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HARRY KNUCKLES & THE PEARL NECKLACE (2004)

Directed by Lee Gordon Demarbre
 Review by David Carter



Released by Eclectic DVD
 Running Time: 116 minutes
 Rating: NR
 Color format: Color
 Audio/Subtitles: 2.0 Stereo English
 Region Code: 1, NTSC
 Aspect Ratio: 1.33:1
 16:9 Enhanced: No

Special Features: Two Audio Commentaries, "Pearls of Wisdom" cast interviews, Ottawa Premier footage, Harry Knuckles short, Deleted scenes and outtakes, Making of home movies
 Trailer Online: Yes



Odessa Filmworks had a minor hit on their hands a few years ago with their film JESUS CHRIST, VAMPIRE HUNTER. Destined to become a cult classic on the strength of the title alone, the Canadian group's film brought them a lot of

new fans. Odessa had been making films for several years already, however. Their spy movie parody character Harry Knuckles had been appearing in their short films since the mid-nineties, and the series has built up a decent sized fan base on it's own. Viewers unfamiliar with the character's exploits get a chance to check him out in Harry first full-length feature, HARRY KNUCKLES & THE PEARL NECKLACE.

Super spy Harry Knuckles is contacted by the Museum of Natural History after a valuable Japanese pearl necklace is stolen during a break in. The mysterious and beautiful museum representatives Cassie Nova and Gail Force warn Harry that the mission will be dangerous, but as usual, Harry laughs the danger off. Following the trail of the stolen necklace leads Harry to his most bizarre foe ever: the Bionic Bigfoot. He's no match for Harry Knuckles, though, and soon Harry has retrieved the missing necklace. Things take a turn towards the unexpected when he's knocked unconscious as he returns the pearls to Cassie and Gail. In reality, the pair work for Harry's long lost evil brother, Fuzzy Knuckles. Fuzzy not only wants to get his hands on the pearls, but he also has designs on getting revenge on Harry. Harry has overcome a lot of enemies, but Fuzzy may be too much for even him to handle.

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HARRY KNUCKLES & THE PEARL NECKLACE

is a parody with many different influences from several areas of film and pop culture. Harry himself is a send up of the typical action movie hero; unbeatable, good to a fault, and always ready with a cheesy one-liner before, during, and after dispatching the bad guys. Among the more amusing aspects of the film are the fight sequences, which themselves are also used to satirize what one typically expects from the action genre. Unlike many lower budget comedies, the film is relatively free of in-jokes or obscure references, making the surprisingly clean comedy accessible to all audiences.



At close to two hours, the film unfortunately drags at several points. The dialogue scenes are quickly paced, but several minutes of screen time are taken up by long focus shots of characters running or driving at many points. While the jokes are good, the film often sacrifices its forward momentum for a chance for more humor. A prime example of this is during the wrestling match at the film's midpoint. While very funny and enjoyable, it relates only tangentially to the overall plot and tacks on several minutes to an already lengthy runtime.



Eclectic DVD has loaded the DVD of the film with a ton of extras. There are several deleted scenes and outtakes, and many looks at the production of the film. For those of you who want to see more Harry Knuckles after watching the feature, they've

included one of the short films that preceded this film: HARRY KNUCKLES & THE TREASURE OF THE AZTEC MUMMY. On top of the bonus footage, they've also included two separate cast and crew audio commentaries, each filled with as much comedy as the film itself.

HARRY KNUCKLES & THE PEARL NECKLACE is an enjoyable comedy in the vein of many of the Troma Studios releases. In fact, the film even has the now ubiquitous Lloyd Kaufmann in a cameo appearance to lend his unspoken approval to the film. Despite some slow moments, Harry Knuckles first foray into long form features is a successful one. Fans of off-beat comedies and action films will want to be on the look out for this one.



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