

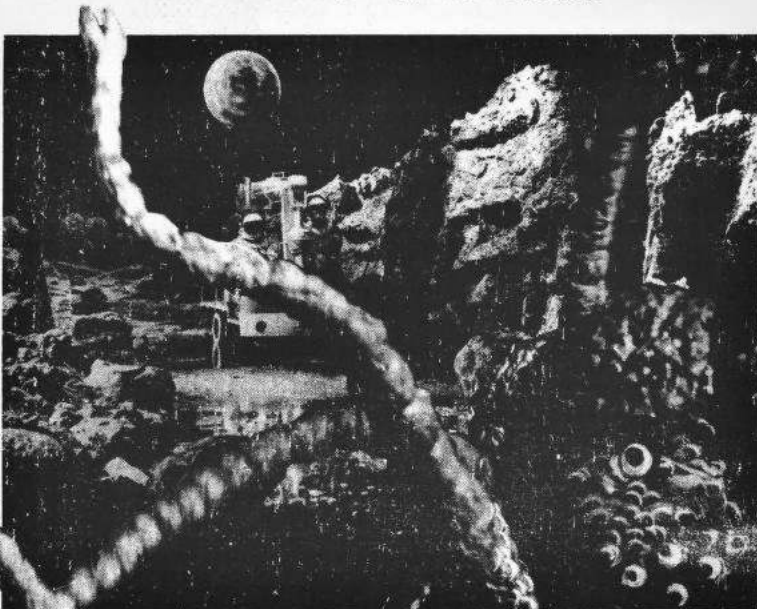
The Green Slime

This space lady is really in trouble... not only does she have a fishbowl on her head, but she's being hotly pursued by an amorous Green Slime who can't keep his tentacles to himself. From one of the many exciting, epic scenes that appear in the pressbook but not in the film.

Although, as we all know, Slime waits for no man, TMT reporter M.C. Richards somehow managed to catch up to the stars of this article. The Slime in question are of the green variety, which, it may be noted, is also the color of money—and money is the key word in the history of our slimy heroes. The producers of this film really had the slime of their lives conducting the ad campaign, which ranks as one of the loudest, most obnoxious campaigns ever to give monsters a bad name. M.C. fills you in on all the down & dirty details herewith...

THE GREEN SLIME
BY M.C. RICHARDS

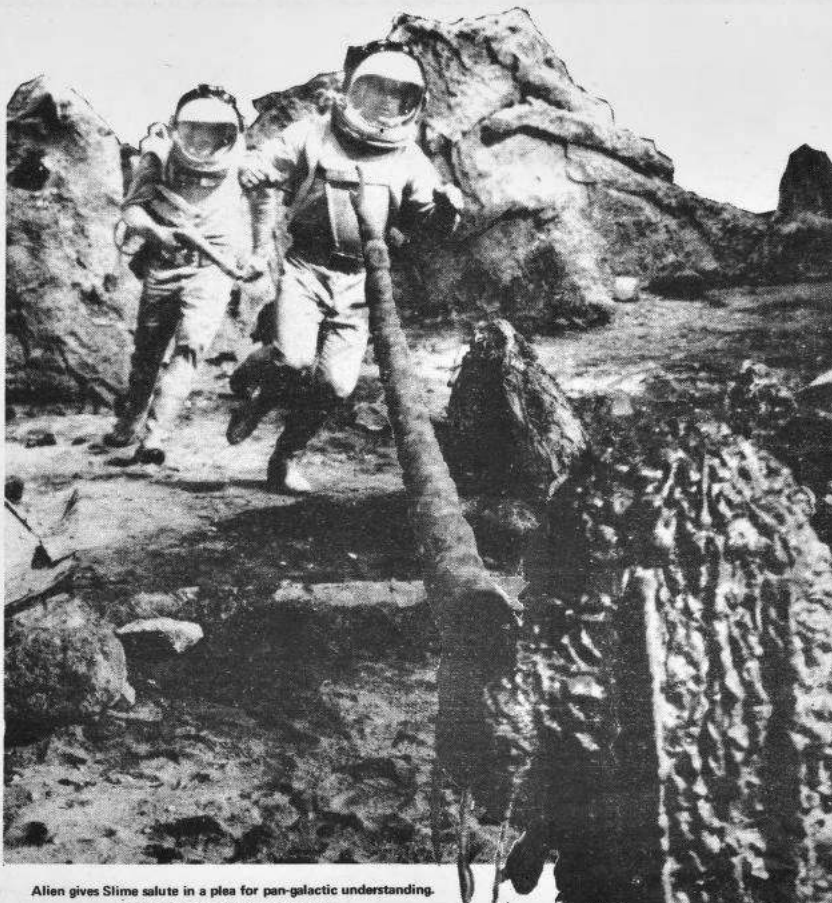
Since the release of GODZILLA, KING OF THE MONSTERS back in 1956, American movie-goers have been barraged by an unending deluge of assorted aliens, creatures, and what-nots from those wonderful people who originally brought us Pearl Harbor—the Japanese. But that's not meant as a slur against our current ally... just against their monster films



