

# Indie Horror Films

All genres of suspense, terror, and horror will be reviewed by Richard Gary. His address to send preview copies supplied upon request to rbf55@msn.com.

Sunday, March 23, 2014

## DVD Review: Scream Park

Text © Richard Gary / Indie Horror Films, 2014

Images from the Internet



### Scream Park

Written and directed by Cary Hill

Protomedia

Wild Eye Releasing

85 minutes, 2012 / 2014

[www.screamparkmovie.com](http://www.screamparkmovie.com)

[www.wildeyereleasing.com](http://www.wildeyereleasing.com)

[www.MVDVisual.com](http://www.MVDVisual.com)

First-time feature director Cary Hill is obviously a genre fan. Filmed in Pittsburgh, there is a number of nods to George A. Romero and zombies, even though there are none in the film; however, the copyright-free *Night of the Living Dead* is shown in a couple of scenes on a monitor screen.

Shot in the spooky Conneaut Lake Park (where scenes from the more mainstream *The Road* was also filmed in 2009), Hill gives it an '80s/'90s slasher feel to the level that one of the characters (the punk guy) actually uses a cassette (before it was cool again), and the manager wears those really big framed glasses that we all wore back then. I dunno, it feels like a time warp with cell phones being the flip kind. Wouldn't be the first time someone thought of that, but that also doesn't take away from it being cool.

At a run-down local amusement park – which reminds me of when we used to go to Crystal Beach (d. 1989), Ontario, not to be confused with Camp Crystal Lake – we meet a half-dozen or so co-workers who show various levels of enthusiasm for the job, as the park is on the brink of closure from lack of public interest. We see mostly empty rides and sideshow games with a number of vacant seats. This group is typical of film teens, expressed through high school jackets, though it's obvious they are at least in their mid-twenties and even some receding hairlines (I'm thrown back to *MADTV*'s "Pretty White Kids with Problems"). While there is the goth (or punk) girl in a corset with tutu, the horny couple, and the good girl, among others, happily Hill manages to steer away from *too* heavy handed clichés, such as the jock vs. the nerd. Bravo.

I promise I will try not to give away too much, but I do have to say, the one black guy (who isn't part of the Pretty Kids group, though equally disgruntled) dies first by being hanged. Really? A black lynching? Things that make you go *hmmm*, indeed. In my own defense, it's pretty clear he's a character that is gonna get it quickly, so I hope I'm not giving away *too* much. Okay, I'm backing off on the spoilers now.

There are some subtle homages here and there, such as the orange-haired punk guy who is reminiscent of Linnea Quigley's Trash character from *Return of the Living Dead* (1985), and one death is right out of *The Toxic Avenger* (1984). The lead character, Jennifer (Wendy Wygant), reminds me of a taller version of Jennifer Love Hewitt of *I Know What You Did Last Summer* (1997), and another's (the exceedingly cute and

### Blog Archive

- ▼ 2014 (11)
  - ▼ March (3)
    - DVD Review: Everyone Must Die!
    - DVD Review: Scream Park
    - DVD Review: Mad In Italy
  - February (3)
  - January (5)
- 2013 (36)
- 2012 (27)

### About Me

[View my complete profile](#)

diminutive Alicia Marie Marcucci) hair style, shirt and plaid skirt is right out of Drew Barrymore's in *Scream* (1996). Also like that film, there are two killers (they make that clear from the beginning as they both wear different masks). Perhaps these are coincidences, or subconscious leanings, but I'm willing to bet that it is an honorarium, more than anything else. Then, of course, there is Pinhead himself, Doug Bradley, in a 4 minute cameo flashback as the amusement park owner, Mr. Hyde (first name Henry?).

This film follows along with the model of Carol Clover's excellent 1992 analysis, *Men, Women and Chainsaws* of the women actually being braver and more intelligent than the men. If you haven't read this book and you're a genre fan, it's well worth it.

One flub that annoyed me, and I am saying this with a genuine smile and without a hint of sarcasm, is one person (male) is inside a building and is fumbling with the keys to open the door to let the heroine in before the guy with the ax gets to her, when it is obviously the door has a lever turn-latch, not a key one. Oh, and why does one of the killers, played by Kevin "Ogre" Ogilvie (AKA Nivek Ogre) from the industrial band Skinny Puppy have (a wavering) southern accent in Pittsburgh? I truly believe it's important to embrace these kinds of questions with these films, because it means you pay attention to what is going on. Man, I love indie cinema! Hey ho, let's go! Punk rawk!

While the ending had a nice touch, the theory was clear to me pretty early on.

There is only one topless scene, by the extremely bodacious, attractive, and oddly grayish-toothed Kailey Marie Harris (yes, there are two actors whose middle name is Marie). As for the gore, there's lots of it, most of it quite effective, even though the fresh blood is bit too dark and heavy on the viscosity (looks like motor oil); the splatter looks much better. Scalpings, beheading, axes, knives, they all look good and the after effects are successful, thanks to Arvin Clay. And that's what matters, right? Of course, right.

The editing is sharp, the color over-saturation works in the retro genre nod, and the day-for-night functions well. There are the usual first-film inconsistencies (one of the fun things to find for me), such as after someone pulls out a huge bag of raw french fries from under a sink and is then called away, when she comes back she pulls it out again. Shades of Vincent Price's sweater in *The Last Man on Earth* (1964). Sure there are the occasional holes here and there, as is fitting the micro-budget and genre, but here's a thought. If the place is named "Fright Land," wouldn't that have made as good a name for the film as *Scream Park*?

The commentary track by the director is interesting with anecdotes and techniques, but it is a revelation at 1:06 that made a whole shitload of sense to me that I hadn't thought of before, so kudos for that, Cary. There is also an amusing bloopers reel which is more the cast letting off steam than errors, and as usual with Wild Eye releases, some great company trailers.

As a directorial debut, this has been pretty highly accepted, with rightfully a bunch of festival nods. If you're a fan of the '80/'90s pre-torture porn slasher films, I don't believe you'll be disappointed.

Posted by **Robert Barry Francos** at 1:22 PM

 Recommend this on Google

Labels: **bloody**, **Cary Hill**, **Doug Bradley**, **George Romero**, **gore**, **Hellraiser**, **horror film**, **Indie Horror Films**, **MVD Visual**, **Pittsburgh**, **Richard Gary**, **Scream Park**, **slasher**, **Wild Eye Releasing**

**No comments:**

**Post a Comment**