

# Overview of 2008 **DARK SHADOWS** Festival in Burbank, CA

With special thanks to Amanda Trujillo and Big Finish Productions at <http://www.bigfinish.com/Dark-Shadows> .

## **FRIDAY, JULY 18**

3:00pm Registration Opens 1500 fans with 1/3 to 1/2 attending for the first time

6:00 Opening

6:30 Dark Shadows On ABC

7:00 Adam & Eve Together Again – Guests: Marie Wallace & Robert Rodan

Robert Rodan was unable to make it to the Adam and Eve reunion because of traffic. We were told that he would be present later in the weekend. In the meantime, Marie Wallace watched all the video clips herself and commented on them, gushing over Humbert Allen Astredo as Nicholas Blair.

Richard Halpern tried to play a DVD of "Baby Dark Shadows," but the disc would not cooperate.

7:45 Willie Remembers - Guest: John Karlen

While on-stage, Karlen came out talking about how scared he was that "Barnabas" was there this weekend and you all know what that can mean for poor Willie. He also mentioned that he, Frid, Selby, and Lara Parker had dinner together the night before at KLS's house - first time Karlen has seen Frid in over two decades - and they all got to catch up and had a great time. In between video clips, Johnny joked a lot about his role as Willie and how he had to drain cows for Barnabas ("Not one, not two, but three or four cows a night! Do you know how hard it is to sneak up behind a cow? Do you know what they do? They don't say 'Moo'"). He praised Dennis Patrick and reminisced about all the fun and laughter they shared. After seeing a clip of Willie talking with the Eagle Hill Cemetery caretaker, he also asked for a minute of silence to honor "Whatever his name was" (Daniel Keyes). One question for Johnny came from a woman in a wheelchair. She recalled the Las Vegas convention 10 years earlier. "You were kind enough to push me all the way down that long hallway at the MGM Grand to get to the ballroom," she said. "Oh, good. I thought you were going to tell me that I pushed you into the pool," Karlen laughed. He said the Vegas Fest was his favorite. Another lady asked him "a burning question that we ladies have wanted to know for the past 40 years." Since Willie had to help Barnabas find a new wardrobe for the 20th Century after releasing him, she wanted to know, "Does Barnabas wear boxers or briefs?" Karlen chuckled before reporting to the amusement of all, "He doesn't wear anything." Another fan complimented him on all the weight he'd lost and how good he looked. "The secret is to get rid of all the junk food," he explained. "You've got to have the willpower to just throw it out. Don't worry about the people in Shanghai and Thailand; they aren't going to be able to get it, so just get rid of it."

8:30 A Visit With Angelique & Josette -

Guests: Lara Parker & Kathryn Leigh Scott were on stage together viewing clips of their time as Josette and Angelique going through the same stories as the last 25 years.

9:15 Dark Shadows Screening - The Lost TV Pilot from 2004 with Alec Newman

10:00 Skit I/ A dramatic play *Curtains* by Jeff Thompson.

*Curtains* reveals a shocking connection between Victoria Winters and Count Dracula, brings Dracula and Barnabas face to face, and ends sadly, in a change of pace from the Collinsport Players' usual funny farces. *Curtains* was serious and scary! ProfStokes as Victoria portrayed her confusion and loyalty. Jeff Black as Barnabas was quite believable. Julia Hoffman was played by Eileen Berger, and Jonathan Harrison as Count Dracula gave an remarkable performance as Barnabas' most terrifying opponent. Laura "victoriawinters" was the assistant director.

11:45 Movie: House Of Dark Shadows & Dan Curtis' The Norliss Tapes

## **SATURDAY, JULY 19**

11:00am DS Today - News & Discussion

Marcy Robin's opening talk was cut mercifully short due to her delay. Same old stuff

11:30 DS Video Vault

An episode of the comedy series "JJ and the Governor" (c. 1970) was show with guest-star Joan Bennet (wearing a flowing yellow dress she wore in HODS). Her role was that of a madam trying to make a political donation to the title character. Joan looked lovely and was terrific.

12:00 New DS Movie Discussion Pierson spoke for five minutes about the Depp movie. The Depp DS movie is in the very early script stage with John August (Charley and the Chocolate Company) (still far from any type of guarantee a movie will actually come to realization) and none of the original cast has yet been approached for cameo roles. No really any thing new.

