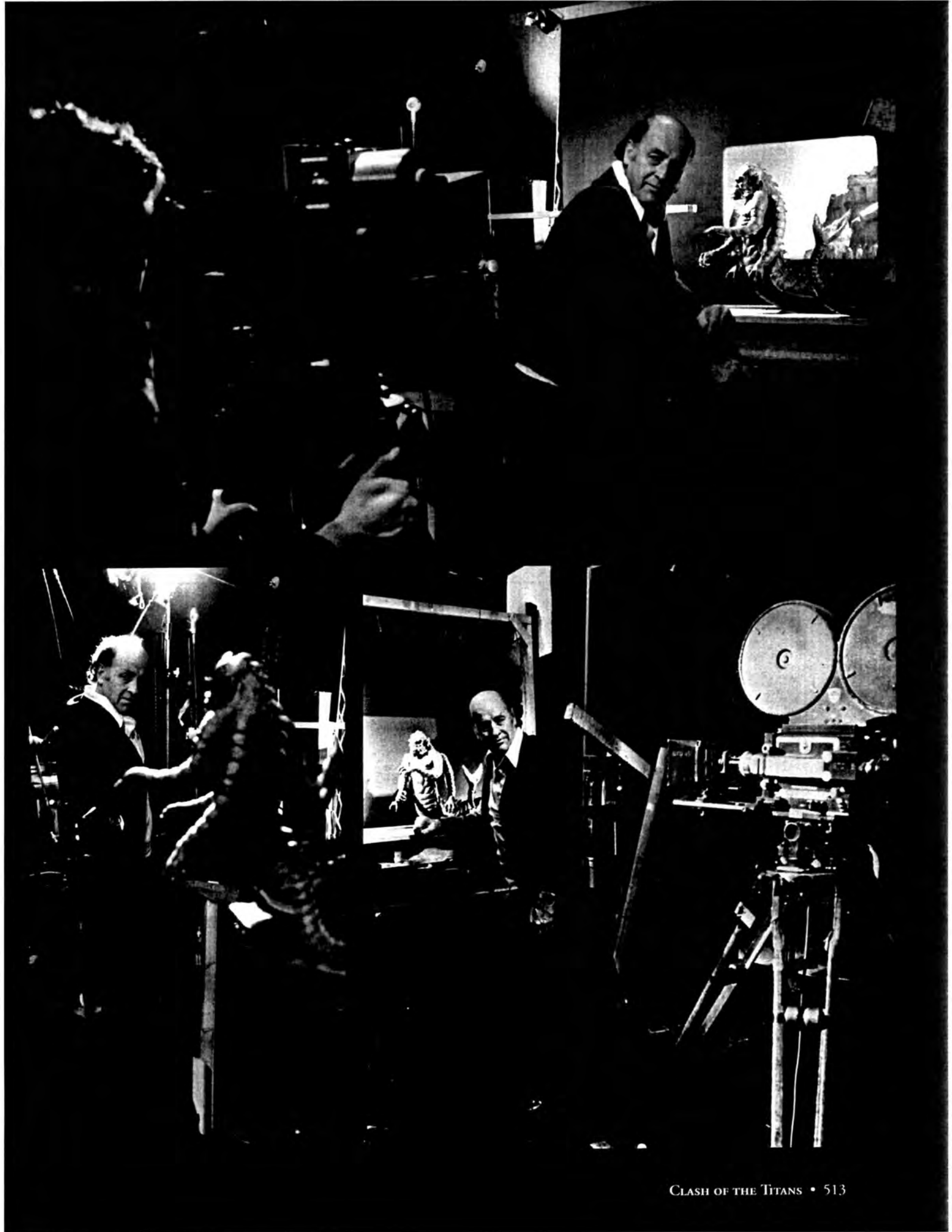
Left: An unidentified shop technician prepares a section of the plaster mold of the Kraken.



Above: Colin Arthur reunited with Ray ca. 1998 when Ray was visiting southern Spain.

Left: Colin Arthur's maquette for the 15-foot Kraken built for underwater filming during live action production.

