

Short Review: “Forbidden Planet” (1956) by Dr. John L. Flynn



Forbidden Planet (1956). MGM, USA, color, 98 min. Director: Fred M. Wilcox.

Writers: Irving Block and Allen Adler. Producer: Nicholas Nayfack. Cast: Walter Pidgeon, Anne Francis, Leslie Nielsen, Jack Kelly, Warren Stevens, James Drury, Earl Holliman, and Robby the Robot.

In a plot that borrows heavily from Shakespeare’s The Tempest, Commander J.J. Adams (Nielsen) pilots his hyper-driven flying saucer across the stars to Altair-4 to find out what happened to the Earth colony there. He and his blaster-toting, all-male crew discover a mad scientist (Pidgeon), who has been playing with the tinker toys of some forgotten alien civilization, his beautiful daughter in a very short mini-skirt (Francis), and a robot that’s brighter and funnier than the ship’s cook (Holliman). Alas, when the midnight monster that destroyed the original colony arrives, the real fun and games begin. The special effects, bolstered by superb Disney animation, still look pretty damn good, as does Anne Francis, particularly when the former New York fashion model is swimming

naked in front of the Commander. Leslie Nielsen is terribly young and serious, but we know he'll eventually lighten up for the "Naked Gun" movies. Sequences with Robby the Robot are fun and memorable as is the conclusion. Like Robby, we'll take our oxygen straight-up, even if it does promote rust.

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