

THE PUPPET MONSTER MASSACRE

If I tell you that this film starts with a well-spoken gentleman puppet being kicked in by a malevolent penguin because the penguin's equally-malevolent Nazi scientist master is growing a monster, then I think I've given you more than enough information to understand the concept behind Puppet Movie Massacre (2011): this is a decidedly daft, gun-ho project which I imagine will increase in appeal the more people and alcohol you throw into the mix. For that reason, this is one film which will now be joining the hallowed selection of WTF DVDs to be brought out in times of need...



Anyway, to the plot! The evil silhouetted Nazi puppet of the first few scenes is one Wolfgang Wagner, a man with a plan. He needs unwitting subjects to come to his mansion home to bring this plan of his to fruition, so he writes to a selection of teenagers challenging them to spend the night. If they're able to do it, they stand to get rich – and so, Charlie, Gwen, horror nut Raimi (heh) and Iggy (who alongside a hanger-on called Mona provides us with a Meet the Feebles worthy cloth puppet sex scene) arrive Chez Wagner. Little do they know, eh? Meanwhile, Wagner's monster is about to do what monsters do...and Wagner will reveal his motivations...

I was expecting this to be a love-letter to Charles Band and his little terrors (which I have a real soft spot for, to my shame) but although The Puppet Monster Massacre is set in the 1980s and professes itself to be an homage to these sorts of films from the decade, it's not like Band's work at all. Here we have something more like an alternate universe where The Muppets get laid and occasionally get torn apart, but I'm having trouble relating this to existing 80s puppet monster movies – not that this is a bad thing, mind you. The important thing is that eventually we have reached the point of cloth puppets extending their oeuvre to include all the important things.

Is it funny? Yes, often. It's at its best when it's completely OTT, and this happens often enough to make the movie fun, although there are times when things dip and our characters start having inane conversations. These were moments when I wondered if there was quite enough material (pun not intended but at least noticed) for a feature-length release, but the pay-off is madcap enough to keep things together. And, hey, it's open for a sequel! As an indie project The Puppet Monster Massacre is a triumph of resourcefulness, with director/writer Dustin Mills financing the whole thing on his credit card, doing a large part of the other jobs including a lot of the voice-overs, and getting his mother to make the puppets (bless her!) It's hard not to admire that, isn't it?

An entertaining piece of lowbrow cinema which has a lot to recommend it, not least the immortal line "I'm gonna headbutt the crap out of you!" The Puppet Monster Massacre is an idea just crazy enough to work. Obviously made on a shoestring, there aren't many extras but you get an audio commentary from Mills and one from Brandon Salkil, the assistant director. I liked the alternative monster designs as well.

Review by Keri O'Shea

Released by Music Video Dist
Region 1 - NTSC
Not Rated
Extras :
see main review

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