Spacemen approach one of scores of Green Slime that have overrun the Gamma III space station. The Slime invasion almost makes the earthly roach problem pale by comparison.

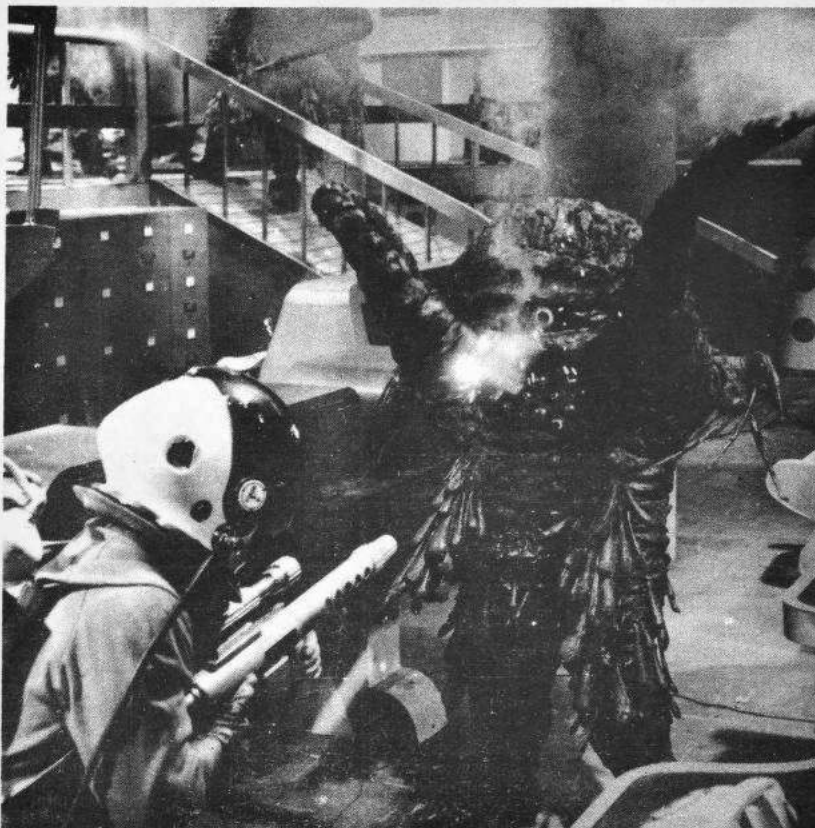
which have been, for the most part, abysmally bad! One might make a case for the first **GODZILLA**, its gloomy black and white photography, half-way intelligent script (and not entirely old-hat in those days), and dour-faced Raymond Burr (whose sequences were skillfully integrated into the American sequences) making it far and away the best of the island nation's monster movies. And the early color films, **RODAN**, **THE FLYING MONSTER** and **THE MYSTERIANS**, weren't half-bad either. But by and large, these films have consisted of men in childish designed monster outfits trampling through those expertly-constructed miniature cities in the vaguest excuse for a script.

