FILMFAX
The Magazine of Unusual Film & Television

Silent Expressionist
CONRAD VEIDT
from
THE MAN WHO LAUGHS to THE CABINET OF DR. CALIGARI and Beyond...

AIP Producer
JAMES H. NICHOLSON
The Man Who Helped Redefine the '50s "Drive-In Double Feature"

WILLIAM CAMPBELL on "Star Trek" • LINDA HARRISON on "Planet of the Apes" • KITTY DeHOYOS on Mexican Horror • Behind-the-Scenes on FRITZ LANG's SF Classic "Frau Im Mond" • ELINOR DONAHUE on '50s TV • "War of the Worlds" on DVD & LD
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Cover Artwork by HARLEY BROWN
INDA HARRISON WILL ALWAYS BE REMEMBERED AS THE beauty among the beasts. She left an indelible impression on 60s moviegoers as the mute Nova, opposite Charlton Heston's lost astronaut, Taylor in the classic sf films, Planet of the Apes (1968) and Beneath the Planet of the Apes (1970). With her long, dark hair and big, brown eyes, Linda had the perfect qualities to bring Nova to life on the big screen. "Nova means new," reminds Linda, with a twinkle in her eye. "I felt very comfortable playing her. I didn't even have to audition. Dick told me I had the look they wanted." Dick is Richard Zanuck, then-head of 20th Century-Fox. It was on the Fox lot that Linda met Zanuck, whom she married in 1969.

Linda Harrison was born in Berlin, Maryland. As a child, she began taking acrobatics, ballet, and dancing. When she was 12 years old, she won the Miss Delmarva Talent Contest and, at age 16, won her first beauty crown as Miss Berlin. After a brief career as a photography model, in New York City, Linda returned home and won the Miss Maryland contest, which resulted in a trip out west for the finals in the Miss International contest. "I was voted first runner-up in the U.S. portion of the contest," remembers Linda. Mike Medavoy, at that time, was a young agent, and came up to me and said I should be in movies. He took me over to 20th Century-Fox for a screen test. They liked me, and signed me to a contract." Linda made her film debut in a small role in Way...Way Out (1966) with Jerry Lewis (whom Linda describes as being "an interesting, eccentric kind of a guy"). She was featured more prominently in her next film, the hit satire A Guide for the Married Man (1967) starring Walter Matthau and Robert Morse.
Zanuck then handed Linda the part she will always be remembered for: Nova in *Planet of the Apes*. Based on a novel by Pierre Boulle (and with a script by Rod Serling and Michael Wilson), the film became a huge box office hit. It received two Academy Award nominations (for scoring and costume design) and won a special Oscar for John Chambers's make-up creations.

After hurtling through space for over 2,000 years, four astronauts land on a planet where humans are mute primitives, and apes are their masters. Of the space travelers, only Taylor (Charlton Heston) survives, but he is shot in the throat by the gorillas who are hunting humans. He is taken to Ape City (along with a woman he dubs Nova) where he tries to convince a sympathetic psychologist, Dr. Zira (Kim Hunter) and her archaeologist fiancé, Dr. Cornelius (Roddy McDowall) of his intelligence. When he regains his speech, he proves his superiority, but is thwarted by Dr. Zaius (Maurice Evans) who has always been aware of man's reputation as the harbinger of death. The film climaxes in the Forbidden Zone with Taylor proving that the apes evolved from humans. He goes off with Nova, only to discover the horrible truth: the planet of the apes is actually Earth, whose civilization was destroyed by man. ("You blew it up! Damn you! Damn you to hell!")

Linda quickly agreed to reprise her role of Nova in the sequel, *Beneath the Planet of the Apes*, because: "I was to be featured more prominently in this so, as an actress, that suited me just fine." Heston, however, would only agree to five days' work because he felt a sequel was a bad idea. James Franciscus was then cast as astronaut Brent, who is sent to find Taylor and his crew. What he finds is a planet of angry apes ("The only good human is a dead human!") and Nova, sans Taylor. As Brent and Nova venture beneath the planet, they discover the ruins of New York City inhabited by a race of masked, telepathic human mutants who worship the Atom Bomb. After reuniting with the missing Taylor, Nova is sadly gunned down by the invading apes. The battle between ape and human ends with the world being blown to bits, killing everyone. Or so it seemed. One year later, *Escape from the Planet of the Apes* hit the big screens, followed by two additional sequels, a prime time TV series, and a Saturday morning animated series.

