

Science-Tone Films Presents

The Technology and You Series

THE COMPUTER: WONDER OF THE FUTURE

A MICHAEL KENNETH JACKSON FILM

STARRING

TOM ACORD

ERIC VEJBY

DEBORAH JEAN WELSH

CIARAN VEJBY

CAITLIN VEJBY

and

BEN HARRISON

as The Robot

Directed by **MICHAEL KENNETH JACKSON**

Written and Produced by **ERIC VEJBY**
MICHAEL KENNETH JACKSON

Cinematographer and Editor **MICHAEL KENNETH JACKSON**

3 minutes, 35 seconds - Color - English - USA 2008 - Not Rated

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THE COMPUTER: WONDER OF THE FUTURE

SHORT SYNOPSIS / LOG LINE

Science-Tone Films, maker of educational movies in the 1950s, presents a look into the future showing how computers will one day simplify the lives of all who use them.

MEDIUM SYNOPSIS

Science-Tone Films, maker of children's educational movies in the 1950s, presents a fantastical look at how computers will one day simplify the lives of all who use them.

Our guide for this informative and astounding journey into the future is none other than the Science-Tone Professor himself. Delivering a lesson to Larry and Suzy, two well-mannered grade school students with excellent posture, The Professor foretells a time in the not too distant future when mechanical thinking machines, called "com-pu-tors," will increase our quality of life, send rockets to Mars, and help fight communism.

The Professor concludes the day's lesson with a coda that will be proven true in decades to come: "At work, at home, or on the go, the computer truly is the wonder of the future."

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THE COMPUTER: WONDER OF THE FUTURE

LONG SYNOPSIS

Science-Tone Films, maker of children's educational movies in the 1950s, presents a fantastical look into the future where mechanical thinking machines, called "com-pu-tors," will increase our quality of life, send rockets to Mars, and help fight communism.

Our guide for this informative and astounding journey into the future is none other than the Science-Tone Professor himself. Delivering a lesson to Larry and Suzy, two well-mannered grade school students with excellent posture, The Professor foretells of a time when, thanks to the computer, the 40-hour work week will be a thing of the past and quitting time will have workers home before lunch.

However, it is not only the workplace that will benefit from computers. The Professor reveals that one day the computer will become a common-place appliance in the average American home. After another short and easy day at the office, Bob returns home to his favorite lunch of tuna casserole that his wife Doris has prepared using one of the hundreds of recipes stored on their household computer -- which is the size of a small refrigerator and sounds like a city bus.

But The Professor has saved the best for last as he boldly heralds science's ultimate triumph in computing: the personal computer, a powerful, mobile machine that users can take with them wherever they go.

Larry and Suzy light-up with excitement when The Professor reveals to them that this computer is "mobile" and "personal" because it is, in fact, a robot -- straight out of a 50s B movie. This personal computer [robot] will simplify everyday life by sending files and messages to co-workers (literally walking them over to the recipient), creating charts and graphics ("hand" painting them on card stock), and helping out with the household chores (balancing the checkbook, washing the dishes, even mowing the driveway). Well, he got it right in theory anyway.

The Professor concludes the day's lesson with a coda that will be proven true in decades to come: "At work, at home, or on the go, the computer truly is the wonder of the future."

THE COMPUTER: WONDER OF THE FUTURE

PRODUCTION NOTES

THE COMPUTER: WONDER OF THE FUTURE is a comedic take on a 1950s educational film that presents a look into the future showing how computers will one day simplify the lives of all who use them.

Writing the script, director Michael Kenneth Jackson and producer Eric Vejby played off one another's respective strengths; Jackson's background in film writing and Vejby's experience in corporate communications marketing high technology products. Together, they fashioned a script based on enough factual knowledge to be completely inaccurate (producing humorous results).

Once the screenplay was completed it was decided early on that the story's concept would be most successful if the filmmakers could get audiences to question whether the movie they are watching was actually filmed in the 50s. This meant furnishing every department -- sets, props, wardrobe -- with the real McCoy where ever and whenever possible.

The first order of business was securing locations that would make the movie look believable as a 1950s period piece. The production needed look no further than Vejby's parents. Their home, a mid-century suburban tract house in the San Francisco Bay Area, was not only perfect for the exterior and interior kitchen shots, but the rumpus room doubled nicely as the movie's central location: the school room where the professor foretells future computer wonders to the school children, Larry and Suzy.

