



THE DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL



Main Facts

Year Made:1951

Production Company: [Twentieth Century Fox](#)

Directed by: [Robert Wise](#)

Written by: [Edmund H. North](#) (screen play), [Harry Bates](#) (based on a story by)

Genre:Drama / Sci-Fi



Main Actors

1. [Michael Rennie](#)
2. [Patricia Neal](#)
3. [Hugh Marlowe](#)



Major Plot Summary

An alien (Klaatu) with his mighty robot (Gort) land their spacecraft on Cold War-era Earth just after the end of World War II. They bring an important message to the planet that Klaatu wishes to tell to representatives of all nations. However, communication turns out to be difficult, so, after learning something about the natives, Klaatu decides on an alternative approach.



Financial Information

Budget: \$1,200,000 (estimated)

Money Made: \$1,850,000 (USA)

Special Costs:



Major Quotes

Klaatu: I am fearful when I see people substituting fear for reason.

Secretary: The phone doesn't work.

Mr. Krull: Well then call the phone company.

Secretary: But... the phone doesn't work!

Klaatu: I won't resort to threats, Mr. Harley. I merely tell you the future of your planet is at stake.

Bobby Benson: [*to Klaatu*] I like you Mr. Carpenter, you're a real screwball!!

American Radar Operator: Holy Mackerel! Call headquarters. Get the lieutenant.



Historical Significance

Commentary on Nuclear Weapons

A look at the idea of religion on society



Filming Information

Filming Location: [Lincoln Memorial, National Mall, Washington, District of Columbia, USA](#)

Special advance made in film.

Source Material:



Composition/Music

The music score was composed by [Bernard Herrmann](#) in August 1951, and was his first score after he moved from New York to [Hollywood](#). Herrmann chose unusual instrumentation for the film: violin, cello, and bass (all three electric), two [theremin](#) electronic instruments (played by Dr. [Samuel Hoffman](#) and Paul Shure), two [Hammond organs](#), a large studio electric organ, three [vibraphones](#), two [glockenspiels](#), marimba, tam-tam, two bass drums, three sets of timpani, two pianos, celesta, two harps, one horn, three trumpets, three trombones, and four tubas. Herrmann's notable advances in film scoring included Unison organs, tubas, piano, and bass drum, staggered tritone movement, and glissando in theremins, as well as exploitation of the dissonance between D and E-flat and experimentation with unusual overdubbing and tape-reversal techniques. By using the theremin Herrmann made one of music's first forays into electronic music, one year before [Karlheinz Stockhausen](#) and three years before [Edgard Varèse](#), something that was overlooked by the classical elite.



Inane Trivia

The role of Gort was played by [Lock Martin](#), the doorman from Grauman's Chinese Theater, because he was extremely tall. However, he was unable to pick up Helen because he was so weak and had to be aided by wires (in shots from the back where he's carrying her, it's actually a lightweight dummy in his arms). He also had difficulty with the heavy Gort suit and could only stay in it for about a half hour at a time.

To give the appearance of seamlessness to the space ship, the crack around the door was filled with putty, then painted over. When the door opened the putty was torn apart, making the door seem to simply appear.

The Army refused to cooperate after reading the script. The National Guard had no such qualms and gladly offered their cooperation.

To increase the sense of reality, some of the most famous broadcast journalists of the time were hired to do cameos as themselves. These included [Gabriel Heatter](#), [H.V. Kaltenborn](#) and [Drew Pearson](#).



Accolades/Recognition

Won

Golden Globe

Best Film Promoting International Understanding