12:30 DS Reborn

Stuart Manning of Collinwood.net was on stage representing Big Finish, the company that produces the audio drams. He revealed that we will soon be hearing a new audio drama (maybe two) from our own Mark Rainey, author of the DS book *Dreams in the Dark!* It's titled *DARK SHADOWS: PATH OF FATE*, and features Quentin and Angelique. When asked about the possibility of recording "*Labyrinth of Souls*," Stuart said he had been in talks with Rainey about adapting that story. He mentioned what a great villain Count Petofi was and that they had actually hoped to use him in Season 1 of the audio series. He didn't say for sure that the character would reappear in the next batch of dramas, but .... Stuart said that the next season of 4 new audio dramas has already gone into production and should be available by the end of the year.

Introduced at the fest were two new hour long dramatic readings written by Stuart Manning that center on the Maggie character. *The Ghost Watcher* and *Clothes of Sand* both costarring Alec Newman who portrayed Barnabas in the ill-fated 2004 remake pilot. These are in addition to the 4 new audio drams to be produced

*Clothes of Sand* synopsis: The Sandman is coming... singing the children to sleep everywhere..." This story takes place during episodes originally broadcast in June-July 1967. When Maggie Evans is take to the Windcliff Institute, she begins her recovery from the ordeal she suffered at the hands of Barnabas Collins. As she undergoes hypnosis, disturbing memories of her childhood being to surface. Who was the imaginary friend who once watched over her, and what threat does he pose for Maggie's future?

*The Ghost Watcher* synopsis: Look into the light and try to deny what you see... I dare you." This story takes place after the 1971 present day timeline of the original series.

As Maggie Evans leaves the Windcliff Institute, she begins to build a new life for herself away from the Collins family. But when an enigmatic stranger arrives in town, searching for phantoms, Maggie finds herself plunged into a world of intrigue and danger. What is the Ghost Watcher's secret, and what is the true cost of his gift to the people of Collinsport?

1:00 Producing Shadows - Guest: Sy Tomashoff was good but his age seems to be catching up with him as his memory seemed to fail him at times. He did bring out some interesting facts about scene design.

1:30 The Music Of DS - Guest: Bob Cobert

Always entertaining, he came onstage dancing to the DS soundtrack and pretending to conduct the music. Throughout the panel, he'd whistle and sing the songs even coming up with lyrics for Josette's music box ("Hello, Jo. This is your music box...") He retold the story of how he became a composer and a funny story of how his kids, who were DS fans, were completely unaware that he wrote the music for it until a classmate pointed it out. "They asked me, 'Dad, are you Robert Cobert?' I said, 'Yes, that's my name.'

'Do you write the music for Dark Shadows?'

'Yes, Dark Shadows puts food on our table, puts clothes on your back, sends you through school.'

"Oh, OK." He also mentioned what a thrill it was to take the kids Christmas shopping at Macy's and, upon visiting the record department, to learn that "Dark Shadows by Robert Cobert" was the Number 1 album.

Other revelations included:

- We learned that all the DS music, except for the theme song, was recorded in London because it was cheaper.
- Cobert told how he came up with the DS theme
- How Curtis was sure the song would sound better without the base and after hearing it Cobert pointed out that the experiment wasted both time and money
- Cobert was commissioned by MGM to co-write the score for the wedding of Grace Kelly and Prince Rainier of Monaco. He wrote "The Mediterranean Waltz" as the B-side to the main theme so MGM could release the single.
- Cobert is a flirt telling a young woman who asked a question, "We'll talk later," she responded: "I'll give you my phone number". To which he said "Just don't expect too much of me," "I'm 83 years old. But I am a very good kisser. At least that's what I tell myself."

2:00 DS Memorabilia Auction I

3:00 "Lincoln's Better Angel" / Q&A Guest: David Selby

Selby began his talk about his play-turned-novel *Lincoln's Better Angel* by coming out from the back of the room and walking down the aisle toward the stage shouting throwing confetti and declaring, "I'm Quentin Collins, and I'm running for president!" , "Quentin for President!!!"

