

Top 100 Sci-Fi Movies

Gary Gerani

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Gary Gerani : Top 100 Sci-Fi Movies before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Top 100 Sci-Fi Movies:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Top 100 Sci-Fi Movies is every bit Gary Gerani's love letter to the genre. By Doyle Elmos Collins Gerani carefully picks and rates 100 magnificent Sci-Fi movies. I'm getting a chill just thumbing through it right now, I cannot disagree with his choices for his top ten. However Gerani is not perfect. It is wonderful that he included DUNE against the wishes of his friends; well then he should have included LIFEFORCE, a similarly undeservedly maligned movie. Also he is quite wrong about the "cables holding up the [Martian war] machines [being] painfully visible" in THE WAR OF THE WORLDS (1953). In fact, I am seriously disappointed in Gerani for either (1) not knowing the facts or (2) not doing his research, or (3) knowingly misspeaking for the sake of younger viewers whose only experience with the movie is on disc. The cables were NOT visible in the original Technicolor prints due to three-strip Technicolor's inherent subdued resolution and the fact that the cinematography of

the battle scenes were dark. Between the darkness and the slightly diminished resolution, the wires blurred a little and were rendered invisible in the original run of the film from 1953 to the mid-1960s. This was carefully planned out by the effects team that went on to win the Academy Award. However, beginning in the late 1960s, for reasons of both economy and ease of handling, *The War of the Worlds* prints were commonly struck (that is, copied) onto the one-strip industrial strength Eastman Color film stock, which was much easier to use than Technicolor. But Eastman Color had almost no blurring effect and also tended to be brighter with higher resolution than the Technicolor prints. As a result the carefully hidden wires of the 1950s version of the movie suddenly popped into plain sight, so that some late 60s theater audiences laughed out loud. It's utterly astonishing to me that nobody noticed the problem or fixed the problem. To make matters worse, transferring the Eastman Color prints onto Laserdisc and DVD only accentuated the problem due to the discs inherent higher-resolution. Again, where were the technicians who should have seen the problem and who should have fixed it? But nothing was done and this crown jewel of a movie was allowed to be perceived as defective when in fact it was not so originally. As a result, severe criticism of the visible wires is commonplace amongst the critical community today by critics who really ought to know that the wires were not visible during the original showings in the 50s. Gerani should have known this and he should have added a caveat saying something like "Unfortunately the wires that were invisible in the original 1950s prints have become visible due to the higher resolution of modern media, through no fault of the filmmakers." Furthermore, steps should be made to remove the wires in future disc releases. Wire removal is commonplace today and should be implemented to bring the movie back to the gorgeous wire-free film its filmmakers intended. Somebody at Paramount Pictures needs to know about this and act on it. This is discussed in more detail in the new book *Mars in the Movies: A History* which references Gerani's *Top 100 Sci-Fi Movies* seven times. This new *Mars* movie book is about the making of about 100 *Mars* movies from 1910's very first *Mars* movie that was made by Thomas Edison the 5-minute-long *A Trip to Marston* the films that quickly followed on the heels of Scott's "The Martian". Rutgers University's John Powell in his *Emerald Insight* review of *Mars in the Movies: A History* says Miller's book would serve as a compliment to [Keep Watching the Skies! (Warren, 2010) and *Top 100 Sci-Fi Movies* (Gerani, 2011)] He also notes correctly that [Miller] pens the ultimate 292-page love letter to an often-overlooked sci-fi sub-genre [but] make no mistake, Miller is authoritative on this topic and it is refreshing to read his insightful comments. It is clear that *Top 100 Sci-Fi Movies* is every bit Gary Gerani's own love letter to the genre. 8 of 8 people found the following review helpful. Attractive and informative guide

