

In 1960, after years of producing films about giant creatures, colossal men, Cyclops, and tiny Puppet People, Bert I. Gordon, affectionately known as Mr. BIG, did something very unexpected – he made a really fun children’s adventure film called *The Boy and the Pirates*. The film starred Charles Herbert as the boy, Murvyn Vye as the pirate, and, best of all, Mr. BIG’S very own daughter Susan Gordon as the girl. Susan had gotten her big break in film in Mr. BIG’S *Attack of the Puppet People*, and then she’d gone on to co-star with Danny Kaye in *The Five Pennies*. She began doing other film and TV appearances, and then, in 1960, did two Mr. BIG films – *Tormented* and *The Boy and the Pirates*. Before I continue, let me just add on a personal note, that as a wee sprig of a twig of a tad of a lad of a youth I had a major crush on Susan Gordon. Major. Big Time. Huge. Where was I? Oh, yes, *The Boy and the Pirates*.

*The Boy and the Pirates* concerns Jimmy, a young boy who loves playing pirates on the wreck of a pirate ship washed ashore on the beach near his home, frequently playing with his friend Kathy. One day he finds a bottle on the shore. Before he tosses it back into the ocean he wishes he could be on a real pirate ship. Before you can say Abu the Genie, his wish comes true. He finds himself aboard a bona-fide pirate ship with none other than Blackbeard the Pirate. Of course, there are scurvy pirates galore, battles, a damsel in distress (who looks suspiciously like his friend Kathy), mutinies, and adventurous adventures on the high seas, all ending with Jimmy safely back home.

The beach location shooting was done at Leo Carillo Beach in Malibu, with the interiors done at Twentieth Century Fox studios in West Los Angeles – Fox had the huge ship on one of its stages – a perfect bit of serendipity. The scenes using model ships doing battle were done on a man-made lake on the back lot, with a huge sky backdrop. According to Mr. BIG, *The Boy and the Pirates* was the last film to use that lake before that whole area was sold for the construction of what would become Century City.

Susan Gordon remembers that it was a lot of fun being the only girl in the cast, and she became very close friends with her co-star, Charles Herbert. Murvyn Vye made a fine Blackbeard, and the cast also included the supremely weird Timothy Carey. Apparently, Mr. Carey got carried away one day in a scene involving him throwing little Charles Herbert across the deck. It was performed with a little too much authenticity and gusto, and Herbert had to bite his lip to keep from breaking out in tears. Other than that and the long hours, the shoot went well and United Artists was so happy with the film that UA immediately asked Mr. BIG, “What’s the next one?”

For the score, Mr. BIG turned to his then frequent musical partner-in-crime, Albert Glasser. While Glasser had been scoring every kind of low-budget film in every kind of genre, for Mr. BIG he’d been composing one horror film after another, so *The Boy and the Pirates* was a nice change of pace for both of them. And it was also the type of score Glasser knew intimately – the big, swashbuckling sort of music he was around when he began in Hollywood, especially when he was working with the master of that kind of music, the great Erich Wolfgang Korngold.

Glasser came up with a lot of swash and even more buckle, with his trademark blaring brass, fun themes, and rip-roaring Saturday matinee adventure music and all in stereophonic sound. It’s grand to hear Glasser in a mode other than horror, and his music really works wonderfully in the film. According to all who knew him, “Al” was a great guy, and a person who absolutely knew that he was who he was – he embraced the kinds of films he did with good humor, great enthusiasm, and complete professionalism.

For this release, we used 1/4-inch stereo tapes, which were in very good condition. We’ve tried to put this in as close to film order as possible – as frequently happens, some of the music was truncated, some repeated, and some not used. It’s a very short score, so to add a little bit more playing time to the CD we’re pleased to present a little

mini-suite from Mr. BIG’s classic, *Attack of the Puppet People*. Sadly, all the tapes I’ve heard on this score have horrible distortion – we’re still on the prowl for better tapes, but until they turn up, we’ve salvaged the few cues that didn’t have extreme distortion and edited them together into a nice little musical appetizer.

This is Kritzerland’s second Albert Glasser release (the first was *Earth vs. the Spider*) – as long as we can find good source material of scores we can license, you have my word we’re going to keep putting them out. Glasser’s music is a constant reminder of a more innocent time, when movies didn’t all have to be event films – when B-movies and even C-movies were frequently more fun than the top of the bill films, and people just went to have a good time at the picture show. I miss those days, but every time I hear an Albert Glasser score I’m right back in the Saturday matinee heaven of my youth.

— Bruce Kimmel