



# Portland Poynts

The Chronicle of the Atlantic Highlands Historical Society

November-December 2020 27 Prospect Circle, P. O. Box 108, Atlantic Highlands, NJ 07716-0108 ♦ [www.AHhistory.org](http://www.AHhistory.org)

## Nosferatu at the Mansion

By Greg Caggiano

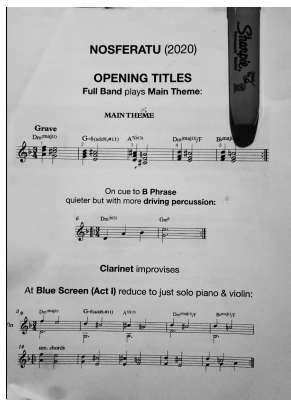
Saturday, October 17<sup>th</sup> on a crisp, clear autumnal evening under a waxing crescent moon, the vampire Nosferatu made his fifth annual sepulchral appearance at the haunted Strauss Mansion in Atlantic Highlands. Fifty socially-distanced people cozied up in the Mansion's rear yard on blankets and enjoyed the food and beverages they brought with them. Due to the restrictions imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic, this was the first time the screening was held outdoors. Because of sound concerns for our neighbors, the Society limited it to only one screening this year instead of the normal two.



Our outdoor screening featured live music synchronized with the film as it would have been presented when it premiered nearly a century ago. Accompanied by original music composed by Cody McCorry — which he changes each year to keep it fresh — and performed live by Cody (theremin, piano and other unique instruments),

Mike Noordzy (clarinet), Ben Karas (violin), Jon Francis (guitarviol), Daimon Alexandrius (accordion and flute), and Kevin Grossman (percussion), Nosferatu's ghastly image appeared on a large outdoor screen — provided by Strauss Mansion Museum friend and neighbor Mike Boylan — at the rear yard of the Strauss 🍷🍷🍷





Mansion. The musicians were situated on the Mansion's expansive rear porch behind the audience.

F. W Murnau's 1922 silent film classic was an unauthorized and unofficial adaptation loosely based on Bram Stoker's Dracula and is regarded as the first horror

movie ever made. Various names and details were changed from the novel, including Count Dracula being renamed Count Orlok, to avoid copyright issues. Even with heavy revisions and the name changes, Stoker's heirs sued over the adaptation and a court ruling ordered all copies of the film to be destroyed. However, a few prints of Nosferatu survived, and the film came to be regarded as an influential masterpiece of cinema.

The version presented at the Strauss Mansion is the most complete, authentic copy known to



exist, including different colored tints to convey mood. It also contains possibly the first "method acting" performance by Max Schreck in the vampire role of Count Orlok. Schreck would stay in character during the production even when not in front of the camera, which was unusual for the time.\*

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, after many years featuring a full calendar of Halloween-inspired events, Nosferatu is the only Halloween-related event at the Strauss Mansion Museum this year. The Strauss Mansion Museum's Halloween Fund-raising Committee was gratified that one event could be held this year. We are anticipating a full slate of events in October, 2021.

Special thanks to Lynne Petillo, Lisa Walling and Alden Walling for their praiseworthy behind-the-scenes assistance to Patty Bickauskas and me.



\* **Ed. Note:** Shadow of the Vampire is a 2000 fictionalized documentary account of the making of Nosferatu starring John Malkovich and Willem Dafoe in which the movie crew begins to have disturbing suspicions about their lead actor actually being a vampire. Dafoe was nominated for the Academy Award for Best Supporting Actor for his role as the obscure German theater character actor Max Schreck who played Count Orlok. To involve himself fully in his role, Schreck would only appear among the cast and crew in makeup, would only be filmed at night, and would never break character. Film critic Roger Ebert said Dafoe "embodies the Schreck of Nosferatu so uncannily that when real scenes from the silent film classic are slipped in, we don't notice a difference."

#### AUDIENCE COMMENTS

Awesome! I come every year. This was the best yet. J.R.

When my friend said he was taking me to see a hundred-year-old horror movie, I thought "how will I ever stay awake?" Wow! It was fantastic. I will come again next year. J.J.

Another terrific event by the Strauss Mansion! L.F.

The music was so cool! Best adaptation I've ever seen. A.H.

I didn't know what to expect. But the big screen, the music, the outdoors. Terrific! B.S.

I didn't know the Strauss Mansion existed or did this kind of stuff. Great evening. I signed up for the mailing list to know more. L.P.