*Bringing the  
Kraken to Life*



## The Music

**C**lash of the Titans needed and deserved music of the highest order, but also a score that would reflect the classic and spectacular nature of the story. Ray had been very impressed with John Barry's Academy Award winning music for the historical drama *The Lion in Winter* (1968), far removed from the composers recognizable sound established for the James Bond films. For the first time in any of their films, Ray and Charles were in the position to ask for a submission of a proposed score from a composer. Within a few weeks Barry submitted his basic themes, which Ray would only describe as disappointing. As this was fairly close to the completion of the film, Barry was announced as the composer on *Clash* on May 30, 1980, and early pre-release posters carried Barry's name.

Rather than gamble on a dramatic improvement, Ray and Charles decided to seek a new composer, someone with the necessary experience to compose the various romantic, spectacular and effects music required by the story. MGM suggested Laurence Rosenthal, and on November 7, 1980, it was announced that Rosenthal would replace Barry.

Laurence Rosenthal was born in Detroit, Michigan, on November 4, 1926. His musical education began at the age of three studying the piano with his mother, then formally at the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, New York, where he also took composition. He later went to Paris where he continued his studies under the highly-regarded French composer, conductor and music educator Nadia Boulanger. Further experience was gained during his military service in the Air Force at the time of the Korean War, writing music for their Documentary Film Unit, while also conducting the US Air Force Symphony Orchestra.

Laurence Rosenthal began his professional career in New York, composing for the stage, television and finally films with credits including *The Miracle Worker* (1962), *Becket* (1964), *Rooster Cogburn* (1975), and *The Island of Dr. Moreau* (1977). Rosenthal recalls how he became involved with *Clash of the Titans*: "I was doing a bit of work around the MGM studios in 1979 and had a cordial relationship with Harry Lobjewski, the head of the music department. One morning Harry rang me up and asked if I could have lunch that day with him and Charlie Schmeer, an American film producer then living in London. Charlie had a project he wanted to talk to me about. The meeting started out pretty well, although later it filled me with a certain apprehension. Schmeer, a warm and friendly man, was very enthusiastic about his film, which had just finished shooting. It was loaded, he proudly announced, with a clutch of stellar luminaries of stage and screen. Of course, one could hardly remain unimpressed by this phalanx of stars. So far, so good."

Probably the one thing that a film composer doesn't want to hear is that a producer has his own pre-conceived ideas of how he wants the music to sound. Rosenthal continues, "He informed me about the 'temp-track' they were using [a temporary music track laid in by the editors to provide a feeling of how the film will play with music]. They had underpinned the whole picture, he told me, with Richard Strauss' *Ein Heldenleben* [A Hero's Life], and they absolutely loved it. I gulped—invisibly, I hoped. Of course, I knew that score almost by heart; it is one of the staples of symphonic literature from the turn of the 20th century. And although not my favorite of Strauss's tone-poems, it is certainly a brilliant and definitive example of the post-Wagnerian orchestral epic, full of heroic hardware, soaring tunes, and opulent instrumental razzle-dazzle."

Rosenthal was intrigued by the scope the project offered, but really wanted to express his own ideas. "First of all, how in the world was I going to top one of Strauss's most overwhelming creations? But second, did I really want to do that, make a skillful copy, or what they call in Hollywood a 'sound-alike' of Richard Strauss? Sure, I knew how to do it, but why should I? I knew in my heart-of-hearts that I would accept the offer, and then I saw immediately what the challenge would be: to give Charlie Schmeer what he wanted, but at the same time to find a way to leave my own fingerprints on the score. In other words, to tread the fine line of evoking Strauss without literally imitating him and still leaving enough room for myself to keep me interested, to hear my own voice. It was a bit of a 'sticky wicket,' philosophically, and I couldn't really promise myself that I wasn't doing a bit of fancy footwork with my conscience in order to justify this action in the name of feeding my family! But so be it, I decided. For better or worse, I would forge ahead. You know how to do it, Larry, I told myself, 'So stop dithering around and just do it! Just say yes!'"

"So in I plunged and was off to London where the film had been made. I started composing almost immediately. A few days later I found, to my relief, that after detecting a few slightly Straussian bars in the main title that sort of crept in of their own accord, I soon forgot all about the old boy and just tried to blend with the sweeping, romantic, somewhat over-the-top style of the movie. It was actually fun.

"Since the timetable, as it so often does, made it impossible for me to orchestrate everything, which I always love to do when I can (it's the dessert after the meat-and-potatoes ordeal of composing), I called in my dear old friend, the incomparable Herbert Spencer, grand master of the symphonic idiom, to help. We set up in Mayfair, in two town-houses opposite each other, and the work proceeded smoothly and with great pleasure. It was wonderful to be able to walk across the road and deliver the cues to Herbie in person, and then play them for him on the piano. As always, he read my mind perfectly and his orchestrations were predictably superb.

