

have it both ways. However, traces of genuine pathos and sickness make *Oliver* a clumsy, but promising debut.

DEJAN OGNJANOVIĆ

SURVIVAL OF THE LONELIEST

THE NIGHT EATS THE WORLD

Starring Anders Danielsen Lie, Golshifteh Farahani and Denis Lavant
Directed by Dominique Rocher
Written by Guillaume Lemans, Jérémie Guez and Dominique Rocher
Blue Fox Entertainment

The undead are everywhere in *The Night Eats the World* (*La nuit a dévoré le monde*) – except inside the Paris apartment building where the movie's real story takes place. This is a zombie-survival film in which the details of the survival are the true focus; the threat is there to motivate a character study.

Poor Sam (Anders Danielsen Lie) isn't even trapped within the familiar confines of his own place. A musician recently split from his girlfriend, he shows up at a party she's throwing to retrieve a box of his tapes and ends up passing out in a back room. He awakens to find blood everywhere and a world outside gone to hell, the streets infested with the infected.

Director Dominique Rocher, who adapted Pit Agarmen's novel with Guillaume Lemans and Jérémie Guez, knows that we've seen this scenario many times before, and swiftly establishes the post-apocalyptic environment (as seen from windows) and the protective measures undertaken by Sam. And then, it's all about how he deals with his sole-survivor status, balancing necessities (foraging for food, collecting rainwater on the roof) with diversions (creating musical instruments from found objects in the apartment).

Sam attempts to maintain order amidst the chaos – rather than drop a dead body out a window, he creates a makeshift mausoleum in a bedroom – yet approaches existential crisis as he laments, "Being dead is the norm now. I'm the one who's not normal."

The Night Eats the World is not a movie for those seeking traditional flesh-ripping thrills, though there are a few scary attacks and effective moments of misdirection. Instead, the film digs into the psyche of a man who is surrounded by the dead and must consistently determine how, and whether, to avoid joining their ranks, both emotionally and physically. With sympathy and humour, *The Night Eats the World* employs inhuman ghouls to examine what it means to be human.

MICHAEL GINGOLD



The Night Eats The World

THE POWER OF GORE COMPELS YOU

AMERICAN GUINEA PIG: THE SONG OF SOLOMON

Starring Jessica Cameron, Jim Van Bebber and Gene Palubicki
Written and directed by Stephen Biro
Unearthed Films

Filmmaker Stephen Biro may have legitimate points to make about the Catholic Church and the real power of evil, but those points get lost in *The Song of Solomon*, an unpleasant gore film whose po-faced seriousness is undercut by amateur acting, unintended humour, and a paucity of drama that makes it hard to stomach.

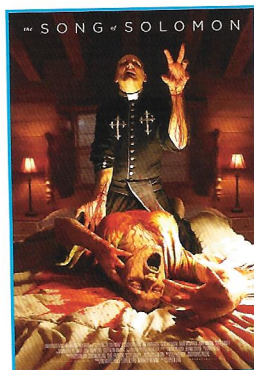
Canadian actress Jessica Cameron (*Buckout Road*) stars as Mary, a young woman whose demonic possession drives her father to suicide, an event that threatens to usher in the End Times. In a suspiciously aggressive attempt to exorcise the girl, the Church sends a series of priests (including *Deadbeat by Dawn* director/star Jim Van Bebber) to Mary's bedside to dislodge the evil entity inside her, but each meets a horrific demise before both the demon and the Church's true purposes are revealed.

That's pretty heavy stuff, and Biro – a former candidate for actual priesthood who uses real

exorcism rituals in the film – packs *The Song of Solomon* with much theological banter. But let's call a spade a spade: as the founder of Uearthed Films, Biro traffics in onscreen atrocity, and his cohorts at Oddtopsy and Toe Tag SFX deliver the gore groceries aplenty here. The film's interminable 84 minutes are chock full of eviscerations, stabbings, intestine pukings, and all manner of unholy desecrations of the flesh. If that's your jam, fair enough, but *The Song of Solomon*'s story plays like a life-support system for its gore effects, existing only to justify the next mutilation.

To their credit, the cast commits to the material, even when slathered with nasty makeup and saddled with ridiculous dialogue, but enthusiasm alone cannot sell lines like "Look at me! I'm mutilated!" Gorehounds into this manner of shit will love it; the rest of us will be stabbing our own eyes out by the end, no gore effects needed.

SEAN PLUMMER



CAVE OF FORGOTTEN SCREAMS

THE MIMIC

Starring Jung-ah Yum, Hyuk-kwon Park and Rin-Ah Shin
Written and directed by Jung Huh
Well Go USA Entertainment

Folk horror is having a bit of a moment (thank you Robert Eggers!), but the subgenre has always gone hand-in-clammy-hand with Asian cinema. South Korea is no stranger to tales of inky black forests and malefic demons – this