## Music at the Mansion al fresco, Part 2



After an unseasonably chilly start to the week, the goddess Athena and the Muses joined forces to bless the Atlantic Highlands Historical Society with delightful late summer weather for its second al fresco Music at the Mansion on Thursday, September 24<sup>th</sup>.

Ticket sales to this B.Y.O.E. event (Bring Your Own Everything: food, beverages, lawn chairs/blankets, etc.) were limited to ensure sufficient social distancing. Attendees were required to wear face coverings to obtain admittance.

Approximately three dozen folks spread out on the Mansion's rear lawn while five groups performed on the building's spacious side porch, once more hosted by the incomparable Audra Mariel.



A talented lineup of musicians included Kasey Jean (singer/songwriter) Bill Henry (pianist, organist and keyboardist) Alice Fawn and Claudio with ambient synth and vocals, Daimon Alexandrius Santamaria (a self-taught illustrator, musician, puppeteer, songwriter, and dabbler in many things who plays flute, piano, sitar and guitar), bassist John Lenis, drummer Noel Sagerman and guitarist Nobuki Takamen.



In the last set, John Lenis joined Nobuki Takamen and Noel Sagerman to perform several upbeat jazz melodies. Audra Mariel joined in to bring the evening to a splendid close with a sensual bilingual rendering of Autumn Leaves.

Under clear skies with the resplendent Strauss Mansion as a backdrop, the marvelous music wafted among the trees and enveloped the audience with its beauty.



The musical event was a fund-raiser for the Atlantic

Highlands Historical Society housed at the Strauss Mansion Museum. The Mansion Museum was closed for several months due to the COVID-19 pandemic and all 2020 in-house events were cancelled.



Half of the proceeds from this event, as well as sales of the edited video, will be used to support the Society's endeavors and the other half was again donated by the musicians to support the food program of Books and Breakfast in Trenton, NJ, a joint project of Urban G.R.A.C.E and Turning Point United Methodist Church to provide the needy of the community with a hot meal and access to a library of donated books every Saturday morning.



Back in 1894... the Strauss family would have been reading about...



November 1 ~ Nicholas II became the last Tsar of the Russian Empire following the death of his father, Alexander III.

November 1 ~ Parisian Dr. Roux announced a vaccine for diphtheria.

November 5 ~ Richard Strauss' Till Eulenspiegel premiered.

November 12 ~ Australian aeronautical pioneer and inventor of the box kite Lawrence Hargrave linked huge box kits together and flew while remaining attached to the ground by piano wire.

November 16 ~ Turks massacre 6,000 Armenians in Kurdistan.

November 17 ~ Daily Racing Form was founded.

November 17 ~ Serial killer H. H. Holmes was arrested in Boston after being tracked from Philadelphia by the Pinkertons.

November 18 ~ Richard Outcault's comic strip Origin of a New Species debuted in the New York World newspaper.

November 19 ~ Dutch troops occupied and plundered palace of Tjakra Negara, Lombo, Indonesia.

November 21 ~ Battle of Lushunkous (later called Port Arthur), Manchuria won by Japanese, a decisive victory in the First Sino-Japanese War. Japanese troops were accused of the Port Arthur massacre of the remaining inhabitants of the city.

December 21 ~ Mackenzie Bowell became the fifth Prime Minister of Canada.

December 22 ~ Dutch coast hit by hurricane. Dutch village Scheveningen fishing boats were destroyed.

December 22 ~ Claude Debussy's Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune premiered in Paris.

December 22 ~ U.S. Golf association formed.

December 22 ~ French officer Alfred Dreyfus was court-martialed for treason, triggering worldwide charges of anti-Semitism.

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## Time to Renew Your Membership



The new year is almost upon us and it is time to renew your membership in the Atlantic Highlands Historical Society. Membership is an important source of funding for the Society's outreach and educational programs, as well as for the maintenance of the 127-year-old Strauss Mansion. Your membership also demonstrates to potential funding sources the support the community has for our Society, which is operated entirely by non-paid volunteers.

This year, due to the State-mandated restrictions required by the COVID-19 pandemic, the Mansion was closed to the public for several months and practically all fund-generating events had to be cancelled. The Society does not have an endowment to carry us through these times. Nonetheless, utility and insurance bills still had to be paid. Your support is more needed this year than ever before.

Membership categories: Student ~ \$10, Individual ~ \$25, Family ~ \$50, Supporter ~ \$100, Sustainer ~ \$200, Benefactor ~ \$500. To renew your membership or to become a new member, simply complete the online form at [AHhistory.org](http://AHhistory.org). You can pay using your credit card. Or print out the form, complete it, and mail it with your check to Atlantic Highlands Historical Society, P. O. Box 108, Atlantic Highlands, NJ 07716-0108.



