

Strand Theatre Shelbyville, Inc.

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Tromadance Day 3 ? Reviews

Written by David on September, 27 2009

The following reviews do not express the opinion of the Strand Theatre.

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In film festivals of any all kinds, such as Tromadance at the Strand Theatre, one often gets a rather eclectic mix of poor, really bad, downright ugly, scarily good and rare occasional gems of sparkling brilliance. Sunday's features, in Shelbyville's only downtown theatre, were no exception to this unwritten rule.

The day began early with an exceptionally horrid attempt "Vampire City," that merely seemed to be an excuse to film attractive Austrian women. This insipid tale of a "rock-n-roll vampire" was far and away the most disappointing movie of the entire weekend.

The day, however, was quickly redeemed by four rather fast paced short-films which swung wildly across the spectrum of vampiric themes. The most memorable of these was "The Union," a vampire wedding filled with assassination and a curious plot twist. Also worthy of mention is "She Thinks She Sees Zombies," a fast, scream-filled, hilarious farce. Finally, these short excursions into mini-horror reached a psychological peak with "The Faceless," a morbid story of a victim of violence turned assassin through the healing powers of modern therapy methods.

The next feature was a take on the tired genre of a geeky, nerd turned bully-killing vigilante. Watching this ghost-filled slasher I was left wondering about the merits of such a gore-filled exploitation and exploration of just such social misfits in a post-Columbine world.

On the heels of this film, followed a more mainstream feature: "Twists of Fate," a rather straightforward tale of the unglamorous life, decisions and deaths of two rival gangster families.

However, it was the next film, "Can't or Won't Not," which proved itself to be a surprisingly, experimental gem of a film. This digital, computer art themed film was created by a 23-year-old Columbus, Indiana native, Adam Cooley. This, his first movie, was a visually promising, color-filled work that played upon a fusion of pop-culture and computer-generated effects. It was a challenging and interesting exploration of virtual and real life that sadly needed tighter dialogue and a little more variation. All-in-all, Cooley is film-producer that deserves and needs to further continue and refine his heightened visions.

At this time, the eyes of this visual bohemian reviewer required a break, so to journalism I turned, letting the audience review the next feature, "Chaos from Outer Space." Most in the crowd said this 72-minute movie would have been better as a short. One frequent weekend-long patron, summed it best in a quick quip "At best this a Z-movie spoof."

Following was an Australian film, "Demons Among Us," which started out as promising dark tale. It, quickly, however, descended into a visual melange of special-effects for the sake of special-effects and one soon came to realize that the person who directed this movie had obviously watched the "Blair Witch Project" a few too many times. Finally, if there are demons among us then they surely haunted and ruined the initially promising cinematography of this film.

As on the previous evening of film, the best Movie experience of Sunday night was the next feature "The Italian Zombie Movie: Part II Zombie Atrocity." If Part I of this epic was a baroque, surreal plunge into madness, discombobulation and mayhem, then Part II was rather strange linear tying of a multitude of plot-lines and the cacophony of conspiracy theories that comprise this film. In short, this movie is the Post-Modern face of horror: a movie that both zombifies the senses and makes ones very skeleton giggle with sarcastic glee.

Kudos to these Michigan movie mavericks. Watching both parts of ?The Italian Zombie Movie? makes one realize that it will take countless, repeated viewings for anyone to deconstruct each and every cultural and movie-lore reference encoded into this film. This sensory tome of Berdinski and friends is like encountering the James Joyce of 21st-century cinema: simultaneously mind-boggling, soul-satisfying and compellingly curious.

Images on this post:

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