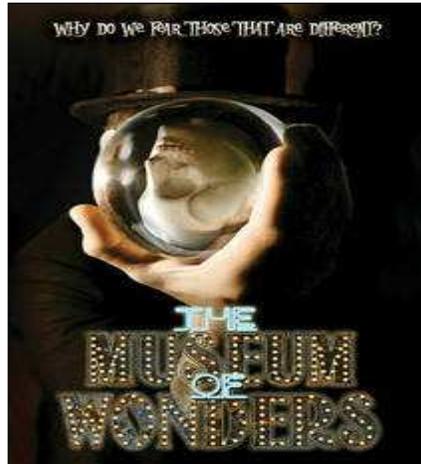


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## Movie Review: The Museum of Wonders (2010)

Posted by KennyB



Directed by Domiziano Cristophare

Starring Francesco Venditti, Fabiano Lioi and Valentina Mio

When the beautiful dancer Salome learns that the dwarf circus owner Marcel has just received an inheritance, she marries the lovesick, diminutive performer. Much to the chagrin of his former fiancée and the rest of the show's unusual cast of performers. It appears everyone but Marcel sees Salome as the gold-digging tramp that she is. Her plan is to steal his fortune and run off with her lover, the world's scrawniest strongman, Sansone.

After attempting to poison Marcel on their wedding night, Salome and Sansone's plan is discovered and the band of walking curiosities carry out a most wickedly disturbing punishment for the two.



I walked into this one not really having any idea what the movie was about, but within about 10 minutes it was pretty clear this Italian festival-style art house film was indeed a modern remake of Tom Browning's classic horror movie *Freaks* (1932). Once I realized this, I spent the next hour and a half waiting with great anticipation to see how the revenge finale would play out, as the ending of the original film was and still is one of the most shocking in horror movie history. I of course won't give the ending away here but I will say it was indeed shocking in its own right and definitely worth the wait. The story line is pretty straight forward and simple, but along the way a good portion of the film focuses not so much on the 3 main characters of the love triangle but on the emotional plight of the remaining circus' performers, how they are seen through the eyes of those who pay to view them, and how they see themselves as they stand staring into the mirror.



The dialog is all very formal and the film is littered with long philosophical, obtuse and poetic monologues. Some of them seemed to make sense but there were a few times when it felt like I was trying to solve a Rubik's Cube made out of spoken words. It was at times a bit hard to keep up with but the fact that the visuals invoked by the cinematography were just so pleasing, it never lost my attention. It was just so beautifully shot. The costumes were amazing and for the most part the acting was very good. Especially the work of Valentina Mio as Salome (a top notch performance as the beautiful but evil seductress), and Fabiano Lioi as Marcel.



With a soundtrack that is comprised mostly of operatic songs, and with all of its formalities this one is definitely outside the box as far as what most of us would consider a horror movie. As a remake of a classic film, I would say it does a more than respectable job of re-telling the tale while putting its own unique stamp on the story. I am pretty certain it won't appeal to everyone out there, but fans of the original *Freaks* and lovers of all things "art house" will find quite a bit here to hold their attention.

BONUS FEATURES:

Deleted scenes

A sword-swallower show

A gag/blooper reel

7 out of 10 Reviewed by KennyB

Labels: **2010s**, **horror**, **Kenny Barnwell**, **remake**

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