

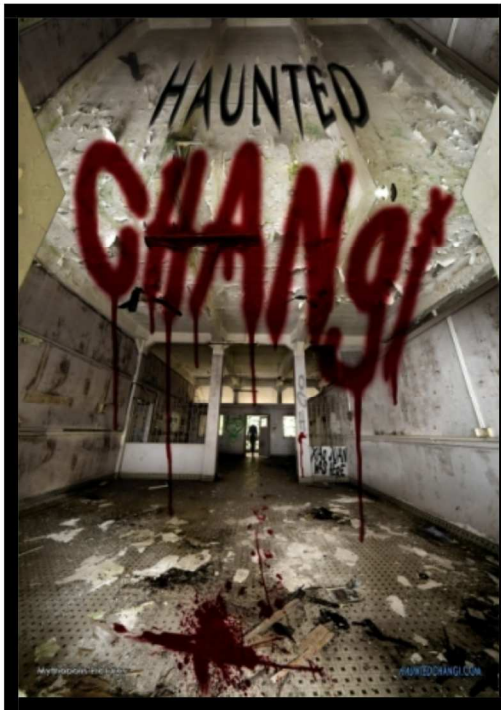


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Posted by Nekoneko on December 2, 2011

## “Haunted Changi” (2010) – Singapore Ghost/ Horror

Posted in: Reviews, Singapore Films. Tagged: Ghost, Horror, Reviews, Shaky cam, Singapore. 6 comments



It's finally December... and even though I've been a wee bit scarce around the ol' Litterbox lately, I *am* still alive and kicking... just busy, busy, busy with the Thanksgiving holiday and, as always, work. But... I have also managed a film or two in my busy schedule, so it's time for another quick review. *(Before somebody discovers I've actually got some unaccounted for "free time".... Hehehehe!!)* This time out... Singapore's recent addition to the virtual deluge of "shaky cam" horror "fake-cumentaries", **“Haunted Changi”** recently released here in the US on Region 1 DVD.

Our synopsis goes along these lines: *“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 in an attempt to tell the full story of the terrible events they experienced.”*

*Hmmmm?* Yep. Sounds familiar alright... but hey, *who knows?* Given the current popular fascination with this particular horror sub-genre throughout the world, it seems your Favorite Catgirl is going to be sitting through lots... *and lots... and lots* of these until the craze finally winds down as they always inevitably do.

Will Singapore have anything new or novel to add? Or will we get a simple rehash of old ideas yet again? Guess I'll find out... and so can you, Gentle Visitor, if you just tag along with lil' ol' me and **“Read On”**....



I've actually been trying to catch a look at this one for some time, but the availability of the original DVD release in Singapore last year was ridiculously brief so I never managed to snag a copy from any reliable source before it

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December 2011

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just faded away just like the ghosts of old Changi Hospital themselves. Don't you just hate when that happens?

*Sigh....* Just when I'd given up

hope of finding it, it popped up here in the US on DVD giving me a second chance... so this time... rather than risking another quick missed opportunity, I grabbed a copy right away. *I know.... I know....* these "shaky cam" films aren't exactly my favorites.... but Asian ghost stories *are*, so how could I *not* grab this one? Especially when I couldn't pass up Korea's entry, "**Deserted House**" all those months back?

So then... This one starts right out with a quick intro to our little cast of characters, the director Andrew Lau, sexy executive producer Sheena Chung, sound guy Farid, and our intrepid cameraman Audi. Yep... the standard quartet for this sort of Scooby-Doo investigation of the Supernatural and certainly nothing out of the ordinary for this sort of story. You'll pick up



quickly just how dedicated a filmmaker our director Andrew is... how sexy Sheena has this "secret" lil' crush on him... and just what sort of cool guys Farid and Audi are. All without really having to pay much attention. There's really no time to let that stuff happen naturally... not if you want to tell the story, and so it comes across a bit "forced", but it is convincing enough for the purposes of our story. They aren't bad characters.... and you will actually get to like them as we go along, so at least it won't be hard to feel badly for them once things get all weird and deadly.



What the heck is going on? Well.... historically this old Hospital was once the scene of some pretty nasty goings on waaaaay back during the Japanese Occupation in WW2. Torture.... executions.... horrific medical experiments to rival the germ warfare stuff happening in China around the same period.... the whole enchilada. This has left the deserted






Hospital a pretty ill-omened place indeed, simultaneously the daytime hang-out for delinquent youth as well as the dreadfully feared and avoided haunted ruin after dark. What sort of hauntings? *Hmmmm?* How about scores of headless ghosts beheaded by the evil Japanese invaders.... or the cursed Japanese soldiers themselves... or even the dreaded Pontianak vampiress reputed to lurk here luring foolish men to their doom? Changi Hospital is said to contain them all. Sounds promising, right?