"As for Charlie Schmeer, he cut no corners. When it came time to record the score, he asked me, 'What orchestra would you like to have?' After a slight pause of amazement, I replied, a bit timidly, 'How about the LSO [London Symphony Orchestra]?' Without a second's hesitation he said, simply: 'Done.' Of course, the LSO is the 'Rolls-Royce' of symphony orchestras and conducting them is like driving one. Unbelievable responsiveness, total precision, and magical beauty of performance. It was nothing but joy. Strangely, this music, which at the time I looked upon as a pleasant diversion from my more 'serious' enterprises, turned out to be the score of mine that many film fans remember almost more than any other.

"While the composition was going on, I often visited Ray Harryhausen's studio and discussed with him the wonderful creatures which he created for the film and the music which would correspond to them. I never got to know Ray very well, but he was always charming and delightful, exhibiting the most exuberant, boyish enthusiasm as he 'introduced' me to the figures of Pegasus and Medusa and the Kraken and the crazy little golden bird which were brought to life by his incredible stop motion animation. My association with Ray, who always came to the recording sessions, remains one of my warmest recollections of that exciting period." [80]

**10 M2 - Medusa - Part II** Rosenthal

Segue = Sequencing + (S.M.) BAR 78

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Very fast

W.W.

BR.

STR.

ff. (comp with file)

VERY FAST SLOW

mf

ORGAN Flute, very slow phase shift

tremolo

3

4

1

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STRINGS, VCLD See BAR 78

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# CLASH OF THE TITANS

## Finishing Touches and Advertising

A s production came to a close, MGM expressed concern over the original title, as Ray explained: "The film was originally to be called *Perseus and the Gorgon's Head*, but it was thought that the name Perseus would not go down well with American audiences, sounding too much like 'Percy,' and consequently, not very strong. It was Charles who came up with *Clash of the Titans*. Desmond Davis wanted simply *Titans*, but again

*Man, Myth and Titans*, on the making of the film, broadcast in May, 1981, and *The Fantasy Film World of Ray Harryhausen*, which covered his full career.

The diverse range of poster artwork commensurate with the importance of the film meant styles differed significantly from country to country. The American Brothers Hildebrandt design was dominated by the head of Medusa with only superficial likenesses of

Perseus and Andromeda. The many European artists favored an image from the closing sequence as Perseus, holding the head of Medusa while astride Pegasus, rides to the rescue of Andromeda. With the Kraken below him rising from a storm-lashed sea amid a background of dramatic sky, this is a representation of the scene as Ray had originally planned it.

The American front-of-house set of eight stills was also used in Europe and had three animation scenes that consisted of the roping of Pegasus, Perseus fighting the scorpions and a closeup of the face of Medusa. The American lobby card set unimaginatively reproduced the front-of-house stills in the same proportion, surrounded by a border that features the *Clash of the Titans* gold logo and a miniature version of the Hildebrandt poster.

*Clash of the Titans* opened June 19, 1981, and enjoyed an opening week gross for U.S. and Canada of \$9.5 million, the highest opening week for any MGM title since United

Artists began distributing MGM films in 1973. The film went on to worldwide success with a combined gross of \$70 million, and brought MGM once again to the forefront of major production companies. In Mexico, the film became the year's foreign box office champion and in London in July, 1982, Mexican ambassador Dr. Jose Juan de Olloqui presented a brass and mahogany prize to Charles Schnee and Ray Harryhausen from the Convencion de la Camara Nacional de la Industria Cinematografica.

Tim Pigott-Smith met Charles Schnee a few years later in 1983 under unusual circumstances: "Very strangely, when I was filming *The Jewel in the Crown* in India, I bumped into Charles in a place called Jodpur in Rajasthan. I was coming across a lake by boat and I stopped off at the hotel in the middle of the lake and Charlie was there. He said, 'I've got great news!' I said, 'What is it?' He said, '*Clash* is number one in Kuala Lumpur!'" [82]



the term could be misconstrued in America as referring to high-powered executives. So *Clash of the Titans* it was." [81]

Although all production work was completed on *Clash*, it would be many months before Ray finished all his duties. To publicize the film's summer release, MGM immediately sent Ray, his wife Diana, and Jeff Rovin (author of *From the Land Beyond Beyond*, a book that covers the careers of Ray, Willis O'Brien and other stop motion animators) on an extensive and exhausting 30-day, 27-state lecture tour across North America. At the official MGM press preview screening on June 6, 1981, Ray was surprised by the unexpected attendance of Fay Wray, whom he had not seen in 40 years.

