

Another film from the infamous shot-on-video era of the 80s/90s. This one is ambition - though ambition far outshot budget on "Scream Dream." It's a short film and the heavily padded running time and choppy story stands in juxtaposition to incredible amounts (relatively speaking) of effort that went into the FX. On the one hand you've got lots (and lots) of footage of female-fronted "heavy metal" (which even by the era's standards really isn't terribly heavy), which is an appropriate way to pad things out given that this movie is a rock-n-roll horror movie, thus earning its place on the (small) shelf of rock horror opuses that understandably surfaced in an era when heavy metal was habitually associated with the diabolical (both by heavy metal proponents and opponents, though I suspect in many cases the latter took the satanic associations more seriously than did the former). The great thing about this is that you can't have female-fronted music in American heavy metal culture without sex appeal being a consideration and while we don't see the main villainess in much more than basic skimpy rock garb, we do see the other main metal girl of the story (who is also the villainess - hold your horses, I'm getting there) display her more-than-respectable torso beauty in more than one scene. I know I sound crass, but we're talking about sheer, low budget exploitation here. I appreciate the aspects of this film that one is supposed to appreciate. This is not high art. This is at the bottom rung of the rock-n-roll horror genre, which is already a low rung subgenre, anyway. Not to mention - or make reminder - that we are dealing with a certain temporal realm of shot-on-video-camera movies, none of which were great cinematically - at least in my experience - but some of which were pretty darn good horror movies. This one is not one of those, but it isn't unwelcome. There are many more microbudget horror affairs available these days than were back then (at least as far as I can tell), and I'm nostalgic about this period in horror, so I'm always happy to see even a bad example of the field. And since bad and camp go hand in hand, Scream Dream makes out okay as a fun hour-plus of vintage direct-to-your-video-store horror. And a bitchy ex-frontwoman of a metal band returned from the grave to possess her replacement and turn into a devil woman - well, that's just fun. And the ambition at least led the filmmakers to go for lots of makeup-FX, which aren't all bad. There's also a fair share of gore, much of which is sloppily done but all of which is somewhere on the spectrum between grossly compelling and I-know-how-they-did-that-but-it's-kewl-anyway. Now, did all that make sense?



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Upchuck Undergrind listens to a little bit of a lot of things - just note the eclecticism of his reviews. He also reads voraciously and loves movies. He is a very open-minded Episcopalian (and student of Buddhism and Hinduism) who thinks Slayer is one of the greatest metal bands. Ever. In addition to his work with Corazine - for which he has written since its inception (he is a Fishcomcollective veteran) - he also writes for DJFix.com.

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