We thank you for your support.



# Welcome, Teddy, to the Strauss Mansion Museum



The newest addition to the Strauss Mansion Museum collection is a century-old, original Teddy Bear that belonged to Eleanore Mittlestead Huson, a beloved resident of Atlantic Highlands who died in 2009 at the age of 106. Mrs. Huson's grandfather, John Hoyes MacGowan, was a friend of President Theodore Roosevelt. At a gathering in Ocean Grove, NJ, President Roosevelt gave a namesake Teddy Bear to the young Eleanore.

The Teddy Bear was donated earlier this year to the Strauss Mansion Museum by Arthur Holmes "King" Sorenson, a well known and respected attorney in Atlantic Highlands where he practiced law since 1953. Mr. Sorenson died on August 26, 2020 at the age of 108.

For many years, Mrs. Huson designed illustrations for the Atlantic Highlands House Tour guide book. She designed and painted her own Christmas cards and was a skilled puppeteer.

The Teddy Bear is in remarkably good shape, its arms and legs still movable. Plans are being made to appropriately display Teddy.

Welcome to your new home, Teddy.

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## Happy Birthday, Mark

Doris Irwin's oldest child, Mark, received a very special birthday gift this year. Doris, who has been a supporter of the Atlantic Highlands Historical Society for many years and a constant attendee at the Music at the Mansion series, made a generous donation to the Society in his name.

"Mark is quite self-sufficient," Doris said, "and really doesn't need anything. He is very generous to his siblings and me and I thought this would be a wonderful way to acknowledge his unselfishness by supporting the Society.

Mark loves the Society's music program and the antiquity of the Strauss Mansion." When told of the nature of his birthday gift, "he was excited and pleased. He said I couldn't have given him anything better."

Happy Birthday Mark, and thank you, Doris, for including the Atlantic Highlands Historical Society in the celebration.



Portland Poynts, the original name of the area that became Atlantic Highlands, is the electronically published bi-monthly March-November newsletter of the Atlantic Highlands Historical Society, 27 Prospect Circle, Atlantic Highlands, NJ 07716. Incorporated in 1974, the Atlantic Highlands Historical Society at the Strauss Mansion is a volunteer-run 501(c)3 tax exempt organization committed to promoting interest in the past and present heritage and history of Atlantic Highlands through a variety of services and programs to the community at large. All donations are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.

# Blast from the Past — Atlantic Highlands Style

## Promoting the digitization of the Atlantic Highlands Journal

By Patty Bickauskas

In recent weeks I was pleased to hear that the Atlantic Cinemas, a great place to take your mind off day-to-day issues at least for a few hours, was reopening after several months closure due to COVID-19 restrictions. Hopefully as of this writing, people are taking advantage of the opportunity. I hear they will also be having live entertainment. Can't wait to see many great performances there. I wish owners Fred and Rickey Rost great success.

The 1912 building was originally John Snedeker's garage. Snedeker was the postmaster, police chief, and a mayor of Atlantic Highlands. During this time, bootleggers would bring their goods from offshore boats and hide them in the rear of the building. There were rumors of a murder that occurred on the property as a result of a bootlegging deal gone bad.

Our paranormal investigation group (Ghosts on the Coast) was given access to the closed building some months ago. We were able to record a few odd voices. While it wasn't much, one could feel the uneasiness inside. Many current and previous employees complained of an eeriness and a feeling of being watched when they closed up at night, specifically in the Theater 4 and 5 areas at the rear of the building, adding to the shadowed history of the structure. Ghosts on the Coast hopes to return to capture more paranormal activity.

Purchased in 1921 and reopened as a theater seating 670 patrons, countless movies have graced the screen. In the 1940s and 1950s, "going to the movies" was a major social event. Patrons would dress in their finest clothes to attend. In 1983 the theater was expanded to two screens, in 1992 to three screens, and in 1995 to five screens. The older clippings included here advertise lost and forgotten movie gems. Long-time residents of Atlantic Highlands may remember some of them.



A number of top-notch attractions are in store for movie fans at local theaters this week. The Atlantic cofeatures "Roxy Hart" and Leslie Howard in "Mister V" tonight, tomorrow and Saturday, while "Kings Row" a gripping, dramatic show, appears Sunday, Monday and Tuesday. For one day only, Wednesday, Jane Withers in "Small Town Deb" is cofeatured with Joe E. Brown in "Shut My Big Mouth."