He talked about the similar goals between Abe Lincoln and Obama. He likes the fact that Obama offers hope and change. Said he will probably vote for Obama. Had the audience repeat the Gettysburg address after him in a sort of rap-style. This is a link to the posted YouTube video of it:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jmOdVjvFWHw>

4:30 "The Growth of Barnabas" / Q&A Guest: Jonathan Frid

The highlight of the show was how they introduced Jonathan Frid. There was a black curtain onstage and a candelabra on stage. John Karlen came out as Willie talking to himself about getting rich. He pulled back the curtain to reveal...a chained coffin!!! He took off the chains and opened the lid and a hand extended from within and choked Willie. Barnabas himself--Jonathan Frid was released again!!! Frid showed clips of some of his favorite scenes from the 1967, 1795, 1968, and 1897 storylines and discussed his portrayal of Barnabas Collins. He paid tribute to Thayer David who was one of the finest actors on *Dark Shadows*. Frid took a few questions from the audience, including the question about Grayson Hall, who Frid confessed, "... was a little too much for me!" When asked if he would accept a cameo role in the new movie, and what he thought of Johnny Depp playing the part of Barnabas. Frid confessed that he does not know who Depp is however, he has been told that he's a very good actor and that his health and stamina would prevent him from taking even a small role.

#### 6:00 Cast Reunion

The cast reunion followed, featuring David Selby, Chris Pennock, John Karlen, Lara Parker, Jerry Lacy, KLS, Roger Davis, Marie Wallace and Robert Rodan. Jonathan Frid did not attend the cast reunion

Chris Pennock was asked about his death scene as Gabriel in 1841 parallel time and whether he intentionally gave the middle finger to the camera "Oh, I was very angry to be killed off," Pennock admitted. "I was not ready to leave. But no, I wasn't crazy enough to do that. I don't remember that at all." Pennock also said that he would be appearing in a comedic play in Idyllwild and another short film in which he plays a sociopath ("It's a stretch, I know.") who sells drugs to teenagers. At one point in the Q&A, a fan asked Pennock if he was still selling his comic books and Karlen exclaimed, "He's a shill! Pennock planted him!"

KLS said she's reached that stage in her career where she's doing commercials for osteoporosis.

Marie Wallace recalled that *Dark Shadows* had offered her a fourth role, which she didn't accept because she was already under contract to NBC-TV's *Somerset*. "I don't know what the role was," Marie said--but I would guess that it would have been the part of Samantha Collins in the 1840 storyline.

Lara Parker raved about her new grandson Wesley as the light of her life. "After he was born, I went online to visit different Bad Mother-in-Law websites and read the advice. 'Don't ever criticize your daughter-in-law or question her. Don't tell her what to do with the baby.' She wants him to develop at his own pace so she tells us not to play with him or challenge him. When she leaves him with me, I listen to all of her instructions and say, 'OK'. Then I wait for her to leave and I wait about 10 more minutes in case she comes back--sometimes she does. Then, I take him out of the playpen and say, 'Come on, Wesley! Let's play!' Her enthusiasm was delightful. Lara also mentioned that she is writing a new DS novel set in the 1920s where Elizabeth is a flapper who falls in love with Quentin. "Of course, he doesn't age, but she does."

John Karlen was asked about working with Tyne Daly on "Cagney & Lacey". He said they still keep in touch and had had dinner together recently. "In all the years we worked together, we never once had to exchange notes on our scenes. That's remarkable for an actor." He confessed that he misses acting ("I stopped doing it because I just got lazy") but that he is considering getting back into the business.

Roger Davis was a big surprise, returning to the Fest for the first time since 2003. He had lost a lot of weight and appeared gaunt. He told us that his brother had recently died of a heart problem, and it motivated him to get a cardiogram of his own. "The doctor told me, 'You have a blockage. In another 90 days, you'll be dead.' It was the same thing that killed Tim Russert. I had a bypass and I've been on a special diet ever since." His disease was hereditary and he was lucky they operated in time. He talked about attending events for "Alias, Smith & Jones" with Ben Murphy. "Murphy told me, 'I would have been nicer to you if I had known this was going to be the high point of my career.'" He just sold the View Monte property for \$7 million

The cast was asked if they ever attended conventions for their other shows besides DS (e.g. "Falcon Crest," "Smith and Jones," "Cagney & Lacey.") Nearly everyone all said no. John Karlen declared "We only love you!" When asked about their most memorable moments on DS, Selby remembered the studio catching fire and the fire department coming to put it out. Karlen remembered everyone going out for drinks to the Brittany du Soir after taping. Roger recalled that when he played vampire Dirk, he rushed at Joan Bennet and she fell over. "That's because you pushed her," KLS scolded. "I didn't mean to," he argued back. "I just get so caught up in my roles."