One film which sought to escape this mold was a 1967 American-Japanese co-production which was originally titled **INVADERS FROM BEYOND THE STARS** and which saw release in Japan as **BATTLE BEYOND THE STARS**. Two years went by before M-G-M decided to pick the effort up for American release. The country was enjoying a fad which was known as "camp" originally started by the "Batman" television show more than anything else, in which something which was once considered serious was now considered outrageously funny and hammed up all the more for laughs. Thus, M-G-M decided the best way to promote **BATTLE BEYOND THE STARS** was to first get rid of that semi-literate title and replace it with something moronic but catchy, so they came up with **THE GREEN SLIME**, something which lended itself easily to the saturation campaign the whiz boys in the M-G-M publicity department dreamed up.



Alien gives Slime salute in a plea for pan-galactic understanding. Needless to say, it went unheeded.

"Don't shoot until you see the green of their slime," orders armed astronaut as Slime advances. The Slime, however, were capable of producing more of their kind from drops of their own "blood."



SLIME SELLS

Realizing they had a bad film which might garner millions if they played their cards right, M-G-M designed a special "Green Slime Go-Get 'Em Fright Kit" for theater owners which promised to wreak havoc in any community, strike abject terror into the hearts of giants, and "incite a riot in their box office!" This stupendous kit included "galling Green Slime bumper stickers," "teeth-gnashing stencils" so that the local sidewalkers would serve as a free ad for the film with slogans such as, "The Green Slime Are Coming!" or "The Green Slime Are Here!" This particular idea was extensively used to render New York City sidewalks all the more ugly during the film's premiere in that city. Then for the "teeny boppers, college kids and simply wacked-out theater patrons" (notice the utter contempt!) theaters could hand out "greasy, goggling, high-camp, pop-art" buttons, these being round tin buttons painted green with Green Slime slogans on them. Guaranteed to "nauseate the nefarious" were the creepy-crawly rubbery Green Slime toys resembling an octopus and just the type of thing normal American boys enjoy dangling in front of little American girls. And what could be better than to distribute these little knick-knacks through a *Miss Green Slime!* Yes, the promotion boys came up with the brilliant idea of having a beauty contest with the winner rewarded with that lovely name.

Going completely overboard, M-G-M released a record single featuring the film's rock theme which swept the country (unfortunately, the country was Poland), and suggested a new dance craze appropriately named "The Green Slime Two-Step." Wow, eh? With all this gosh-wow advance publicity going for it,

one might have expected that **THE GREEN SLIME** would clean up at the box office. I remember seeing it at the New York City theater during the afternoon of the first weekend it opened along with nine other individuals who had somehow wandered in. Evidently, most people saw through the film's quality in spite of the campaign, but being the completist I was, I had to see if the film was really that rotten. It was.

THE SLIME OF THEIR LIVES

THE GREEN SLIME was filmed in Japan with a crew predominantly from that country but with a totally Caucasian cast. Heading this monumental film was *Robert Horton*. Some of you may remember him from the old "Wagon Train" series where he made a pretty big name for himself in the late fifties; he thought he was headed for bigger and better things—winding up in **THE GREEN SLIME** seems to show that, somewhere along the line, things took a turn for the worst in his career. What would any monster film of this type be without a bosomy heroine? In this case, our starlet was *Luciana Paluzzi*, who nearly did in James Bond in **THUNDERBALL**, and romanced her way through another M-G-M release of the time—**CAPTAIN NEMO AND THE UNDERWATER CITY**. Winding up the stars was *Richard Jaeckel* who has, luckily for him, gone on to better things since this film was made.