Ray also had to oversee a comprehensive exhibition of his work at the Museum of Modern Art in New York. Booked initially for two months, the display was so popular that the engagement was extended to four months.

Ray also participated in the documentaries



In spite of many indifferent reviews and some that were downright hostile, the film proved to be Ray's most successful feature and prompted a flood of merchandising material: In England, *Look-In* magazine produced a large format comic book version of the story, while Futura Books published the novelization of the film by Alan Dean Foster with a center section of 13 color stills. The film was covered extensively in genre magazines, including *Cinefantastique*, *Cinemagic*,

*Famous Monsters of Filmland*, *Fangoria*, *L'Écran Fantastique*, *Médiascene Prevue* and *Starlog*. Other merchandising, probably the most extensive for any Harryhausen film, included tie-in products by Ben Cooper halloween costumes, Carlin children's toys, GAF Viewmaster packets, General Foods Post cereal in-box promotion, Pepsi-Cola, Cadbury candy, Stuart Hall school supplies, Thermos lunch box and Thermos bottle, and Western Publishing story and picture books. In addition to action figures of Perseus, Charon, Calibos, Thallo, the Kraken, and Pegasus, Mattel joined with Peter Paul Cadbury candy company to mount a \$10,000 Sweepstakes of *Clash of the Titans* prizes. Similarly, McDonald's created the first movie tie-in campaign for Australia by creating a *Clash of the Titans* sweepstakes, uniquely installing VCRs in 81 of the 116 participating restaurants to continuously run scenes from the film. For once, a soundtrack album was issued concurrently with the film's release, but with only a selection of cues. (A later CD release was identical, yet was obviously planned to include further cues, as the numbering of the tracks indicates that three are missing. The music still awaits the ultimate pressing.)



Top Ray and Charles Schnee attend the premiere of *Clash of the Titans* in Japan.

Above: Ray makes an appearance at a sci-fi convention, accompanied by Medusa.

Below: Ray explains the intricacies of animating a head full of snakes to the attendees at the Festival of Fantastic Films in Manchester, England, in 1994.

Quite unprecedented for a Harryhausen film, a promotional film containing early animation and miniature shots was screened at film conventions, fully six months before the film's release. For once, a publicity campaign was being mounted properly.

Desmond Davis, although delighted with the

success of the film, expressed his fears that this would be the last large-budget film that would showcase stop motion animation. "I believed that the process was under stress already, because frame-by-frame back projection results in tremendous quality loss. Back projection was practically dead by then, because front projection and computer compositing processes were taking over. We mustn't forget this was the time of the *Superman* films and they were using front projection and computer-controlled cameras. If you did a move on location, you could put that on computer tape and the studio camera would follow the move to match the background. They were into unbelievable sophistication. Things like *Superman* (1978) were done by a great team of thirty different special effects people, all contributing to a massive technological venture. But it was quite different for Ray, who essentially worked on his own. He conceived, designed and often built the creatures. No one else was doing that. Ray was absolutely unique. He had this incredible artistic eye. I remember seeing the skeleton fight in *Jason and the Argonauts* and I couldn't believe the consummate skill of matching seven articulated figures with a back projection image. Can you imagine the amount of concentration needed to make those figures move so beautifully?"

"The problem with the process was that some of the things he did sometimes required several dupes with traveling matte and back projection. It was the amount of duplicating that made the process show stress in terms of color degradation and grain. Frame-by-frame back projection was initially developed in the black-and-white days and the fine grain black-and-white stock stood up much better. You can dupe that quite a lot. I think technical standards are getting higher and higher, because if you look now where technology has got to, it has gone through the roof."<sup>(83)</sup>

Despite Davis' reservations, plans were already in motion for a new project that would again bring Sinbad back to the screen in his most unusual adventure. However, for the moment, any thoughts of committing to another three years of work was far from Ray's mind. Work on *Clash* had both physically and mentally drained him and it was time to take a break. In the immediate future, Ray's plans centered around Diana and Vanessa, as well as an extended trip to visit places he had longed to see. Ray couldn't possibly have imagined that this much-needed sabbatical would last longer than expected.



