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## Harry Knuckles and the Pearl Necklace

Written by Brent Simon

Monday, 14 August 2006



What kind of folks would make a movie titled *Harry Knuckles and the Pearl Necklace*, you might ask? Well, the same kind whose previous credits would included a movie entitled *Jesus Christ: Vampire Hunter*, of course.

A slapdash, silly, low-budget Canadian spy spoof, the film centers around the titular secret agent (Phil Caracas) and his partner El Santos (Jeff Moffet), whose quest is to track down a valuable missing necklace. Over the course of the movie, this means showdowns with a hinterland horror known as Bionic Bigfoot and a team of Amazonian assassins, among many other trials and tribulations. Fish nunchakus and copious affected slow motion are also deployed.

Writer Ian Driscoll and director Lee Demarbre have a deep affinity for kung-fu shenanigans, and *Harry Knuckles and the Pearl Necklace* is full of the same type of marginally choreographed rows. Caracas – returning from *Jesus Christ: Vampire Hunter* as well – gives his character a certain goofy charm, but execution and tonal consistency are the big bugaboos here. What glues the movie together more than any sense of slapdash style is its breathlessly anarchic tone. In Driscoll and Demarbre's DIY world, continuity problems are best incorporated and made fun of within the flow of things, rather than painstakingly ironed out. This works a few times, but eventually drags things down, because it just seems lazy.

*Harry Knuckles and the Pearl Necklace* is at its best – a term loosely applied – when dashing mindlessly over and around all obstacles, but the movie's running time, at just under two hours, belies this model of brevity-as-virtue, and the "action" herein is far too large a piece of the pie. People don't want to sit through low-budget films for more than a

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- Fighting (Mortal Kombat, Soul Caliber, etc.)
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- Role-Playing (includes MMOs)
- Simulators (flight, racing, etc.)
- Strategy (includes RTS and turn-based strategy games)

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#### FEATURED CLIP

scene or two of inadequately staged action; you have to woo them with ideas. This film has some, but they're not as entertainingly explored as in the filmmakers' previous work.

Housed in a regular Amray case, *Harry Knuckles and the Pearl Necklace* is presented on a region-free disc in a full-screen transfer that preserves the imperfections of the movie's 16mm production alongside a Dolby digital 5.1 English track that's a definite step up from the visual plane of the movie. Cast and crew alike sit for an audio-commentary track, and a 23-minute making-of documentary graces the roster of supplemental material, along with a 25-minute 1999 short film, *Harry Knuckles and the Treasure of the Aztec Mummy*, that serves as this feature's predecessor. There's also nine minutes of footage from the film's Ottawa premiere, meaning plenty of comical pronunciations of the word "about," as well as interviews with on-queue fans and Demarbre's mother. Alas, even proud mothers of those involved might have some problems looking past the unevenness and wan double entendres of *Harry Knuckles and the Pearl Necklace*. D+ (Movie) B- (Disc)

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