7:00 Restoring Night Of Dark Shadows with Darren Gross

NODS is being restored and will be a year (or more) before restoration is complete. They have been having the actors re-dub some of their lines from footage found where the audio was unusable. It is hoped that with the interest in the new movie Warner Bro who owns the rights to the two movies will hold off on the DVD release until the footage is finished so that a restored version is released. Other wise, Darren Gross said it is likely never to be restored. There were technical difficulties and Darren was not able to show the special restored scene after all!

7:30 Skit II "Another Day at Collinwood"

The Collinwood Players headed by Peter Mac as Vickie and Carolyn, Walter Down as Willie, Dr. John Schaefer as Julia, Richard Halpern as Barnabas, Diane Eckert as Elizabeth, Jay Keaveny as Roger and Jack Kessler as Adam. The skit borrowed heavily from *Young Frankenstein* with Carolyn singing *Sweet Mystery of Life* and *Deeper Love* after and "encounter" with Adam. Peter as Carolyn even exchanged her normal blond wig for a black one with a white streak as in *Bride of Frankenstein*.

Costume-Presentation Gala

The first act in Saturday's costume gala was Michael Culhane as Nicholas Blair, who led the audience in a salute commemorating the 40th anniversary of Astredo's first appearance on DS. Apparently, Jim Pierson was going to send Astredo the video. A gentleman dressed as a vampire sang a jazzy tune. AngeliqueWins sang a parody of "Beauty School Drop-Out" about Angelique, then she and adamsgirl performed a duet of the Collinsport chant. Afterward, adamsgirl herself sang a solo, "I Dreamed a Dream" from *Les Miserables* to illustrate Angelique's thoughts about Barnabas marrying Josette. VictoriawWnters sang her own parody as Victoria after being bitten by Barnabas (instead of "I Could Have Danced All Night" from *My Fair Lady*, it was "I Could Have Bled All Night"). A woman dressed like Pansy Faye sang, "I'm Tired" from *Blazing Saddles*. Sara, Angela, and their friends reenacted a dramatic drawing room scene of Carolyn, Vicki, Elizabeth, and Mrs. Johnson discussing Barnabas's arrival. Other costumes included a sexy Eve, two charming Josettes, a historically accurate Naomi and Joshua, borgosi in his elegant suit and cape, and "Sam the Umbrella Man," a peculiar figure from Jonathan Frid's earlier presentation. Peter Mac wrapped up the show by dressing as Angelique and singing in character as Lara Parker, venting her frustration because her character has just been killed off. This song was a riot!

11:00 Movie: Night Of Dark Shadows & Late Night Horror Classics

## SUNDAY, JULY 20

11:00am Jonathan Frid's 40th Anniversary Tribute & Video (video) shown at the 2006 fest.

11:30 The World of Parallel Time with Frank Borzelleri,

Author of the book gave a lecture (commercial) about his book, he teaches literature at a college in California

Frank stressed that time travel does not violate the laws of physics and that the only reason it has not happened yet is because of our limited technology. He opened his talk by discussing inventions that we now take for granted but were considered fantastical at the time (e.g. an airplane that would take you from New York to Tokyo in one day). He used examples from "Dark Shadows" to illustrate Einstein's ideas about relativity and the twin paradox. The slideshow contained photos of DS characters who were associated with a particular time paradox (Willie for Barnabas not being in the coffin to be released after 1897 and 1840, Roxanne for having become a vampire in the original history despite the lack of Barnabas in 1840) as well as pictures of famous physicists like Heisenberg, Hawking, and Einstein. We also saw diagrams of warp speed and wormholes.

