Tonight for Halloween we offer you a triple bill of sinister simians ... three apes with human brains, three mad (or at least enthusiastic) scientists, two uncooperative directors on the way up, and one former notable on the way out. Even in their day these were hardly "real" horror films, although they were sold as such. Today of course their horror content will seem mild indeed, but we think you'll enjoy them as slick, well-made Grand Guignol melodramas, each one of them similar in running time, but otherwise typical of the different production methods and "look" of the studio that made them.

THE MONSTER AND THE GIRL (Paramount, 1941) Directed by Stuart Heisler; produced by Jack Moss; Screenplay by Stuart Anthony; Camera, Victor Milner; 65 mins.
"The Monster and the Girl" was one of a quartet of horror films (two "A's", "Dr. Cyclops" and "The Mad Doctor", and two "B's", "Among the Living" and this one) that Paramount made in the early 40's to cash in on the new cycle of horror films launched the year before with "Son of Frankenstein". "Among the Living", a superior work also directed by interesting new director Stuart Heisler was by far the best of the group. As a horror film, "The Monster and the Girl" is the weakest. The horror element of the plot is delayed too long, the murders are repetitious and without variety, and it could really use a good atmospheric musical score. But it isn't all bad, for it deals with white slavery, and is a glorious thumbing of the nose at the censors and the Production Code Office. If you can study it carefully and you'll see that there isn't a word - that would show up in the script - that gives the game away. Everything is done by suggestion, by visuals, and the words that are not spoken. It's obvious for example that there's something untoward about the wedding ceremony when one notices a gun protruding from the minister's hip pocket. Unosopisticated horror fans in the 40's may have been shocked by this, wondering why this apparently huge syndicate of crime was spending so much to kidnap a mild girl (and perhaps also wondering where their money came from). But it's fast, fun, the plot isn't bad, and the cast is exceptionally strong, including Philip Terry, one of the Joan Crawford husbands, and those dear old genre reliable stars, George Zucco and Edward Van Sloan. It's not as good as Karloff's earlier "The Walking Dead", which it greatly resembles, but it's a fascinating curio.

CAPTIVE WILD WOMAN (Universal, 1943) Directed by Edward Dmytryk; produced by Ben Pivar; Screenplay by Henry Sucher and Griffin Jay from a story by Ted Fethian and Maurice Pivar; Camera, George Robinson; 61 mins.
With: John Carradine, Evelyn Ankers, Aqauanetta, Milburn Stone, Lloyd Cerrigan, Fay Helm, Martha MacVicar, Vino Bannatt.

After 1942's "The Ghost of Frankenstein", Universal lost serious interest in their horror films and began to assemble-line produce them with almost the standards of a rock picture, all about the remains fun. "Captive Wild Woman" was an attempt to introduce a new monster in Pauln the Ape Woman, who lasted through only two sequels, "Jungle Woman" and "Jungle Captive". Like the Mummy, there just wasn't enough variety in what she could do, and the two sequels didn't even bother to stimulate much interest in her background. Assuming that her following had seen the prior film, she was introduced casually, lying on a slab in the morgue, and the story picked up immediately as part of the same ongoing saga. This first attempt at making a monster picture gave John Carradine some genuinely classic dialogue. At one point he is discussing his (perfectly sound) experiments in quite reasonable terms and without batton an eyelid seques into a recital as to how out of all this will come the super-beings of the future. It's a deathless moment. Production values are helped by liberal chunks of circus footage from the old Clyde Beatty circus film "The Big Cage", with Milburn Stone very admirably cut in with shots of Beatty and his lions. (So much Beatty footage was used that Universal tactfully gave him a credit thanking him, "to whom this film is dedicated") How will this footage be lifted and used? (You'll see next Summer, when we plan to run "The Big Cage").

DR. REINHARD'S SECRET (20th Century Fox, 1942) Directed by Harry Lachman; produced by Sol Wurtzel; Screenplay by William Bruckner and Robert Metzler; suggested by "Rahmou" by Gaston Leroux; Camera, Virgil Miller; Art Direction, Richard Day and Nathan Juran; 58 mins.

20th Century Fox always put tremendous production values into their B movies, and this one boasting excellent sets, art direction (by one of von Stroheim's favorite designers) and camerawork has the glossy look of much bigger films like "The Lodger". The last film of director Harry Lachman ("Dante's Inferno") it's also in a way a sequel to two of the lost silent horror films - "D'Alma" from France in 1915, and Fox's 1927 "The Wizard", both based on the Gaston Leroux original. (The American silent, with Gustav von Seyffertitz as the scientist, had a great deal of comedy in it, and may not be superior to this final version, much as we'd love to see it to find out). For the second time in one night, George Zucco muddles in things Man Has No Right To Know, and J. Carroll Naish is the result.

William K. Everson.