With the locations in place, attention turned to dressing them with as many authentic 1940s and 1950s pieces as possible. These items included such vintage items as a crank lever adding machine, a loving cup, and a burnt orange casserole dish. There was one item, however, that could not be found in any antique store: the personal computer of the future. As described in the movie, it is a "powerful, mobile machine that users can take with them where ever they go." It is revealed that this machine is mobile because it has legs -- it's a robot.

Jackson and Vejby always knew the robot needed a retro feel. They based the look on the many toy robots they treasured as kids as well as the archetypal robots from 50s B (and C) movies. To give the robot a look unique to the production, an analog clock (with hands) was mounted on the mechanical man's chest. "We just loved the idea," says Jackson, "with all the advanced technology used to make the robot, the main scientific tool on this thing's chest is a plain ol' kitchen a clock." Ben Harrison joined the elite group of actors who have played robots when he donned the thirty pound costume, performing all sorts of activities such painting, washing dishes and walking, all with with zero-vision.

THE COMPUTER: WONDER OF THE FUTURE

PRODUCTION NOTES (continued)

Full attention was now given to casting the production. "This is a tricky movie to cast," relates Jackson. "You not only need actors who can bring that 50s acting style to the screen, but they have to look the part as well. With just three short minutes to establish the film's look and feel and tell the story, you need every advantage you can get."

The central role of the film is undoubtedly the Professor who foretells the fantastical future computer advances. The filmmakers cast Tom Acord, who, as fate would have it, was an actual professor -- but of music studies, not retro computer sciences. While not an actor per se, Acord had performed in numerous operas as well as given solo tenor performances. "Tom was a direct gift from the movie gods. I took one look at him and thought to myself 'he looks just like he stepped of the Yahtzee box - all he needs is that graduation cap.' which, of course, made him perfect for the role"

Larry and Suzy, the grade school children sitting in on The Professor's fantastical lecture, Vejby's nephew and niece, Ciaran Vejby and Caitlin Vejby respectively, were cast. "Originally, I wanted to cast family members in the kid's roles," remembers Jackson, "so we could skirt all the child labor laws... that's just a joke. But then I was ecstatic when I discovered how talented they were -- very natural and very focused."

The two remaining roles were of Bob and Doris, the office worker and his wife who both benefit from computer life. The part of Doris went to musician and television producer Deborah Jean Welsh. "Deborah is a friend of mine," says Jackson. "I asked her to play the part because I knew she would "get it" - she could add a little 'wink' to the role; an almost surreal approach that could move it further away from reality. Eric and I were always aware that the part of Doris was an anachronism; the little housewife, at home, cooking for her husband. What Deborah brought to the part, and pretty much all in one shot, was this sort of eerie, knowing smile, like Doris really has more than tuna in that casserole dish for ol' Bob." Rounding off the cast as Doris' husband Bob was Vejby, adding the job of acting to his duties on the production.

With the movie's cast came another key aspect to the production: the actors' clothing sizes. Next stop was every vintage clothing store in San Francisco to acquire authentic wardrobe from the 1950s. Nearly 90% of all costumes worn in THE COMPUTER: WONDER OF THE FUTURE were actual clothing from the era. Complimenting the costumes was period hair and makeup by Eileen Bartlett.

Filming took place over four days in the San Francisco Bay Area. The movie's four sets, the school room, Bob's office, Bob and Doris' kitchen and the exterior of their house, were shot at two different locations -- making furniture moving as necessary a skill as film production.

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PRODUCTION NOTES (continued)

Jackson directed and shot the movie, acting as both cinematographer and camera operator. "Believe it or not," says Jackson, "one of the toughest things to do in photographing this movie, was to make sure there was at least one shadow in every shot. These old movies were shot in like, 20 minutes so there were often shadows all over the place -- one light, flood it, shoot, print it. We wanted that same creepy feel in this movie so we were constantly re-blocking actors" Vejby filled in as grip and gaffer while location sound was recorded by David Jackson.

In postproduction, picture and sound were edited by Jackson at AVI Studios in the San Francisco East Bay with technical engineering by James Boyle.