Briefly, the film opens with the news that a giant asteroid, loosened from its

This must be the Green Slime Two-Step the pressbook talks about: "Promote a groovy, intergalactic dance contest," the Slime advertisers advised, "with your leading sub-teen, gum-chomping top 40 R&R radio station to find the young couple exhibiting the most mind-expanding rendition of the **GREEN SLIME TWO-STEP**, (known in leading interplanetary circles as the 'GASHTLY (sic), INTERGALACTIC GREEN SLIME GIG')." With the increase in the birth rate, the Slime campaigners apparently were counting on there being a good deal more than a single sucker born every minute . . . but, fortunately, they miscalculated.



This man has seen the future . . . his own, at least, and it's not very bright. But then neither was the movie.

orbit, is headed for a fatal collision with Earth a la the good old days of **WHEN WORLDS COLLIDE**. Since the film takes place some time in the not-too-distant future, the various nations have constructed a space station, a giant wheel called Gamma III. The world's scientists brilliantly deduce that the only way to prevent the asteroid from striking Earth is by destroying it before it comes in contact with our world. For this job, they select James Rankin (*Robert Horton*), who is the typical semi-cynical handsome space jockey (*who in normal circumstances you wouldn't let take you across town in a cab*), to destroy it. Rankin arrives at Gamma III and there the secondary story nonsense gets underway. Seems like Rankin and femme Doctor Lisa Benson had a thing going, but that they broke up and now she loves the commander of the space wheel, Vince Elliot (*Richard Jaeckel*). Rankin and Elliot, formerly good friends, are now bitter rivals and Rankin's being placed in charge of this important mission doesn't set well with Elliot who believes he should get the chance to be the big man in this flick.

A space crew headed by Rankin blasts off to eventually land on the giant asteroid and here we get a sampling of the superb special effects consistent throughout the remainder of the film—unrealistic toy spaceships which rate little better than those old corn-poppers seen in the **FLASH GORDON** serials, and an asteroid which is nothing more than a small one-room sound stage with a few greenish rocks and an ugly-looking swamp. As Rankin and the others prepare to blow up the huge rock, Doctor Halvorson (*Ted Gunther*) ventures away from the party to explore the surroundings and comes upon the aforementioned swamp in which he discovers . . . yep, the green slime. And that's what they are—slime . . . the type in which you find tadpole eggs in your own local mire. Only there's one

difference, this slime is moving . . . they're alive! As might be expected, Halvorson carelessly allows some of this organism to become adhered to his space suit.

SLIME MARCHES ON

Working against a split-second time limit, Rankin and his crew manage to set the charges and escape from the planet of the slimes moments before it is blown to smithereens, and return to Gamma III where their uniforms are placed in a special cleansing chamber to be decontaminated. We have a moment or two of suspense reminiscent of the melting of "The Thing" in the film of the same name, as the green slime grows into an eight-foot creature which kills a couple of crewmen before moving on to destroy the rest of the humans. Halvorson is killed in the first encounter, and typical of every monster film ever made, standard weapons prove ineffective in combating the menace. In fact, for every drop of green blood the creature drips, a new monster develops. It isn't long before there are a dozen of the slimes running about. Finally, Rankin and Elliot are united against a common enemy, resolve their silly rivalry, and decide to blow up the entire multi-billion dollar space wheel to destroy the creatures. In short, they do, Elliot giving his life (thereby leaving the door open for Rankin and Lisa to continue their romancing), and the film mercifully concludes with the miniature space wheel and little green slime models catching fire and hurtling towards oblivion. Unfortunately, the film didn't meet a fate of a similar kind.

But in case you missed this classic science fiction film, do not despair! It has recently been sold to television. Our advice: if you're occupied in transplanting Venus Fly-Traps, twiddling your thumbs, or if you're involved in something really important—like reading back issues of **MT**—then our advice is to forget this film. It just might go away. ■