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SANGUIVOROUS – REVIEW

DVD Reviews — 20 March 2014 » Written by Aaron Mannino



Tidepoint Films is a daring and diverse distributor. Recently relocated to Philadelphia, Tidepoint brings with it a bevy of challenging underrepresented Asian cinema to the North American market. No exception is Naoki Yoshimoto's experimental horror film *Sanguivorous*, a vampiric hyper-textural fever-dream. With its muted palate and silent-film dynamic, *Sanguivorous* is redolent of the surrealism of the 1920's, which are abundant with psychology, violence, and the language of dreams. This referential tone is one of the things that effectively displaces the world in which *Sanguivorous* unfolds.

Sanguivorous begins and ends in distortion. The skyline of a city bristles in blurs and vibrations. We meet a nameless woman (Ayumi Kakizawa) disturbed by visions and torturous inner darkness. Strange compulsions well up inside her as she awakens sexual desire with her boyfriend. The sinister truth, abstractly as it is imagined, is that she is a dormant vampire. More than that, she is a member of a long lineage of vampires who have been summoned by her awakening. The language of the film almost seems to suggest that her predecessors live within her, that she herself is a possessor of her entire history in blood. *Sanguivorous* takes place at the moment of her painful quickening. Her boyfriend becomes the unfortunate center of the covens insatiable thirst.

Her brethren are an old man and woman (Matsuko Yoshinaga), hundreds of years old. They live in a strange in-between world that has both ancient and industrial elements, like a haunted house in the woods that is part Mizoguchi and part Lynch. Between the older man, the older woman, and the girl, only the older woman seems to embody her malevolence with joy. The old man is played by Butoh artist Ko Murobushi. His physique is both powerful and aged, young and old. He is as perfect a representation of the torture of the vampire as Gary Oldman in Francis Ford Coppola's expressionistic 1993 film. Elegance and brutality, animalism and lost humanity mixed into one. He and the young woman are somewhat at odds with their reality. This taps into the sadness that is inherent in incarnations of the vampire: sadness of immortality, of isolation, of secrets, of destructiveness even in love, of unquenchable thirst. The use of Murobushi's Butoh stylings and gestures, assembled by the directors editing eye is a fantastic and expressive element. Butoh and Vampires...why did no one think of this perfect match before!?

Sanguivorous, although scarcely an hour long, contains such a level of visual, aural and psychological disruption and inventiveness that it possesses the body of a feature length film. It reflects the young heroine of the film, whose petite frame holds within a perfect storm of violence, history, and a soul screaming in the dark. I can only imagine how arresting the experience would be were it presented in its ideal format accompanied by live score.

Look out for Tidepoint's New Generation of J-Horror Showcase at PhilaMoca this April 5th !

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Aaron Mannino is a Philadelphia area artist, film enthusiast, and some other things. He has made contributions on film analysis to the publication Korean Quarterly. Visit his [blog](#) or his [other blog](#) for writings and art-ings.

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The @CinedelphiaFF preview night is tomorrow, and it's FREE! Check out the trailer: <http://t.co/iP49iW4RO6>, Mar 31



RT @Ms_teLEvision: OnPhilly: Cinedelphia #Film Festival 2014! #Philly#Entertainment @PhilaMOCA @Cinedelphia <http://t.co/6GDWs7okEw>, Mar 30

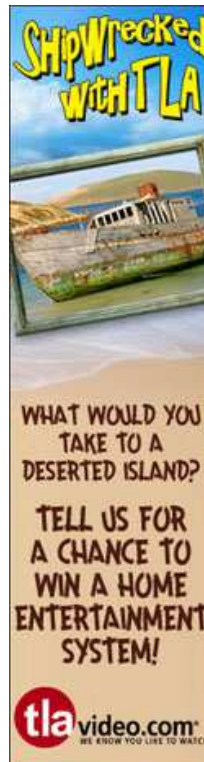


Friday reviews: @Filmhash says ENEMY is an intriguing psychological thriller, now playing @PhillyFilmSoc's Roxy: <http://t.co/ITP6LWb8F2>, Mar 28



Friday reviews: @garymkramer says LE WEEK-END is a mix of sour and sappy: <http://t.co/R1SgrF3pDa>, Mar 28

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