Well... yes and no. Like many "found footage" films of this type, we have to wade through lots and lots of boring stuff featuring our gang as they go about all the very mundane work connected with the actual making of a documentary film. Mind you, the old Hospital itself is an amazing set.... very atmospheric and perfect for



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the needs of this kind of story, but a little of this sort of “reality film-making” goes a long way. I think “**Haunted Changi**” would have definitely benefited from a bit more of the creepy and unexplained a little earlier in the plot. As it stands, things don’t really get going until about the halfway point and never reach the terrifically frightening until nearly the end. Still... the all footage here is watchable.... there’s very little of that frantic, out-of-focus filming that normally gives me splitting headaches to watch. A definite plus. We get some of that “green night vision” looking stuff I remember from “**Atrocious**”... as with that film, it’s all done in post-production and benefits from it by being visually superior to actual light intensification film footage that is usually barely watchable. They even manage to add the idea to the story that the ghosts.... invisible to normal camera lenses can be glimpsed briefly by such cameras if you are in just the right place at just the right time.



But Neko? What about the characters? Aren’t they just going to die in the end and spoil the fun? Surprisingly, no. Not everybody dies here, although I’m not going to spoil things by giving away exactly who gets to live.... lets just say that spirit possession figures into the overall plot scheme for our climax. The characters you expect to die... and you’ll see it coming

long before it happens.... *do*, in fact, “*shuffle off that Mortal Coil*” but there is at least one lucky cast member left standing by the time things wrap themselves up and that’s certainly refreshing for a change.

All in all... how did I end up liking this one? Well, as I’ve said... there’s certainly nothing new or original on hand here. Pretty much the winning point for this film is that it looks and feels very authentic, especially given the small budget and cast. It’s not a crowning achievement of film-making, but it isn’t too bad an effort either, especially for the Singapore film



industry. I can say it’s a good middle of the road film that is worth a look as long as you didn’t have to scour the world to find a copy or if this genre of horror is your thing. For me, it scores 3 “**Meows**” out of 5, being competently made and acted, using it’s setting to the fullest, but ultimately lacking the originality to truly distinguish itself from the pack of “**Blair Witch**” wannabees. Still... it’s hard to think of this as a near miss, rather as a homage to films the cast and crew obviously loved themselves. After all, they *do* say, “*Imitation is the sincerest form of flattery*”.... and never has that felt so true as here.



However.... the Region 1 DVD itself was a fun surprise. For one thing, it’s filmed nearly *entirely in English language*, not dubbed into English, with a few lines by incidental characters in Malay or Chinese and comes with excellent English subtitles to help you muddle through those. I can honestly say I didn’t expect that... and it’ll help if the folk you share your

movie watchin’ fun with are a little “subtitle shy”. Always a good thing. It also comes with some nice

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extras, mostly very “tongue in cheek” bits to help sell the illusion that you are watching something real and not fictional. There’s even an old newsreel documentary about the Fall of Singapore from waaaay back in WW2. Not something you need to watch to enjoy the film itself... but not unendurably tedious either. Hey... you might just learn something... *Hehehe!!*

As always... I have a Trailer to help put you in the mood... and here it goes!

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### 6 comments on ““Haunted Changi” (2010) – Singapore Ghost/ Horror”



**Novroz**

on December 2, 2011 at 10:10 pm said:

I have never seen any Singapore movies before. I don't think I want to see this.It reminds me so much of an Indonesian show where people are put in scary places and then the crew recorded the event and see people's reaction when ghost finally showed up.

Thanks for the review,anyway glad to see you have a new post.

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**Novroz**

on December 2, 2011 at 10:18 pm said:

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**Novroz**

on December 2, 2011 at 11:02 pm said:

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Anyway...I was just saying this sounds like an Indonesian show where they put people in scary places and recorded it. So I am not really interested in seeing this,but thanks for the review. Glad to see your new post

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**Nekoneko**

on December 3, 2011 at 4:32 am said:

Actually it is better than the type of show you mention. We have a TV series like that here in the US.... and it always feels so fake and forced. This one, although it's not terrifically new an idea, at least does use the documentary format well.

*Ahhh...* and for some weird reason, your first comment did get stuck in the Spam filter.... and it took a bit for me to convince Askimet that it was real.... *Hehehe!!* That shouldn't have happened since you've commented before and been approved already. Not certain what the heck it was thinking.... 😊



**Nekoneko**

on December 3, 2011 at 4:35 am said:

*Ahhh!!* I figured it out!! You sent the first comment using Kame & Kroten's Blog address instead of your Main Blog and it got all suspicious when it didn't match your previous comments.... Well. Got that fixed!! 😊



**Novroz**

on December 4, 2011 at 5:35 am said:

So...akismet thinks that my turtle blog is a spam? lol

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