

AAAH! ZOMBIES!!

Aaah! Zombies!! is a re-title: I first saw this film under the title *Wasting Away* at 2009's Bram Stoker International Film Festival. It went down well there, being a fairly non-demanding horror comedy with some good gags and, most importantly, a decent attempt at doing something interesting with the tried-and-tested zombie formula: here, the story is told from the point of view of the brain-munchers themselves. Think a comedy skit on the premise behind 'the £45 zombie film' *Colin...* Zombies have - for good or ill, but often ill - become the standard refrain for unimaginative low-budget filmmakers, with the result that I have had my love for the genre seriously tested during recent years. With that in mind, I was pleasantly surprised here.



The Return of the Living Dead conceit of 'toxic goo', courtesy of the evil military, is used to get the plot underway here: a barrel of (luminous green, of course) gunk falls off an army truck and ends up contaminating an ice-cream machine at a nearby diner/bowl-a-rama. This is bad news for a group of friends named Mike (Matthew Davis), Vanessa (Julianna Robinson), Cindy (Betsy Beutler) and her would-be boyfriend Tim (Michael Grant Terry) who are soon tucking into aforementioned ice-cream. We're in on this from the start - the film begins in black and white but the toxic goo is helpfully coloured in bright green, as is the ice-cream! Soon the friends are rolling around in agony, and voila - we have the walking dead.

Thing is, from their perspective, they just feel a little 'off'. The film snaps into glorious technicolour for them here (staying black and white for other characters) as they head out to seek medical assistance. But everyone is acting strangely, and - with the exception of a secret ops fella they encounter - everyone keeps on screaming and running away at top speed. Private Nick Steele (Colby French) explains that a mysterious virus has broken out; only they seem not to be 'infected', and in fact, by virtue of their exposure to the toxic goo, they're now an elite rank of super soldiers!

It's a simple case of mistaken identity then, and a simple joke, which nonetheless gives us some good comedy performances, daft physical humour and schlocky one-liners. If you like your humour satirical and subtle then forget it, and this isn't *Shaun of the Dead* either - this is brains milkshakes and, ahem, zombies getting it on. It's watchable stuff, and - as a festival viewing demonstrated - it's good for a group view, being at just the right level that doesn't require close scrutiny or to be taken all that seriously. The jokes might not always make you laugh out loud, but overall the film will just carry you along anyway. That's not to say it's a completely mindless film - it isn't - but it seems to be aware of its limitations and works with them, not against them. For all that, its attempt to bring a new spin to the zombie genre is to its immense credit. *Aaah! Zombies!!* is a beer movie, easy to enjoy and entertaining without being demanding, and at 90 minutes it doesn't overstay its welcome.

The Level 33 Entertainment release looks decent, with bright colours and good levels throughout (especially considering the low budget). It's presented in 1.78:1 widescreen with 5.1 surround sound.

Special features consist of a music video by Barricade and two trailers for (decidedly non-genre films) *Scouts Honor: Badge to the Bone* and *Blues*, plus a link to the company's website.

Review by Keri O'Shea

Released by Level 33 Entertainment

Region 1 - NTSC

Not Rated

Extras :

see main review

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