

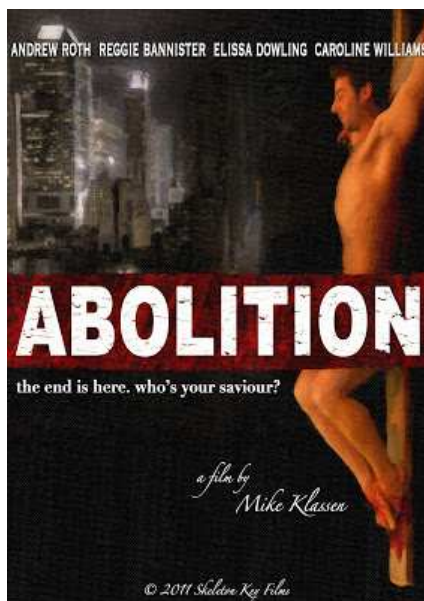
Indie Horror Films

All genres of suspense, terror, and horror will be reviewed by Richard Gary. His address to send preview copies supplied upon request to rbf55@msn.com.

Saturday, February 2, 2013

DVD Review: Abolition

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Abolition

Directed by Mike Klassen
Abolition films / R-Squared Films
82 minutes, 2010 / 2012
Rsquaredfilms.com
MVDvisual.com

As much as the word "abolition," (the overthrow of something), sounds similar to "absolution," so this film juggles with the line(s) between good and evil.

Even with a somewhat high gross (e.g., vomit) and gore quotient - even though most of it is after the fact, such as brains splattered on the sidewalk after a jump - this is a very story-based project. Unlike the usual Biblical-themed action thrillers like *The Seventh Sign* (1988), *End of Days* (1999), *Bless the Child* (2000) or *Constantine* (2005), the pace here is more of a build than a burst, as it should be. One of the positive side-effects here of it being done that way is that it definitely makes the viewer work harder on the coming events. With most films, many times I'd say, "Oh, this is going to happen at some point," and it does, but this more lured me in with bits of info, keeping my attention.

I'm certainly not going to give away much, because it's rare that a film works this well, especially for a first-time director such as Mike Klassen. There are a couple of moves that felt a bit amateurish, such as the obvious use of a wide-angle lens to indicate things being out of sorts, but that is how one learns. If the viewer sees the film as a whole, it's quite impressive. Even with the occasional plot hole, it plays out so well. Again, you look at some directors like Cronenberg, Hooper, Craven, Carpenter, and the like, their early films also had questionable moments of mire, sometimes more than here.

One of the things that impressed me the most is that this film has its own feel, that certain vibe and look. There is also a level of subtlety that works towards the grand reveal. When dealing with a storyline with no comic relief, all the elements need to work together as not to feel oppressive; this one walks that line successfully.

Klassen should also be acknowledged for some of the talent he has chosen for his leads, especially Andrew Roth as Joshua, an recently unemployed building superintendent who is trying to figure out why whenever he helps people, bad things seem to happen, especially in *Sybil* (1976)-type blackout moments. Roth is gaunt, intense, and has total movie-star appeal. He's so much better an actor than many of those making so much more, such as Adam Sandler, the Wilson brothers (Owen and Luke),

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and Vince Vaughn. It's not surprising he's been in over 40 films, though he still needs the right vehicle to get recognized).

The female lead is Mia, played by Elissa Dowling, definitely an indie film demi-goddess). She seems to pick many quirky roles, usually in the horror genre, such as in Creep Creepersin's *Peeping Blog* (2011) [Reviewed [HERE](#)] or *Bloody Bloody Bible Camp* (2012) [Reviewed [HERE](#)]. Whether a sex comedy or an intense story, she is always fun to watch; plus, she has impeccable timing whatever the genre. Yeah, I'm a fan.

Matthew is a pivotal character, a bitter man who gave up the priesthood for family, only to also lose them (named after the first book of the New Testament, I'm sure), played by Reggie Bannister. Bannister will forever be associated with the *Phantasm* (1979) series (yes, he still has the ponytail), but over time has proven himself to be more than just that. Matthew takes in the homeless Joshua, a relationship that is bound to change over time and a decisive puzzle piece to the overall story arc. While Bannister does have a tendency to do a bit of curtain biting, he is also extremely effective in this role as he eventually goes all Renfield. Oh, as a side note, Reggie also starred in the aforementioned *Bloody Bloody Bible Camp*.

As I said, the question here is who good or other, and what acts are positive or perhaps something more sinister? One of the underlying issues in the film that is well handled is the desperation and loneliness of the down-and-out, be it through substance abuse, poverty, physical and verbal abuse, suicide, prostitution, homelessness, or any combination above. While on paper it may sound like this film is trying to achieve too much, it all works together, albeit in a bleak way. But it is that despair that drives home the central theme of the story leading to its... well, check it out. It may not be the feel good movie of the year, but it will certainly keep you guessing and interested.

The only extra is the trailer. For this one, I would have loved a commentary, but as the great stage director Roger De Bris said in 1968, *quell dommage...*

Posted by **Robert Barry Francos** at 11:59 AM

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Labels: Abolition, Andrew Roth, antichrist, Elissa Dowling, end of days, FFanzeen, gore, homeless, horror, Indie Horror Films blog, Mike Klassen, MVD Visual, R Squared Films, Reggie Bannister, Revelations, Richard Gary

2 comments:



Mike Klassen February 4, 2013 at 1:40 PM

Thanks so much for the honest review! Really appreciate your insightful comments...one of the only reviews I can 100% advocate.
Mike K.

[Reply](#)



Robert Barry Francos February 4, 2013 at 3:46 PM

Thanks, Mike! Glad you saw that I meant this as positive. That's why, in part, I started this blog. Most others' reviews are "Oh, this is great," or "Oh, this sucks." I appreciate the fact that it takes a lot of work to put out an indie film, and I want to take the time to pay attention to the outcome. That's also why I don't usually don't do a short-form review. Please keep me in mind for your next release, and I certainly hope their will be one (or more). Oh, and just so you know, it was Clint at MVD that passed the film along to me. Just want to make sure he gets the credit.

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