

## “I ALLOW YOU TO LIGHT THIS LAST SPECTACLE”

*Genghis Khan* hit movie screens in 1965 at the tail end of a ten-year run of epic films on epic subjects. While not up to the classics that had preceded it (*Ben-Hur*, *The Ten Commandments*, *Spartacus*, *El Cid*, and others), it wasn't really trying to be – in fact, it was more of a boy's adventure film, but with a little sex in it. It was one of many multi-national films made at the time, with an irresistible cast of actors, including Omar Sharif, Stephen Boyd James Mason, Robert Morley, Francoise Dorleac, Telly Savalas, Eli Wallach, Woody Strode, Michael Hordern, and hordes of extras splashing across the Technicolor and Panavision screen. As to historical accuracy – well, no. As to entertainment – well, yes, especially seen today. It's one of those “they don't make 'em like that anymore” movies and one looks back on some of these films rather fondly. Directed by Henry Levin (an excellent journeyman director who'd done such films as *Journey To The Center Of The Earth*, *April Love*, *Bernadine*, *The Wonderful World of the Brothers Grimm*, *Where The Boys Are* and two Dean Martin / Matt Helm films, *Murderer's Row* and *The Ambushers*), and shot by the great Geoffrey Unsworth, the film has battles galore, colorful larger-than-life characters doing colorful and larger-than-life things and the beautiful Francoise Dorleac (the sister of Catherine Deneuve) who gives the lavish location scenery a run for its money.

The film was not well reviewed and did not do well at the box-office. The *New York Times*' review summed it all up pretty well in its opening paragraph: ““IT is better to light a candle than to curse the dark,” the Emperor of China fatuously remarks in the “Genghis Khan” that descended on theaters around town yesterday in a rush of color, battling hordes and juvenile talk. If he thought that he was coining a cliché, he was farther from the mark than the American,

German and Yugoslav producers of this decidedly Eastern Western, who dredged up nearly every one on record. Perhaps record is not the precise word for “Genghis Khan.” Aside from the name of the title character, it is no closer to history than Omar Sharif is to being a Mongolian.”

But they had some nice things to say, too: “To the producers' credit, it must be said that there is more action than stilted, sometimes unwittingly funny palaver, as Genghis unites his Mongols, defends the Chinese Emperor, escapes his clutches and conquers vast domains including Eli Wallach's Persia. The mountains, forests and arid plains of Yugoslavia, as well as the Peking Palace interiors and its lovely damsels, are vividly colorful.”

The film disappeared from theaters quickly, and then ended up on television – not exactly the best place to see an epic film, but one which enabled new generations to discover that it was what it always was – a sprawling and occasionally giddy adventure that was and is fun in a way that simply doesn't exist anymore in the films of today.

Helping the film enormously is the grand, robust, and adventure-filled score of Dusan Radic. A Yugoslavian composer born in 1929, Radic had previously scored many films in his home country, as well as being very prolific in the classical world, but became known in America with two 1960s films – *The Long Ships* and, a year later, *Genghis Khan*, both of which thankfully received LP releases. Those LP releases were must-haves for those who loved and collected soundtracks back then. The score of *Genghis Khan* is real old-fashioned movie music – music in classic adventure mode with themes galore, whether a heroic march or a beautiful love theme. Radic's music propels the film from scene to scene, which helps the pace of the two-hour plus film immeasurably. It's a shame Radic didn't continue to work on American films.

The original soundtrack release of *Genghis Khan* was on Liberty Records. For this first release on CD we've used the original album masters housed in the vaults at Capitol/EMI. Even though there was a “stereo” and mono LP release, they were, in fact, both mono (the “stereo” version may have had some electronic processing) - the only tape in the vault was that original mono tape and that is what we present here. There was also a foreign pressing of the soundtrack that included two additional cues - we've included both of them as bonus tracks. It is a treat to bring the music of Dusan Radic and *Genghis Khan* to a new generation of soundtrack fans – just as with the film (they don't make 'em like that anymore), so it is with Dusan Radic's score – they don't write 'em like that anymore.

Dusan Radic passed away on April 3, 2010, seven days shy of his 81st birthday. We lovingly dedicate this CD release to his memory.

— Bruce Kimmel