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CLASH OF THE TITANS



HARRY HAMLIN



JULIE BOWEN



BURGESS MEREDITH



MAGGIE SMITH



URSULA ANDRESS



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SEAN PHILLIPS FLORA ROBSON LAURENCE OLIVIER  
Produced by CHARLES H. SCHNEIDER and RAY HARRISBAUGHEN  
Directed by RAY HARRISBAUGHEN  
Screenplay by REVELLY CROSS  
Music by JOHN BARRY  
Costume Designer: BO MANDI  
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**CLASH OF THE TITANS**

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 can ever match the experience.



# CLASH OF THE TITANS

Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Presents A CHARLES H. SCHNEER Production "CLASH OF THE TITANS"  
 Starring HARRY HAMLIN as Perseus JUDI BOWKER as Andromeda BURGESS MEREDITH MAGGIE SMITH  
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 Creator of Special Visual Effects RAY HARRYHAUSEN Music by LAURENCE ROSENTHAL Written by BEVERLEY CROSS  
 Produced by CHARLES H. SCHNEER and RAY HARRYHAUSEN Directed by DESMOND DAVIS



# SOUBOJ TITANŮ

Britský film



## Notes:

1. Interview with Beverley Cross, May, 1995.
2. Interview with Ray Harryhausen, February, 1997.
3. Telephone call with Charles Schneer, May, 1994.
4. Interview with Cathy Hill, September 6, 2008.
5. Ibid.
6. Telephone call with Charles Schneer, May, 1994.
7. Interview with Harry Hamlin, June 14, 2003.
8. Interview with Desmond Davis, May, 1994.
9. Ibid.
10. Interview with Beverley Cross, May, 1995.
11. Interview with Desmond Davis by Mark F. Berry, *FilmfaxPlus* #114, April/June, 2007.
12. Interview with Beverley Cross, May, 1995.
13. Interview with Desmond Davis, May, 1994.
14. Letter to author from Burgess Meredith, July, 1995.
15. Interview with Desmond Davis, May, 1994.
16. Interview with Harry Hamlin, June 14, 2003.
17. Interview with Desmond Davis, May, 1994.
18. Interview with Brian Smithies, October, 1995.
19. Interview with Desmond Davis, May, 1994.
20. Ibid.
21. Ibid.
22. Interview with Tim Pigott-Smith, June, 1993.
23. Interview with Harry Hamlin, June 14, 2003.
24. Interview with Desmond Davis by Mark F. Berry, *FilmfaxPlus* #114, April/June, 2007.
25. Ibid.
26. Interview with Roy Field, March, 2001.
27. Interview with Desmond Davis, May, 1994.
28. Interview with Judi Bowker by Mark F. Berry, *Video Watchdog* #135, December, 2007.
29. Interview with Desmond Davis, May, 1994.
30. Optical "rock-and-roll" involves running a short section of film back and forth in the optical printer, usually when there is very little action in the scene (if the shot needs to be extended), or on a small portion of the frame in order to isolate sections of

Right: Ray Harryhausen and artist Cathy Hill at a signing at Passport Books in Burbank, California, in the early 1980s.

Below: Ray and the Kraken.

Below, right: *Heroes and Legends*: Ray Harryhausen, director Gordon Hessler, "Sinbad" John Phillip Law, and "Perseus" Harry Hamlin at the Mann's Chinese Theater special event for *Clash of the Titans* in April, 2006.



- the film to minimize registration or other problems. This technique maintains some movement of the film grain itself, avoiding a solid "freeze frame" effect. An example of "rock-and-roll" used to extend a portion of a background plate occurs in *The 7th Voyage of Sinbad* as the skeleton reaches for the sword hanging on the pillar—Kerwin Mathews and Kathryn Grant can be seen doing a slight back-and-forth "dance" step briefly in the background as the footage is lengthened to allow more time for the skeleton's action. In that case, the "rock-and-roll" was likely accomplished using the background projector during the stop motion to avoid an additional optical dupe of the background plate.
31. Interview with Brian Smithies, October, 1995.
  32. Ibid.
  33. Ibid.
  34. Interview with Colin Arthur at the London Film Museum, June 29, 2010.
  35. Ibid.
  36. Interview with Harry Hamlin, June 14, 2003.
  37. Interview with Desmond Davis, May, 1994.
  38. Ibid.
  39. Interview with Judi Bowker by Mark F. Berry, *Video Watchdog* #135, December, 2007.
  40. Interview with Desmond Davis, May, 1994.
  41. Interview with Ray Harryhausen, February, 1997.
  42. Letter to author from John Lawton, August, 1994.
  43. Interview with Brian Smithies, October, 1995.
  44. Interview with Ray Harryhausen, February, 1997.



