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PUPPET MONSTER MASSACRE (2010)

Directed by Dustin Mills

Written by Dustin Mills

Starring Steve Rimpici, Jessica Daniels, Bart Flynn, Ethan Holey, Erica Kisseberth, Dustin Mills, Brandon Salkil

Reviewed by Ambush Bug

Fans of MEET THE FEEBLES and TEAM AMERICA WORLD POLICE will want to line up for this one. Though it was released a few years ago, since I just watched it recently for the first time, I figured I'm not the only one who missed this little gem when it first came out.

THE PUPPET MONSTER MASSACRE takes Jim Henson's puppetry and casts it over the template of a B-grade monster movie. Though not all of the humor hits homeruns, PUPPET MONSTER MASSACRE made me giggle with glee more than once during viewing. The film ignores the fact that these are puppets doing everything in this film which is what works best. Gore, acting, sex scenes, story—everything is taken seriously; it just so happens that puppets are doing it all. That's where this mad little movie excels. It's a horror movie that just happens to have puppets as the main characters.

The story is your typical HOUSE ON HAUNTED HILL set up as a seemingly random selection of guests are sent an invitation to spend the night in a haunted mansion. The group is an eclectic bunch; a nebbish innocent, his girl friend, a punk rocker, a movie nerd—none of them know what they're in for, but all want the million dollars promised to the one who survives the night in the mansion. Upon reaching their destination they encounter the more than slightly Nazi-esque Wolfgang Wagner, a mad scientist with devious motives. Soon the participants find themselves locked in a house of horrors filled with booby traps and monsters.

Of course, humor is a huge part of this story, but unlike MEET THE FEEBLES which seemed to relish in the fact that they were taking the Muppets to levels of perversity and leave it at that, there are some genuine moments of hilarity, most of which are supplied by Raimi, the weird movie nerd played by Dustin Mills (the director and writer of the film). There are a few scenes where Raimi scares himself while walking through the woods that are downright gut busting. Mills isn't above going the potty humor route, though, with multiple gags about farting, puppet sex, and other low brow guffaws.

The film is really gory as well, mixing CG with real world puppetry successfully for the most part. The blood is shed in copious amounts once the monster is revealed and goes on his rampage and the CG used does so in a manner that is obvious, but hilarious. Mills seems to be able to use both practical and CG effects to their fullest potential.

Goofy as hell, THE PUPPET MONSTER MASSACRE is bound to please those who like their horror served with a heaping helping of funny. Sure the concept of a monster movie shot in earnest using puppets is somewhat trite, but Mills executed the whole thing with a lot of ingenuity and skill. On the PUPPET MONSTER MASSACRE website, it looks like they have a campaign to do another PUPPET MONSTER MASSACRE. Given the skill and fun put into this first installment, I'd love to see another one.