

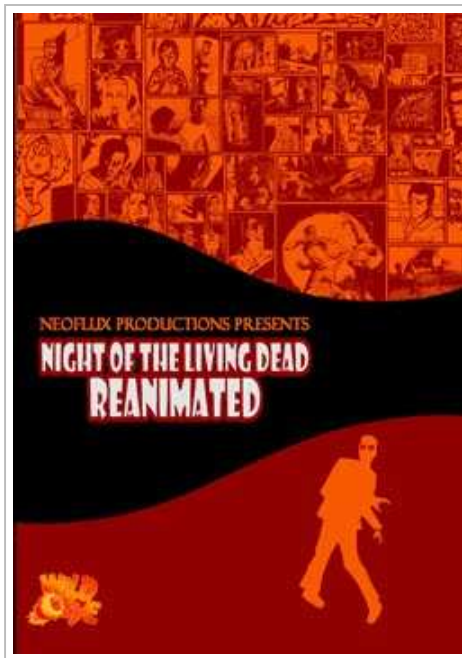
FFanzeen: Rock'n'Roll Attitude With Integrity

Through the writings and photography of Robert Barry Francos, a view of the arts and culture, including everyday life.

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 16, 2010

DVD Review: "Night of the Living Dead: Reanimated"

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Images from the Internet



Night of the Living Dead: Reanimated

Curated by Mike Schneider, directed by George Romero
Wild Eye, 2009

101 minutes, USD \$16.95

Wildeyeleasing.com

MVDvisual.com

Notldr.com

Julie Andrews could have sung, if her tastes were more similar to mine, "music and horror and comics and White Castle / These are a few of my favorite things." Okay, so the first and last of those are not the focus of this review, but the middle two are, with joyous abandon.

The assumption here is that if you're reading this review, you've seen George Romero's groundbreaking 1968 zombie classic, *Night of the*

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Living Dead, most likely more than once, if not more than 10. It's familiar, comfortable, and still a pleasure with its angular neo-Germanic Expressionism, and black and white images. Remember the first time you saw it? I have a clear memory of cutting high school in the early '70s and going by myself to the Walker Theater in Bensonhurst (now a Mandees store). It was a double Halloween bill, but I have no memory of what the first piece of crap was, though I certainly remember the three hood wannabes behind me who kept kicking my chair between loud, open-mouth breathing (in just a couple of years they would probably be wearing polyester and medallions, and hanging out at 2001 Odyssey). By the time *NOTLD* was over, as the second feature, we were all sitting together.

That was the first time, but hardly the last. There have been a number of remakes, even by the same team, but none have - or can - live up to the original. But like the zombies, it keeps rising up again and again.



Night of the Living Dead: Reanimated takes a new twist on a now old concept. Previously there have been reissues of films where the dialog has been replaced by something totally different, such as Woody Allen's spectacular *What's Up Tiger Lily?*,

and serials from the '40s being given the treatment by Firesign Theater. Well, *Reanimated* takes the opposite approach in two directions: first, they use the actual soundtrack and change the image, and second, this is totally respectful and not a spoof at all (though there are moments of humor, such as one zombie looking a bit like GW Bush).

Here is the concept: Mike Schneider sent out word over the 'Net via horror Websites to artists for their input to animate the film by any means necessary. With contributions of over 150 individual pieces,



he took this work and connected it to the original film. There are still images and animated sections, including line drawing, EC-style comics, Ren & Stimpy type caricatures, claymation, Barbie dolls, computer game styles (including Grand Theft Auto and SIMS), stop-motion photography, puppets, and even a few Furbies thrown into the mix. While this sounds like a hodgepodge from hell, it actually works fantastically, possibly creating a new genre.

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About Me

Robert Barry Francos
c/o 62 Timber Ridge Rd,
Commack, NY 11725. From 1977-88, I used to publish a music magazine in New York called FFanzeen, which dealt with the wide-ranging independent music scene. I also photographed many bands from the period (and since). And the beat goes on.

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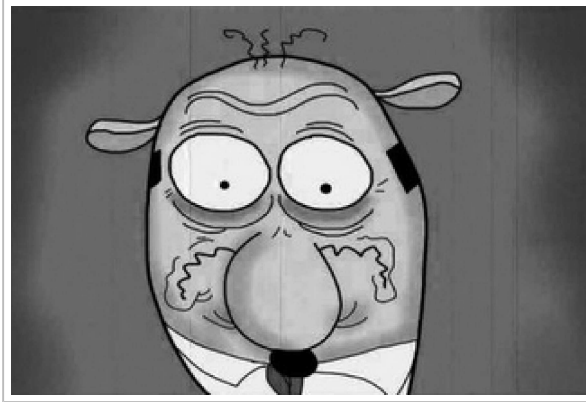
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For the still pix, the camera rolls over them giving some sense of motion, and there is hardly a moment where your attention is drawn away

(no pun intended). The contributed work is all over the map, some of it quite conceptual and abstract, while others are obviously adapted from the actual film frames (a good example of this is the multiple shots of the same frame of Bill Hinzman, the first zombie seen in the opening cemetery scene - he's coming to get Barbara - at the car window). All these images and styles are put together like a series of museum pieces (which is why Schneider lists himself as "curator"), but in a constant flow.

This is all done for the love of the art and the film, as those who contributed were not paid to do so, but each is given full credit at



the end, and often in the bonus features. Speaking of which, this release is chock full of extras, including animated shorts, great obscure trailers (for Wild Eye films), extended unused scenes, an introduction by horror host Count Gore De Vol, a panel from a horror conference with many of those involved with this project, and two very interesting commentary tracks. The first one deals with the film and this version of it in an almost philosophical bent without being anywhere pretentious (the "art" of the art, zombie cinema, etc.), and the second is how it all came to be in this film, and how the production team created the final outcome). I sat through both without being bored at all.

If *Reanimated* is successful, perhaps there are other public domain films that can be given this treatment. Of course, it would need to be one that has an audience that has seen it numerous times, enough to get what is going on at any particular time... which brings me to one minor quibble about this release. I would have loved an option to be

able to turn on the original version of the film in a smaller window, perhaps in a corner, to compare them. But hey, what the hell, it's a brilliant concept that is put together in a cohesive albeit jumpy way as it goes from style to style, but it is never distracting to the story.

This is a true homage to a classic piece of cinema.



Bonus video: The opening scene



Unrelated bonus video



Posted by Robert Barry Francos at 5:12 PM

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