By A. Gammill

As I lifelong fan of science fiction films, I realized long ago that reliable, informative criticism of such films is pretty hard to come by. Oh, sure we've had magazines like *Starlog* and *Cinefantastique* to keep us informed, but the articles often read more like press releases than honest appraisal of a film's merits, or lack thereof. Phil Hardy's *The Overlook Film Encyclopedia: Science Fiction* has remained the definitive text for the past two decades, and no one has come close to Mr. Hardy's level of commitment to the subject. Now Gary Gerani has arrived on the scene with his boldly-titled "*Top 100 Sci-Fi Movies*." And I personally think this is a very GOOD thing, because it's past time someone offered up such a list. And whereas lists of the past have focused almost exclusively on sci-fi cinema's "Golden Age" of the 1950's, Mr. Gerani has augmented the list to include many modern films as well. Whether or not they all belong on the list. . .well, that's up to the reader. But let's look at the book itself for a minute. It's a truly gorgeous work from cover to cover, with literally hundreds of color and black white pictures, as well as movie posters for each film. With a few exceptions, each film is given a one- or two-page spread, liberally decorated with high-quality photographs. Most of these are scenes from the film itself, along with the occasional promotional or behind-the-scenes pic. Icons at the top of the page represent a film's running time, screen aspect ratio, and whether the sound is stereo or mono. The review is then broken up into 3 categories: (1) WHO MADE IT? gives the film's technical credits; (2) WHAT IT'S ABOUT gives the film's plot; and (3) WHY IT'S IMPORTANT makes the case for the film's inclusion in the list. Naturally, this final category is given the most space, and Gerani really proves time and again that he is an obvious fan of the genre. So. . .what about the list itself? Any hardcore fan of the genre certainly has his or her own Top Ten or maybe even Top Twenty list in mind. But think for a moment: Could you come up with a Top HUNDRED? It's a daunting task, but the author seems up to the challenge. As I said above, he pays due respect to the acknowledged classics; roughly half of the top 20 (see? I think we're just conditioned to think of shorter lists!) are from the 50's and 60's. Conversely, Golden Age films that fall near the bottom 10 (*Earth vs. The Flying Saucers*, *Conquest of Space*) left this reader feeling something wasn't quite right. Some choices are downright baffling (*Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind*? *District 9*?) while purists will balk that J.J. Abrams 2009 *Star Trek* reboot falls a full 25 places above *Wrath of Khan*. And frankly, I could go on and on with my personal nit-picks. But here's the thing: For every choice I deemed strange, there were films I hadn't seen or even heard of. And since I almost always enjoyed the reviews of films I WAS familiar with, I figure I should maybe seek out some of the lesser-known ones that are getting high marks. As a fan, I was also gratified to realize that the author really likes all the same films I do. Indeed, if I were to sit down and come up with a Top 100, I'd estimate our lists would be something like 80% compatible. If you're even a casual fan of the genre, this definitely belongs in your personal library. I'm sure I'll be referring back to it in the future, and it has certainly given me food for thought regarding the films I haven't seen. Its appealing design also makes it a great "coffee table" book. All in all, a very nice effort whose only real deficits are a few differences of opinion.

Enjoy! 3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Great Book in Need of a Sharper Proofreader's Eye By Scott R. Brooks
Having had my childhood enhanced by Gary Gerani's classic "Fantastic Television," I looked forward to reading his "Top 100 Sci-Fi Movies." I knew I would quibble over his choices and certainly over his rankings, but I also knew I would enjoy Gerani's direct writing style, and would respect his analysis. I wasn't wrong about any of that. I rediscovered favorite movies, re-assessed many, and discovered a few new titles to seek out. There were some puzzling omissions, notably "Westworld," "Soylent Green," "Logan's Run" and "Escape from New York" and "Total Recall." Sure, those are all flawed movies, but believe me, there are plenty of flawed movies to be found within this list. Also, for good or ill, there is not a lot of high-fallutin exploration of themes and symbolism. Frankly, I found that refreshing. The movies in his top 25 or so pretty much deserve to be there (2009's "Star Trek" being an egregious torn t-shirt in a world of tuxedos), though I can't imagine anyone would agree with every single ranking. My biggest gripe (due to my being one of those irritating grammar and spelling Nazis) is the repeated misspelling of "Khan" from the only movie in the book featuring that name. Spelled as "Kahn" (in sharp juxtaposition to the movie poster's correct spelling), it kept poking me in the eye as I read. At least it was consistently misspelled. There are other errors that Spellcheck wouldn't have caught, but a good editor should have. For instance, the "Road Warrior" entry refers to the movie as "Blade Runner" in one passage. Still, I can't imagine anyone interested in a broad look at science fiction movies would be disappointed by what is found here. This will go on the shelf next to my worn and venerable "Fantastic Television" as a worthy companion.

Fantastic Press strikes again with its second trade paperback offering, this time exploring the ultra-fanciful universe of spaceships, exotic planets, time travel, and extraterrestrials. The "Top 100 Sci-Fi Movies" are reviewed and ranked by fantasy screenwriter/film historian Gary Gerani, who covers everything from early silent groundbreakers like A Trip to the Moon to today's widescreen, computer-generated blockbusters. With over 600 rare visuals, full-color layouts, and an introduction by one of Hollywood's greatest filmmakers, this exciting new pictorial overview is the ideal companion book to 2010's Top 100 Horror Movies.

About the Author Gary Gerani is a screenwriter, author, noted film and TV historian, and children's product developer. He is best known for his contribution as co-writer of the Stan Winston-directed horror classic Pumpkinhead and his groundbreaking 1977 nonfiction book Fantastic Television. Over the years he's created various comic books and a record number of trading card sets, working for the famous Topps Company. His graphic novels include Dinosaurs Attack! (inspired by his own Topps cards) and Bram Stoker's Death Ship, an untold story of the Dracula legend. He also has his own publishing unit, Fantastic Press, in partnership with IDW Publishing.