45. Letter to author from Jim Danforth, March, 1993.
46. Letter from Harry Walton, October 14, 2008.
47. Interview with Steve Archer, May, 1984.
48. Ibid.
49. Interview with Tim Pigott-Smith, June, 1993.
50. Interview with Desmond Davis, May, 1994.
51. Interview with Judi Bowker by Mark F. Berry, *Video Watchdog* #135, December, 2007.
52. Letter to author from Jim Danforth, March, 1993.
53. Ibid.
54. Ibid.
55. Interview with Desmond Davis, May, 1994.
56. Interview with Roy Field, March, 2001.
57. Interview with Ray Harryhausen, February, 1997.
58. Ibid.
59. Interview with Beverley Cross, May, 1995.
60. Interview with Brian Smithies, October, 1995.
61. Interview with Roy Field, March, 2001.
62. Interview with Tim Pigott-Smith, June, 1993.
63. Interview with Harry Hamlin, June 14, 2003.
64. Interview with Desmond Davis, May, 1994.
65. Interview with Ray Harryhausen, February, 1997.
66. Ibid.
67. Mark A. Miller, "Dark Winds of Fatalism: *The Gorgon*," *Monsters From the Vault* Vol. 3, #5, Fall, 1997.
68. Interview with Ray Harryhausen, February, 1997.
69. Ibid.
70. Interview with Harry Hamlin, June 14, 2003.
71. Interview with Ray Harryhausen, February, 1997.
72. Interview with Harry Hamlin, June 14, 2003.
73. Interview with Beverley Cross, May, 1995.
74. Interview with Ray Harryhausen, February, 1997.
75. Interview with Desmond Davis, May, 1994.
76. Interview with Harry Hamlin, June 14, 2003.
77. Interview with Judi Bowker by Mark F. Berry, *Video Watchdog* #135, December, 2007.
78. Interview with Laurence Rosenthal, February, 2009.
79. Ibid.
80. Ibid.
81. Interview with Ray Harryhausen, February, 1997.
82. Interview with Tim Pigott-Smith, June, 1993.
83. Interview with Desmond Davis, May, 1994.





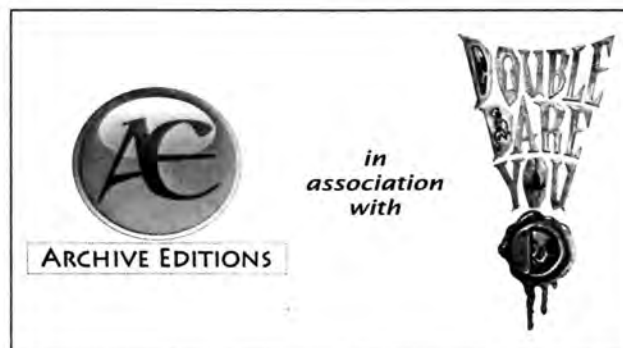
# Ray Harryhausen Master of the Majicks

By Mike Hankin



## Volume 3: The British Films

*The Three Worlds of Gulliver, Mysterious Island, Jason and the Argonauts, First Men "In" the Moon, One Million Years B.C., The Valley of Gwangi, The Golden Voyage of Sinbad, Sinbad and the Eye of the Tiger, Clash of the Titans*



Published in the United States by  
**Archive Editions, LLC**  
P.O. Box 39A04  
Los Angeles, CA 90039  
www.archive-editions.com  
info@archive-editions.com

Publisher / Editor  
**Ernest Farino**

Executive Publisher  
**Guillermo del Toro**

Associate Publishers  
**Jay Duncan**  
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Editorial Consultants  
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Additional Photo Scanning  
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ISBN 978-0-9817829-1-1

Ray Harryhausen—Master of the Majicks was created using  
Apple® Macintosh® computers. Layout & design was completed using Adobe® InDesign®.  
Primary typefaces are Palatino and Lucida Grande (text), Adobe® Garamond (headlines),  
and Gill Sans (captions).

Printed in China