

The Batman

US serial : 1943 : dir. Lambert Hillyer : Columbia : 15 x 20 min
 prod: Rudolph Flothow : scr: Victor McLeob, Leslie Swabacker & Harry Fraser
 : dir.ph.: James S Brown

Douglas Croft
 Lewis Wilson; J Carrol Naish; William Austin; Shirley Patterson; Charles Wilson;
 Charles Middleton; Robert Fiske; Michael Vallon; Gus Glassmire

Ref:	Pages	Sources	Stills	Words	Ω	8	≠	M	☺	Copy on VHS	Last Viewed
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The Oscar for Best Costume Design seems to have eluded the Dynamic Duo this time

Source: How Sweet it Was



*"Think fast, Mr Moto" growls Batman, as yet another oriental caricature joins the Hollywood Hall of Infamy
Source: Films & Filming*

Speelfilm Encyclopedie review:

"Serial in fifteen chapters. Victor McLeob, Leslie Swabacker and Harry Fraser based their screenplay on the comic book characters of Bill Fingers and Bob Kane. Wilson is Batman and Croft Wonderboy Robin. Naish is the villainous Dr Daka who, with a zombie army, attempts to steal radium for the Nazi powers. The serial was popular and was released again at the end of the sixties due to the success of the TV series running then. Even in the Netherlands people could go and watch the serial at the time, but only in one sitting [= 200 min], so that was hours of cinema enjoyment. James S Brown did the camerawork for producer Rudolph Flothow and Columbia. *** "

Halliwell's Film Guide review:

"With the help of the Boy Wonder, the Caped Crusader battles an enemy underground ring led by Dr Daka. Reasonably spirited romp marred by the usual tinpot sets. **"BATMAN AND ROBIN"** (15 episodes) followed in 1948, directed by Spencer Bennet. The leads were played by Robert Lowery and John

Duncan: they combated The Wizard with the help of Lyle Talbot as the police commissioner."

[no listing in "Leonard Maltin's Movie and Video Guide 2001", "The Critics' Film Guide", "The Good Film and Video Guide", "Movies on TV and Videocassette 1988-89", "Rating the Movies (1990)", "The Sunday Times Guide to Movies on Television", "The Time Out Film Guide", "TV Times Film & Video Guide 1995", "Variety Movie Guide 1993", "Video Movie Guide 1993" or "The Virgin Film Guide"]

Radio Times notes:

"The original 1940s series, with Lewis Wilson as the Caped Crusader, Douglas Croft as Robin."

"Batman and the Boy Wonder continue to battle against crime in Gotham City in this 1940s version of the comic strip."

"The Dynamic Duo determine to rescue the hapless Linda from the diabolical Dr Daka."

“Vintage action with the caped crusader.”

What’s On TV note:

“Vintage action with the caped crusader.”

Films & Filming article:

“,,,,,,,,,,,,,”

Only a few random episodes seen. The plotting of these popular matinee serials did not suggest a high opinion of their target audience, and often resorted to puerile caricatures of perfidious orientals, psychotic Krauts and the like. These would be replaced during the Cold War period by psychotic Russkies and perfidious Europeans. There was a brief hiatus in the 1980s with psychotic flatmates, lovers and babysitters before we moved comfortably on to the perfidious arabs. Nobody makes films about the perfidious Americans, of course, because that’s where the largest box office market resides.

This incarnation of Batman seems to have been drawn from the newspaper comic strip rather than the DC comic books for boys, which were governed by the strict censorship code of the American Comics Authority. It would be interesting to contrast the characterisations between the two. The huge popularity of the camp sixties TV show left most adults with the impression the Caped Crusader and his adversaries were written as figures of farce, but that lampooning tone was wholly a creation of TV. Kids always preferred their tales of heroism told straight. Batman was Roy Rogers without the horse and guitar, a Tarzan for the inner city.

Douglas Croft played George Cohan as a boy in the early part of **"YANKEE DOODLE DANDY"** ('42), putting on airs after a vaudeville success as "Peck's Bad Boy". A bashing from the envious boys in the audience, and a backstage spanking from dad Walter Houston, remedy that situation. Judging from his age in that, he'd be about 14 here.

See also **"BATMAN AND ROBIN"** (serial, 48), **"Batman"** (TV series, 65-67), **"BATMAN"** (66), **"BATMAN"** (89), **"BATMAN RETURNS"** (92), **"BATMAN FOREVER"** (95) and **"BATMAN AND ROBIN"** (97). There was also a full-length animated feature, **"BATMAN: MASK OF THE PHANTASM"** in 1993, based on a TV cartoon. See also subject index under **BOY SIDEKICKS, COMIC BOOKS & SUPERHEROES** and **SERIALISATIONS**.