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Bill Up Close

Comedy, reviews and recollections from the mind of Bill Treadway.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 11, 2010

Bad Movie Summer: A Fart That Doesn't Completely Stink

FART: THE MOVIE *** (out of ****)

1991/86 mins/Not Rated/SRS Cinema, LLC



Nineteen years ago when I was in the sixth grade, I had a problem with passing gas. Aside from the fact that it may be the only time in my schooling that I learned nothing of value, I was also being bullied constantly, so sixth grade was no picnic to live through. I have a feeling my intense farting had something to do with my nervousness. My entry into extreme farting began one day when I accidentally dropped my books. Bending over to pick them up, what should rip but a long, loud fart. Standing right behind me on line were the class wiseasses. Big mistake. Whenever I farted thereafter, they'd sing out loud "Willy farted! Whoa-o-a-oa!"

The lowpoint came when my science teacher noticed that report cards were coming awfully close, so she decided to do actual work for once. (We only got up to Chapter 6 in a 26 chapter textbook.) Loading all seven blackboards chock full of notes, we were allowed to move around to write them all down. I felt a fart coming on, but figured it would be a silent one. It turned out to be loud enough to register a 4.8 on the Richter scale. It also cleared out the classroom.

My sixth grade report card is probably the only one in history in which farts are mentioned.

What does all this have to do with **Fart: the Movie**? Nothing, except that the credits sequence ended up bringing all these memories flooding back. It may seem difficult to believe, but yes, there is a film titled **Fart: The Movie**. Although it was made way back in 1991, it seems to have only surfaced recently with this DVD release.

When I discovered that there this movie not only existed but was available on DVD, I immediately e-mailed The Godfather about it. He responded with a simple question: "where the fuck did you find out about this?" Neither of us were expecting **Fart** to be a good movie, so it seemed a natural to headline Bad Movie Day VII. **Fart** is not what I'd call a great movie, but it is a lot better than anyone could possibly expect from a movie with such a title.

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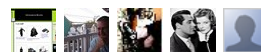
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Fart is a series of comic vignettes strung together by the barest of bare-bones plots. Russell (Joel Weiss, a character actor whose face you'll recognize) is a man who lives to fart. He loves nothing more than to just let one rip wherever he is standing. His wife Heather despises his fart habit. She wants to go out for New Year's Eve, but he wants to bring in the new year by loading up on gassy food, watching TV and farting his brains out. She storms out of the house, screaming at him that if TV adapted fart-based programming, he'd be in high heaven. Guess what'll be on the telly tonight!

Yes, I know. This *is* lowbrow humor. The movie makes no bones about it. While it is true that some of the sketches don't work (particularly several stand-up comedy bits titled The Rude Dudes that just aren't very funny), the sketches that do work are a riot! Among my favorites include: a spoof of TV evangelists, in which the preacher attempts to divulge the true reason why Adam and Eve were expelled from the Garden of Eden; a TV game show cheerfully titled *Who Cut the Cheese?*; a new rap album from rip n'tootin rapper MC Gaseous; an African-American Andy Rooney with a golf-ball booger sticking out of his schnozz, recalling the history of farting; a New Year's celebration that has to be seen to be believed and I'll leave you to discover the rest. Yes, this is all silly stuff, but it left me grinning and laughing all the way through the 86 minute running time. I laughed a lot.

Some of the verbal humor works better than expected, too. Early in the film, Russell's wife screams out that "If George Bush knew about you, there would be no energy crisis!". Russell's response: "Dan Quayle could clear out the Senate Chamber in less than a minute!". Silly, yes. But it's also fairly clever for a micro-budget movie such as this.

Speaking of micro-budget, **Fart** is so low budget, it was shot on standard VHS tape rather than on film. However, director Ray Etheridge knows how to use his limited resources to create a good looking movie that was made with competence and real skill. Considering some of the truly awful films I've seen this summer involving bigger budgets and higher resources, it was a pleasant surprise to see a director who took some care to make sure there were no major blunders or continuity errors in his finished product.

I don't know how to judge the acting in this movie. You can't expect Olivier or Newman from a movie about farting, but the performances are competent for this material. Star Joel Weiss is delightfully over-the-top as the fartmeister. Most of the performances are over-the-top actually, but that seems appropriate in a silly sketch comedy such as this. Even Conrad Brooks, a veteran of Ed Wood, is better than usual during the brief bits he appears in.

What else can I say about **Fart: the Movie**? Well, this is one fart that doesn't completely stink.

Posted by Bill Treadway at 7:13 AM

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Few people know much about me. I'm an enigma and I prefer it that way.

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