"That Certain Woman," starring Bette Davis and Henry Fonda with Ian Hunter and Anita Louise in the supporting cast, will be shown at the Atlantic theater today. Friday and Saturday will bring "Charlie Chan on Broadway," with a notable cast including Warner Oland, Joan Marsh, Louise Henry, J. Edward Bromberg and others. The companion picture will be "Talent Scout", with Donald Woods and Jeanne Madden. The attraction Sunday, Monday and Tuesday will be "Madam X" with Gladys George and Warren William. Mr. and Mrs. Martin Johnson's "Boreno" will also be shown. Wednesday and Thursday, Loretta Young and Warner Baxter in "Wife, Doctor and Nurse" will be featured. "Lucky" is played Wednesday and Friday is "Prosperity" night

The double feature at the Atlantic theater tomorrow and Saturday will include "The Bad Man," with Wallace Beery in the title role and Lionel Barrymore, Laraine Day and Ronald Reagan, and "Horror Island," with Dick Foran, Peggy Moran and Leo Carrillo. Fran Capra's "Meet John Doe," scheduled for Sunday, Monday and Tuesday tells of how a newspaper girl, played by Barbara Stanwyck, sees in an unemployed ball player, Gary Cooper, a typical John Doe, and as such brings him national fame. Other in the star-studded cast are Edward Arnold, Walter Brennan, James Gleason, Regis Toomey and Spring Byington. The story of a teacher's love for her profession is told in "Cheers for Miss Bishop," in which Martha Scott portrays the teacher who finds romance and a sense of accomplishment in her work. Others in the cast are William Gargan, Edmund Gwenn, Mary Anderson and Rosemary DeCamp. The companion attraction will be "Model Wife," with Dick Powell and Joan Blondell

### AMATEURS TO APPEAR AT ATLANTIC THEATER

Friday night will be the first of a series of amateur nights at the Atlantic Theater, at which local people who believe that they have stage talent will be given an opportunity to demonstrate the fact. In addition the experiment will be supported by participation of five winners of stage and radio amateur contests in New York City.

It is the intention of Manager Mc Namara to continue these performances if they prove to be popular with the public.

Tonight the Atlantic Theater in Atlantic Highlands will present a gala five-hour New Year's Eve show of comedy, drama and music with nothing repeated. The feature for tomorrow and Saturday will be the big hit "George Washington Slept Here" with Jack Benny and Ann Sheridan. Sunday, Monday and Tuesday will bring "Me and My Gal" with Judy Garland and George Murphy. The features for Wednesday, one day only, will be "Lady Gangster" with Faye Emerson and Julie Bishop and "This Time For Keeps" with Ann Rutherford and Robert Sterling.

Gracie Fields, famous English comedienne, and the ever popular Vivitor McLaglen may be seen at the Atlantic theater today, when "We're Going to be Rich" will be shown. Friday and Saturday will bring "The Amazing Dr. Clitterhouse," with Edward G. Robinson portraying a man with a dual personality. Supporting him are Claire Trevor, Humphrey Bogart and Allen Jenkins. The associate feature will be "Penrod's Double Trouble," with the Mauch Twins and Dick Purcell. Joan Bennett and Randolph Scott in "The Texans" will be presented Sunday, Monday and Tuesday. Also on the program will be Laurel and Hardy in "A Perfect Day." Wednesday and Thursday will bring a stirring love story, "Port of Seven Seas," starring Wallace Beery, with Frank Morgan, Maureen O'Sullivan, John Beal and Jessie Ralph.

### ATLANTIC THEATER ATLANTIC HIGHLANDS

Phone A. H. 148

Last Times Today, Thur., Mar. 3  
Double Feature

"MISSING WITNESS"

—and—

"LOVE IS ON THE AIR"

Friday, Saturday March 4-5  
Double Feature

"Beg, Borrow or Steal"

Frank Morgan—Florence Rice

—and—

"Roll Along Cowboy"

Smith Ballew—Ceilia Parker

Sun., Mon., Tues. March 6-7-8

SONJA HENIE in

"HAPPY LANDING"

With

Don Ameche — Caesare Romero

Wednesday, Thursday, March 9-10

"Bad Man of Brimstone"

With Wallace Beery

### Don't Forget the Date

Thursday, June 6, benefit of St. Mary's Church, A. H., radio and vaudeville stars in person and "Mississippi" - with Bing Crosby, at Atlantic Theater. Tickets 30c.

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The Strauss Mansion Museum project to digitize the Atlantic Highlands Journal costs money and all donations are greatly appreciated. To donate, go to our website, [AHhistory.org](http://AHhistory.org) and click on the **DONATE** link.