

Will Batman Revive Saturday Serial?

THE EVENING NEWS, SAULT

HOLLYWOOD (AP) — Will Batmania bring back the Saturday serial?

They're hoping so along film exchange row, where salesmen for the movie companies hang out. For years the film sellers could no more peddle a serial than they could a William S. Hart Western.

The ubiquitous Batman may be changing that. The success of the television show caused the local Columbia exchange to dig deep into the vaults and come up with a Batman serial made during World War II.

The 12 chapters were spliced together and booked into Holly-



BOB
THOMAS

wood's Cinema Theater; running time: 4½ hours. What happened? Crowds broke the house record.

The Batman serial was scheduled for test showings in nearby Santa Ana, Goleta, and San Diego. If the tests prove as profitable as the showing in Holly-

wood, the serial may receive a nationwide release. Columbia also has a sequel serial, "Batman and Robin" as a followup.

Other film companies are searching their vaults. Republic has exhumed "The Adventures of Captain Marvel" for a showing in Long Beach.

Today's generation knows nothing of the Saturday serial, except via ersatz versions on the telly. Their parents can tell them of the thrills of watching a hero or heroine escape the clutches of a demoniacal villain, only to fall into a worse trap at the end of the chapter.

As a research project, I went

to the Cinema Theater with daughters Janet, 14, and Caroline, 7½, both devout followers of the latterday Batman. Research came dear: \$2 admission, including children.

Attendants told me that nighttime showings were often sell-outs. Such audiences were largely adult, and most stick out the entire four and a half hours.

It was easy to see why. After the first few chapters, the serial becomes an opiate; you crave more. You wonder just what new pickle Batman and Robin can get into and how they can possibly extricate themselves.

The serial is good for laughs, though not the intended ones of the television series.

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