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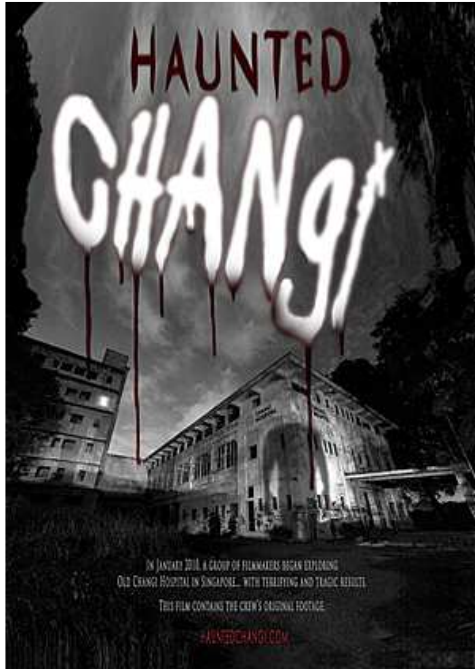
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HAUNTED CHANGI (Singapore)



Genre: Horror/Thriller
Director: Andrew Lau
Cast: Andrew Lau, Sheena Chung, Farid Azlam, Audi Khalis
RunTime: 1 hr 20 mins
Released By: GV
Rating: PG
Official Website: <http://hauntedchangi.com/>

Opening Day: 2 September 2010

Synopsis:

In January of 2010, a group of local filmmakers began exploring the famously haunted Old Changi Hospital in Singapore with terrifying and tragic results. This movie pieces together the original Haunted Changi film crew's footage to tell the full story.

Movie Review:

For the record, there are already over 42,000 people who are fans of this local movie on a certain popular social networking website that is Facebook. There is also a blog by the film crew which has garnered a large number of hits. That is a phenomenal number of followers for an independent project like this, if you ask us.

The 80 minute production is marketed as a collection of original footage taken by a four member film crew who had the guts to explore the haunted Old Changi Hospital earlier in January this year. If you do not already know, the abandoned hospital located in the Eastern part of our island is an eerie building that is teeming with spine tingling supernatural stories, no thanks to its reputation as a site during World War II in which prisoners of war were captured and tortured to death. If you believe what eye witnesses have to tell, spirits of different races and nationalities have been seen wandering around the compound.

So it is with this temptation to spot some unnatural elements captured on camera that we ventured into the preview screening. So did we exit the theatre spooked out? Unfortunately (or fortunately, as some of us would rather prefer), we did not.

In all fairness, the filmmakers are spot on in choosing Old Changi Hospital as its subject. Just seeing the worn out building on screen and thinking about the possible "homeless" spirits in there will send a shiver down your spine. When the camera zooms in on the graffiti and vandalism that have become part of the building, you create chilling mental images of the activities which have been carried out there. And this is where the film works best, letting your imagination create the fear.

Trust this writer who has been on site for military exercises and location scouting – there is indeed an unexplainable forbidding force which no words can describe.

But alas, the filmmakers had to resort to formulaic, and dare we say it, tackily cheap scares towards the end of the movie, hoping that viewers would squirm in their seats in fear. Without giving away too much (the Facebook page told us not to spoil it for those who haven't seen it yet), let's just say the plot involves some predictable encounters of the third kind.

The cast (Andrew Lau, Sheena Chung, Farid Azlam, Audi Khalis) does a decent job of acting freaked out, but there's really nothing you haven't seen before. What's more impressive is the





movie's editing, which are creatively effective. The pacing is also well kept – look out for a harrowingly claustrophobic sequence before the film ends to understand what we mean. Also, considering that the footages are shot with a DSLR camera, kudos to the cameraman (in this case, it's Khalis, if the production notes are to be believed).

With the advancement of technology in the last few years, the success of this movie should not be doubted. Not that we are skeptical or unsupportive of local productions, but we have seen this distribution strategy before. Just to jog the memory of those readers who can remember, there was a little film some 10 odd years ago named The Blair Witch Project which made use of the Internet to suggest that the film was a real event – this is the marketing approach the filmmakers of this independent production has taken. The last we heard, there are overseas distributors who have expressed interest in obtaining its rights.

While we await whether Old Changi Hospital's tales will strike a chord with foreign audiences, we can only say that for the real experience, the valiant and courageous ones should consider making a trip to the building where bloodcurdling memories reside.

Movie Rating:



(Fear works best when confined in the mind)

Review by John Li

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