12:00 Guest: Christopher Pennock

Instead of reading from his comic books, he had brought a DVD of a short film called "*Cardboard Signs*" in which Pennock plays a homeless man struggling to maintain his dignity and his long-term relationship. It's a much more mature role than Jeb Hawkes. Apparently, the director was only 17 at the time this movie was made. The movie in its entirety can be seen on YouTube <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=90q0xolBo3U>. Aging technical difficulties plagued the segment Chris' DVD kept freezing. The staff tried three times to get the player to work. While they worked, Chris's daughter Tara performed the song "*Defying Gravity*" from the musical *Wicked*. A Q&A line also formed, but only one person got to ask a question before the movie was up and running again by using someone's portable DVD player. It was a touching movie, about a homeless couple finding love.

12:30 Guest: Kathryn Leigh Scott

She complimented his short film as a compassionate study of homeless life, explaining that she knows a lot of people in show business who have fallen on hard times and are now living out of their cars. Kathryn volunteers with the homeless through her church during the weekends. She is working on three different novels right now, including two mysteries, and has also just filmed a commercial for Actonel (Osteoporosis medication). "Apparently at my age," she joked, "the only commercials you get to make anymore feature body parts that don't work anymore or are falling off." She spent the bulk of her Q&A outlining her vision for Maggie's character in the new movie

1:00 Guest: Lara Parker - no report

1:30 The Many Faces Of Trask

Jerry Lacy watched clips of all of his performances as Trask (all but Tony Peterson). When he was asked what was 1795 Rev. Trask's first name was, he said he christened him Orville, and admitted the character had never been given a first name. Lacy was also asked if he'd ever received hate mail because his characters were so evil. "If I did, nobody ever gave them to me."

2:00 DS Memorabilia Auction II

3:00 Dark Shadows - The Lost Script On Stage with The Actors

The actors were Lara Parker, Robert Rodan, Marie Wallace, and Roger Davis. Marie and Rodan began by reading the script at the mike with no action. Once it was Roger and Marie, though, we actually saw some action to go with the words. Roger really got into the role and gave far and away the best stage performance. He actually interacted with Marie rather than simply reading the lines as the others did. Lara had very few lines overall but brought the audio passion one would expect from Angelique. According to Davis, Dan Curtis's own notes on the script say, "Lose this!"

4:00 "An Odd Assortment Of Stage Events That Determined A Career" / Q&A

Guest: Jonathan Frid reminisced about his days at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Arts and his roles in *Julius Caesar*, *The Rivals*, *And So to Bed*, *The Heiress*, and other plays, and he read aloud from *The Heiress* and *Washington Square*. He also showed clips from his new DVD *Frid-Evil*, which features 1990 footage from his one-man show of dramatic readings. He was given a chair on Saturday but said he preferred the stool so that's what was provided for Sunday's presentation. As Frid turned toward the screen on his stool he slid off the side and landed hard on his rear end. Fortunately he managed to keep from falling completely off the stage. He was assisted back to his feet and did a little dance on stage to show he was not injured but he was definitely suffering from the immediate effects of the fall, which could be seen in the way he walked. He then he moved down into the front row and his Reader's Theatre continued. At this point Frid basically turned the rest of the performance over to the videos. He also presented the Spanish Poe performance at his cousin's house that was on his website for a few weeks. .

5:30 Final Autographs

7:00 Banquet Dinner With The Stars (By Advance Reservation Only)

We were served uneatable vegetable lasagna that made several people sick. We basically paid \$50 to eat a salad, a little bit of broccoli and carrots. The entertainment was a very rushed program of prize drawing conducted by Person, Jerry Lacy and Chris Pennock. They showed a video of interview shows from the past (Rick Dees and Soap Net features) with KLS repeating the same things, that she said on the stage for the last several years. They were able to show the clip from NODS that they couldn't get to work for earlier. It was a scene where Angelique (in the past) is playing Quentin's Theme flirting right in front of Charles's wife Laura, who accuses Angelique of bewitching her husband. It was a fabulous scene that helps to flesh out the background of the characters. The only downside is that Diana Millay's voice sounds much rougher and older than she did in 1971, and the sync is not quite there so it's not a flawless redo.