After production wrapped on *Beneath the Planet of the Apes* in 1969, Linda married Dick Zanuck. She then was cast as one of a trio of starlets working at a movie studio, in the TV series *Bracken's World*. When the series was cancelled in January 1971, Linda took some time off to have children, but her marriage to Zanuck was on the rocks. She returned to acting in 1974, using the name "Augusta Summerland." She was one of the passengers.


Top left: Nova (Linda Harrison) and Brent (James Franciscus) witness a ceremony in worship of an atomic bomb in *Beneath the Planet of the Apes* (1971). Bottom right: Late-'60s publicity photo of the lovely Linda Harrison.
trapped on a disabled airliner in *Airport 1975,* and also did a couple of series guest shots on *Barnaby Jones* and *Switch.* After divorcing Zanuck in 1978, Harrison abandoned acting to regroup. She returned to the big screen in another sf feature, *Cocoon* (1985) playing Wilford Brimley and Maureen Stapleton's doting daughter, and reprised the role in *Cocoon: The Return* (1988).

Today, Linda Harrison is still a strikingly beautiful, charming woman. She has resettled in California after spending a number of years in her home state of Maryland. Linda still yearns to act, but her family—and her new role as real estate agent—keep her busy. "I've also begun doing autograph shows and conventions," says Linda enthusiastically. "My fans have ignited my self-esteem. They believe in me, and are always asking when am I going to be in another picture. I can't tell you how wonderful it is to have their support."

**FAX:** How was it working for Richard Zanuck?

**HARRISON:** It was neat being under his tutelage. He was a tremendous head of the studio. He was full of energy and drive. Dick tended to bring in all of his people. And everybody worked very closely—the talent, the directors, the crews, and the screenwriters. It was like a big family.

**FAX:** What was your first acting job with Fox?  

**HARRISON:** I did a TV pilot called *Men Against Evil* which later became a series called *Felony Squad,* with Dennis Cole and Howard Duff. I played a biker chick. My first spoken lines were, "Go, man, go!" Then, right after that, I did an episode of *Batman.* I played a cheerleader. I remember that they got us up around 6:00 a.m. and started working us out. Cheerleading is very arduous, physically. I said to the teacher that if you work us too hard, we wouldn't have any energy left for the shot. By the time we did the shot, at 5:00 in the afternoon, I was so exhausted that I fell over. My legs gave out. But they kept the shot anyway! Then the teacher reported me to the head of the talent school, and said I was being difficult. I was so sore that Dick had to carry me up the steps to my home.

**FAX:** It has been written that you screen-tested for the role of Dr. Zira in *Planet of the Apes.*

**HARRISON:** I really didn't test for the part of Zira, but was used as a model for the make-up. That's what contract players did back then. You were being paid a weekly salary so, sometimes you had to do things like this. The studio heads wanted to see if the make-up was doable. At that point they hadn't green-lighted *Planet of the Apes* yet.

**FAX:** What was the make-up process like?

**HARRISON:** I had to lay back and be perfectly still as they put this plaster mold on my face. You had to know how to control your body, which I did, because of my training as an acrobat. The whole process took about three hours.

**FAX:** Was it more difficult playing a mute character, since you could only emote with your facial expressions?

**HARRISON:** They say it is more difficult but I think, for me, it was easier, and the best way for me to go. Being a relatively new actress—at 21 years old—I had the quality for the part. That's what the audience sees. It worked out perfectly.

**FAX:** Did you enjoy working with Charlton Heston?

**HARRISON:** He had a quiet quality about him. Charlton was gentle, and was always looking after me. He taught me how to favor the camera. As an actor, I was someone he kind of took under his wing, which was good for the film. Sometimes, simple things like that transfer to the screen, and are very dramatic.

**FAX:** How was your relationship with Roddy McDowall and Kim Hunter?

**HARRISON:** They were great people and fabulous trouper. I'm not just saying that; they were pros. They had a difficult time with all that make-up. And they had to report to the set at 3:00 a.m. Roddy was also a photographer, and he was always taking pictures.

**FAX:** Was it a bit difficult or dangerous for you, filming the apes' first scene, as they hunt the humans?

**HARRISON:** Being young, you don't realize what is difficult, you just do what is asked, because you have this omnipotence about you. We had the humans running one way, some apes beating the bushes, and...
Jim Franciscur was more of a
cerebral guy. He was an Ivy
League graduate, and was
more mental rather than inspi-
rationals. I thought Charlton was
a more caring and special guy.

FAX: Nova gets to speak her
first word in *Beneath the Plan-
et of the Apes.*

HARRISON: That's right. She
says, "Taylor." Nova was very
loyal to him. They bonded, and
he was her man. That was
Endearing quality about the
character. She never forgot him.