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CAST BIOS

Tom Acord (The Professor)

Tom Acord earned his B.M. degree from Texas Technical University and his M.M. and D.M.A. degrees from The University of Texas, Austin. He has performed major roles with the Portland Opera, Festival Opera, Sao Paulo Opera (Brazil), and San Francisco Spring Opera. His symphony appearances include San Jose, Boise, Phoenix, Dallas, San Antonio, Oakland, and Marin. Throughout his career, Tom has produced, conducted, directed and designed operas on the national scene as well as in university opera workshops. In sacred literature, Dr. Acord has performed the tenor solos in all of the major oratorios and sacred works.

Eric Vejby (Bob)

A born extrovert, Eric started his acting career in high school productions of STALAG 13 (Reed) and THE DESK SET, and he was awarded both the Bank of America Drama Scholarship and the prestigious title of Hayward High "Class Clown" in 1983. In college, Eric earned awards for improvisation, dramatic interpretation, and performed in garage bands including Chalky Greenboard and the Eraserheads and The Popsimilies. Today, Eric works as a senior marcom professional, bringing more than 20 years of experience to high technology marketing, including corporate and industrial video production. He is currently Web Marketing Manager at JDSU in Milpitas, CA.

Deborah Jean Welsh (Doris)

An award-winning producer, Deborah Jean Welsh has a vast array of experience and accomplishments from corporate communications and commercials to television programming and narrative feature films. Ms. Welsh's producer and hosting credits include innovative musical talk shows for the Oasis and Wisdom satellite networks. Recently, she served as Director of Outreach and Development for the feature length documentary, MINE: TAKEN BY KATRINA, focusing on the fate of the animals of the gulf coast. Her current project as producer, director and writer is the award winning documentary JUST SIGN HERE, exposing the worst fraud, betrayal, and loss in modern U.S. History. The song from the film, WHATEVER HAPPENED TO THE AMERICAN DREAM, HD music video produced by Ms. Welsh, can be seen on You Tube.

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FILMMAKER BIOS

Michael Kenneth Jackson (Director-Writer-Producer-Director of Photography-Editor)

Michael Kenneth Jackson made his first movie at the age of eleven, using his grandmother's Bell and Howell double roll 8mm camera. This began a streak that saw him making one movie every summer right through high school. Jackson received his Bachelor of Arts in film from San Francisco State University where his writing was twice chosen by the Department of Cinema's Screenwriters In Residence program. He has authored the screenplays THE ART LIFE, DEVIL OF A DEAL, MY GIRLFRIEND DANA, and RENT-A-ZOMBIE. His film work as writer-director-producer includes SECRET OF THE SUPERHEROES, CLOWN TOWN, SANTA OF THE LIVING DEAD, THE COMPUTER: WONDER OF THE FUTURE, as well as regional commercials for Columbia Records, Oodle, and Pacific Gas and Electric. Jackson's filmmaking has been honored by The New York School of Visual Arts, Starlog Press, The Alliance For Community Media, and The San Francisco Bay Area Cable Excellence Awards.

Eric Vejby (Producer-Writer)

A born extrovert, Eric started his acting career in high school productions of STALAG 13 (Reed) and THE DESK SET, and he was awarded both the Bank of America Drama Scholarship and the prestigious title of Hayward High "Class Clown" in 1983. In college, Eric earned awards for improvisation, dramatic interpretation, and performed in garage bands including Chalky Greenboard and the Eraserheads and The Popsimilies. Today, Eric works as a senior marcom professional, bringing more than 20 years of experience to high technology marketing, including corporate and industrial video production. He is currently Web Marketing Manager at JDSU in Milpitas, CA.

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CAST LIST

The Professor.....TOM ACORD
Larry.....CIARAN VEJBY
Suzy.....CAITLIN VEJBY
Bob.....ERIC VEJBY
Doris.....DEBORAH JEAN WELSH
The Robot.....BEN HARRISON

CREW LIST

Directed by.....MICHAEL KENNETH JACKSON
Written and Produced by.....ERIC VEJBY & MICHAEL KENNETH JACKSON
Cinematographer and Editor.....MICHAEL KENNETH JACKSON
Location Sound Recording.....DAVID JACKSON
Grip.....JOHN SILVA
Gaffer.....BRIAN JACKSON
Makeup and Hair.....EILEEN BARTLETT
CHERYL VEJBY
Production Designer and Costumes.....MICHAEL KENNETH JACKSON
Props and Sets.....MICHAEL KENNETH JACKSON & ERIC VEJBY & CHERYL VEJBY
Postproduction Engineer.....JAMES BOYLE