

CREEP CREEPERSIN'S FRANKENSTEIN

It begins with the "Overture". This is where we find Victor (James Porter) watching classic silent horror films – THE CABINET OF DR CALIGARI, CARNIVAL OF SOULS etc - while not tending to horses on a farm.

Life on the farmhouse is quiet and repetitive – we bear witness as to how interchangeable each waking day is: it soon becomes apparent that Victor, with only a pet rat called Frankenstein for company, is desperately lonely.

We learn more of Victor's unstable psyche as he feeds Frankenstein pieces of corn through the bars of his cage, and talks to the little fellow in a truly eerie manner. He speaks to himself in a similarly freaky fashion when sat all afternoon every afternoon on the veranda, and waits expectantly on evenings in front of a telephone that never rings.

But all of this is relative normalcy compared to when the television set begins 'communicating' with Victor, telling him of his dead mother's wishes for him ... and he hatches the idea of creating his own friend. After all, it works in all the old films he watches repeatedly – why shouldn't it work for him?

Following the night of his epiphany, Victor awakens the next morning at the same time that he awakens every morning and goes about his usual business – brushing his teeth, eating his vulgar-looking breakfast etc. But something has changed. He has a purpose.

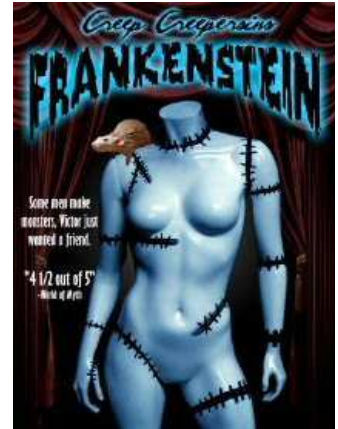
But when Victor ventures into the outside world in a bid to set his plan into motion, he finds a place alien to that in which he exists alongside the likes of Bela Lugosi and Boris Karloff ...

Creep Creepersin wrote, produced and directed this latest, rather novel variation on the well-worn Mary Shelley story. Who, you may beg? You know, Creep Creepersin – born in the same Californian town as late shoe-gazer Jeff Buckley, and lead singer of his own rock bands Creepersin and The Sci-Fi Originals.

No? You still don't know of him? You may do, in time. Because if there's one thing Mr Creepersin has been in the last few years of filmmaking, it's prolific. In 2009 alone, the year he made FRANKENSTEIN, he also directed seven other 'projects'. These included the delightfully titled VAGINAL HOLOCAUST and a cheeky horror portmanteau that took its cue from a certain King-Romero collaboration of old, bearing the audacious title of CREEP CREEPERSIN'S CREEPSHOW.

But before you dismiss Creepersin as someone with a silly name who makes silly-sounding films (and you'd be right, arguably, on both counts), I can say that FRANKENSTEIN is a formidably refreshing take on an old concept. It updates Shelley's original story while reflecting on themes of classic horror literature (most explicitly, through the inclusion of clips from legendary monster flicks of yore) and adopts an experimental bent to its quietly disturbing story.

The opening farm-set montage set to Mrs Creepersin's mournful score had echoes of



NEKROMANTIK to it, while the scenes of Victor hanging out with his rat in his squalid home recalled the unnerving demented loneliness felt in ROADKILL: THE LAST DAYS OF JOHN MARTIN. I don't wish to mislead readers though: Creepersin's film is nothing as ferocious as either. Elsewhere, people in the outside world speak backwards – a tip of the hat to David Lynch, surely.

Well-shot and well-lit, FRANKENSTEIN offers style and imagination when for some reason I'd anticipated a succession of knob and fart gags along the lines of your average Troma fare. But FRANKENSTEIN isn't a Troma film and Creepersin takes his horror a lot more seriously than his name may suggest. There is wry humour evident throughout but, chiefly, his film relies heavily on atmosphere and style to tell its unusual and oddly haunting story effectively.

FRANKENSTEIN is presented in anamorphic 2.35:1 and looks rather cheap in its presentation. Shot on digital video over a period of two days, it is of course a no-budget film and therefore miracles should not be expected. Onscreen shimmer is mild but noticeable; colours are deep but images waver towards the soft. All in all though, the film looks decent enough, given its origins.

The English 2.0 audio track sounds fine throughout when the score is playing, but is a little muffled during dialogue.

There is no scene-selection menu on the disc. It's hardly a problem when the film in question is only 54 minutes in length.

MVD Visual's DVD is region-free and opens with an atmospheric animated main menu page which accentuates the Gothic flavour of the film, along with its melancholic piano-led score.

From there, animated sub-menus include one which allows access to three trailers: two teasers (52 seconds and 44 seconds long respectively) that play along with the autumnal images and plinky-plinky sounds, and a longer trailer – 2 minutes and 17 seconds in length – set to a punchy rock tune.

The best extra on offer is a 33-minute Making Of featurette entitled "A Test Of Our Stupidity: The Making Of Creep Creepersin's Frankenstein". A handheld shot-on-video affair, this looks ugly and is certainly rough around the edges – but that's what lends it its charm. This is proper video diary-type stuff, with longhaired Creepersin leading the way in pursuit of making a horror film in 36 hours.

If you're after a real warts-and-all expose of minimal budget filmmaking on location with a tiny cast and crew, then this documentary is a great place to start. What shines through more than anything is how much energy this collective share.

CREEP CREEPERSIN'S FRANKENSTEIN is a very low budget quickie that eschews the obvious and strives for atmosphere instead. It's successful in this respect, and offers something genuinely different.

Review by Stuart Willis

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Region 1 - NTSC

Not Rated

Extras :

see main review

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