

Night Of The Living Dead: Reanimated

(DVD Region 0: pub: MVD Visual/MVD Entertainment Group. B003GUGB8G. 101 minute DVD with extras. Price: £17.83 (UK), \$16.95 (US))

stars: Duane Jones, Judith O'Dea and Karl Hardman

check out website: <http://mvdb2b.com/b2b/>

'Night Of The Living Dead: Reanimated' is essentially a re-working of the classic George Romero movie 'Night Of The Living Dead' with animations replacing the live action visuals. But rather than a straightforward animated version of the film, 'Night Of The Living Dead: Reanimated' features the work of 150 different artists, each working in their own particular style. The result is more art gallery than art house and as a simple beginning-to-end rendition of the film 'Night Of The Living Dead: Reanimated' is too choppy to work well, but it's a remarkable piece of film-making nonetheless.

As many readers will already know, because of a legal error made when the film was first released in 1968, 'Night Of The Living Dead' is considered to be in the public domain. That means it isn't covered by the intellectual property rights that protect most commercially-released films, so like a Shakespearean play, the 'Night Of The Living Dead' is out there for artists to tinker about with as they wish. In this case, artists from all around the world have recreated scenes from the film and these have been edited together to replace all the original live action footage.

The range of methods used by the artists is remarkable, including traditional animation, stop-go animation, storyboard scan-and-pans and three-dimensional computer-generated graphics. Even more diverse is the range of styles and materials, with things like Barbie Dolls and skeletonised Furbies making particularly notable appearances. Doubtless some will want to argue over the variable quality of the various segments, but such things are inevitable with projects of this type. That said, the choppiness that comes from the successive switching between dozens of radically different styles does make 'Night Of The Living Dead: Reanimated' rather difficult to watch from start to finish. At the least, it undermines dramatic tension because any suspension of disbelief is continually being reset as the viewer adapts to yet another style of animation. So rather than being scary, the resulting film feels like a succession of unrelated visuals. Nonetheless, as an artwork the overall impression of 'Night Of The Living Dead: Reanimated' is one of innovation and affection for the original source material.

Perhaps even more remarkable is the way the animations have been edited to synchronise with the audio, particular the speech. The sound quality isn't great and the muddiness of the voice track jars somewhat compared to the clarity of the new electronic score and special effects. Also, for whatever reason, I couldn't view the DVD-ROM content on my MacBook Pro. But these are minor niggles, and in general, this region-free DVD played great. For a start, there are lots and lots of extras. These include extra scenes and offerings from the artists, documentaries on the various animation methods used and commentaries to listen to while watching the film itself.

There's also a slideshow that gives the names of each artist alongside a frame of their work, almost like a gallery programme.

Zombie fans will likely want to buy the thing simply to enjoy new renditions of their favourite scenes, but more generally this DVD will appeal as a fun novelty. It would, for example, be a great movie to have playing in background at Hallowe'en parties. For the more artistic-minded horror fans, definitely recommended.

Neale Monks