FAX: Were there any differenc-
es between shooting the first
picture and the sequel?

HARRISON: It was more re-
laxed on *Beneath the Planet of the Apes* due to
director Ted Post. Also, for me, it was a more physi-
cal shot. I had to ride a horse, and there was lots
more running and being
chased by the apes. At one
point, I was racing down this
hill, and one of the stunt guys
tried to jump in and stop me.
I had picked up too much speed
and couldn't stop.

FAX: Were you happy with the
sequel?

HARRISON: Yeah, that was fun.
But it wasn't like the first pic-
ture. Though Ted Post was a
wonderful TV director, he
wasn't a Franklin Schaffner.

FAX: The Earth is destroyed at
the end of *Beneath the Planet
of the Apes.* Were you sur-
priised that the producers devised
another sequel?

HARRISON: No, because the
films were so different and special.
When you have a real-
ly good subject matter
that takes off, you tend
to do sequels.

FAX: Why did you agree to play the role of
Pauline in the TV series *Bracken's World?*

HARRISON: Because I
could be beautiful, I had
to speak, and be more like my-
self. But they kept tell-
ing me, "Linda, you
must memorize your
lines." (Laughs) I wasn't
used to having any.

FAX: What prompted you to return to work, a
few years later?

HARRISON: I realized that, as much as I was
an idealistic wife and mother, I also needed
that acting outlet. That brought some conflict in my
marriage. Dick didn't want me to work anymore. He
had problems with me being an actress.

FAX: Why did you use the name Augusta Summer-
land?

HARRISON: In the interim, I met this guru who helped
me deal with my conflicts. He was a very powerful
man, and had a great influence over me. But he had
some funny little ideas for everything.

FAX: You would have been perfect to play Roy
Scheider's wife in *Jaws.* Why didn't Dick offer you
the part? ⇒ 91
HARRISON: I had the part. Then I had to give it up to Lorraine Gary, who was married to Sid Sheinberg. He was the head of Universal Pictures, and promised her the part. So Dick called me from Martha’s Vineyard and said, “You won’t believe this, but Spielberg promised Sheinberg he’d use Lorraine as the wife.” He told me to let her have the part, and he’d find me another one, which he did, in *Airport 1975.*

FAX: After being away from acting for ten years, how did you land the role in *Cocoon*?

HARRISON: I was studying with an acting teacher, and we had a showcase. I invited Dick and his new wife, Lili Fini. They told me I did a real good job. And Dick said that there might be a part for me in *Cocoon.* I auditioned, and got it.

FAX: Did you enjoy working with director Ron Howard on *Cocoon*?

HARRISON: I liked working with him greatly. Ron’s a natural, and has lots of integrity. He’d be directing a scene, and have us be exactly as we are. I loved that. He’s a terrific human being, and it shows in his work.

FAX: Have you been actively pursuing acting work?

HARRISON: Yes, because I like meeting people. That’s why I’ve become a real estate agent. I like shifting gears. I like acting, because it’s a present-moment thing, and you enter into another sphere. It shows flexibility. It’s a creative medium I love working in. When the creative medium is allowed to express itself, it helps us to grow as human beings.

FAX: Are your sons involved in the film business?

HARRISON: My oldest son is Harrison Richard, and the younger one is Dean Francis. Harrison loves computers, and has worked his way up to Visual Effects Coordinator on *Deep Impact* after working in various jobs on other films. Dean has worked as a production assistant on *Clean Slate, Mulholland Falls,* and *Apollo 13,* among others. He currently is the Vice-President of Creative Affairs at Zancuck & Co. And together, they have just finished writing a screenplay.

It’s a science-fiction story.

FAX: Is there a part for you?

HARRISON: There better be a part for me! (Laughs) I’ve told them enough times that I feel like a Jewish mom.

FAX: What does the future hold for Linda Harrison?

HARRISON: I believe everyone has a path of destiny. Whatever is on that path, you have to accept it. It’s the best thing for you. I love to work as an actress, and I really think I will again. And I’ll do some wonderful things. There are just so many things I want to do.

FAX: No matter what roles you play in the future, you’ll always be remembered as Nova.

HARRISON: I’m happy to be remembered for that part. Nova was a terrific character. I think people will want to know more about her. The audiences are getting more sensitive, and they’re observing *Planet of the Apes,* and realizing the sensitivity in that movie. And it was science fiction, which is really my consciousness, because I love space. I’m very Aquarian that way.