

SCREAM PARK

A bargain basement theme park, Fright Land is due to close down shortly due to poor attendance. It could be that the surly young staff, a security guard who'd rather be watching NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD than keeping an eye on the CCTV cameras and a distinct lack of any rides remotely capable of challenging the mini-rollercoaster at Peppa Pig World have helped run this place into the ground.

Virginal Jennifer (Wendy Wygant) is the only chipper one out of a bunch of disagreeable teens who've been left to run the place. But even she has other things on her mind: her boyfriend, fellow worker Blake, is nowhere to be seen. So instead she has to tolerate wisecracks from unfunny jokers such as officious deputy manager Marty (Steve Rudzinski), geeky Rhodie (Tyler Kale) and football team captain Tony (Dean Jacobs).



Seeing as though it's their last night at the park, the teens decide to party on site after hours. As security guard Henry finally busies himself checking that the park's been emptied, the teens start their partying: getting slutty Allison's (Alicia Marie Marcucci) punk boyfriend Roy (Kyle Riordan) to smuggle booze in over the fence; fucking in the women's toilets, and so on.

As the festivities gather steam, there's only sober Jennifer who recognises that Blake's still missing despite his car being parked nearby, and that Henry's never returned from his routine checks. It's only when she spies two gatecrashers in Slipknot-style masks that Marty starts to share her assertions that something is amiss.

In the meantime, the killings begin. Who is behind them? And, can the surviving revellers stop heckling each other long enough to pull together and fight their way out of the ensuing shit-storm?

Writer-director Cary Hill's SCREAM PARK (do you see what he did there?) has but one ambition: to emulate the slasher films of the 1980s. He pulls it off for the main part, and does it with lots of style. The film is often gorgeously filmic to look at, while the editing is professionally slick and Christian Kriegeskotte's score perfectly evokes a bygone era of summer camp teen massacres.

Some of the acting is, admittedly, terrible - there's a moment 49 minutes into proceedings where three characters discover a friend of theirs has been killed; you would react more than they do if you were stoned off your tits. Oh, and casting Riordan as a hard-arse is an inadvertent faux pas by Hill for UK viewers, as he comes across as nothing more than a camp version of Vivian from "The Young Ones".

But salvation comes in the form of a damn fine cameo from Doug Bradley as park owner Mr Hyde. I can't really divulge more about his role - shot in one day - here, as that would constitute a spoiler. But he's very good in what amounts to an extended cameo role.

Homage is paid to SCREAM, HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO NE, THE TOXIC AVENGER and INTRUDER amongst others during the horror set-pieces once this 84-minute film finally gets going (it takes about 40 minutes for anything of interest to happen). The gore is decent without

ever being extreme, and it's all of the old-school variety - no CGI here! Fans of 80s slasher fare will recognise motifs but Hill is careful never to fall into cliché or parody. The guy's got talent and as a director I can see him going from strength to strength.

My reservations are restricted to the pacing of this film: the first third, at least, is pretty dull. It echoes INTRUDER in this respect: too much exposition involving a bunch of uninteresting characters, and numerous mentions of a character that the audience don't even meet at the time.

There's a revelation about an hour into proceedings which is quite novel. But you have to avoid reading about this film to enjoy it, because as soon as you look on the IMDb or even the back cover of this DVD this twist is given away.

So my advice would be: if you fancy your chances with a good-looking, pretty accurate and faithful updating of conventional 80s slasher motifs, SCREAM PARK should easily sate your needs. But don't read any other reviews if possible ... just go into it. Because virtually any other review you read will spoil the reveal for you...

Wild Eye Releasing's US DVD is region free and presents SCREAM PARK fully uncut. The film comes in its original aspect ratio and is enhanced for 16x9 televisions. Generally speaking, the video quality is excellent. Colours, blacks, detail - it's all very strong and quite cinematic-looking. But there are a couple of scenes that look inferior, with washed-out blacks and mild noise to speak of.

English 2.0 audio is efficient and clean if a little flat.

The disc opens to a crisp, colourful mock-up of the DVD cover art on a static main menu page. From there, a static scene selection menu allows access to SCREAM PARK via 4 chapters.

Of the bonus material on offer, by far and away the most substantial is an audio commentary track from Hill. He points out a lot of the stylistic nods to 80s horror films, as well as highlighting the necessity of having an effective score. Casting, locations, set-piece preparation, time constraint compromises: Hill covers a lot of ground and keeps the flow interesting throughout.

A bloopers reel is less interesting. These run their course over 7 minutes and almost exclusively consist of on-shoot japey. It's the type of stuff that may've been funny if you were there, I suppose.

Finally we get the film's original 91-second trailer (complete with 80s-style voiceover), along with trailers for a handful of other titles available from Wild Eye: FINAL ENTRIES, MOLD!, MURDER UNIVERSITY, CAESAR AND OTTO'S DEADLY XMAS, DISCO EXORCIST and EXHUMED. Disconcertingly, perhaps, I've seen every one of these!

Nice to look at, slickly edited and true to its 80s slasher aspirations, SCREAM PARK is actually very absorbing - once it gets going.

By Stuart Willis

Released by WILD EYE RELEASING
Region All

Not Rated

Extras :

see main review

[Back](#)