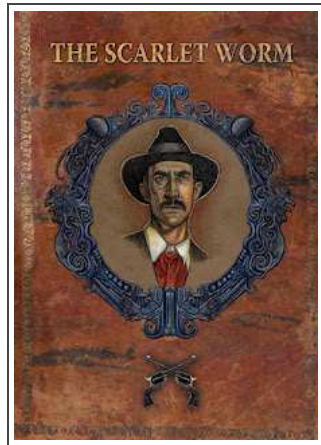




AUG 21, 2012

REVIEW: THE SCARLET WORM



Every modern western will most likely be compared to Clint Eastwood's 1992 epic Unforgiven. And any western should be flattered when used in the same breath; however, any western is also doomed in the same respect. Beyond the tenuous connection between The Scarlet Worm and Unforgiven, in that both of them are westerns, there is actually quite a bit similarly thematic between the two than just the former's lineage. Unforgiven – about a former and aging outlaw tasked with dispatching a couple of ruthless cowboys for cutting up a whore - is a rightful classic. The film, in which Eastwood's Will Munny teams up with a young hotshot and an equally aging loyal partner, was a movie made in a time when the western was all but dead. Any other western brave enough to try since has no choice but to pale in comparison. Such similarities will serve as The Scarlet Worm's own condemnation, simply because the similarities cannot be ignored.

A rogue and hired gunman named Print (Aaron Stielstra) brings a tedious and almost poetic touch to his assassinations. He'll spend hours crouching in a ditch, waiting for just the right moment to unleash a single bullet that will claim the lives of not one but two of his targets. One day, he receives his next assignment from his contact, Mr. Paul (Brett Halsey). It seems that there's a rather vicious whoremaster named Heinrich Kley (Daniel Van Husen) forcing graphic abortions among his hired women. Mr. Paul wants a stop to it, and so he bequeaths the job to Print...with a twist. Print must also shepherd a wet-behind-the-ears, would-be assassin to accompany him on the job. Along the way, Print and his protégé infiltrate Heinrich's operation, and because of Print's unusual way of dispatching his targets, Heinrich's assassination does not come quickly. Print immerses himself in Heinrich's world, becoming privy to his sociopathic mind firsthand. During this time, the protégé grows a little too attached to one of Heinrich's women, and all sorts of complications arise because of it.



The Scarlet Worm really wants to be more than the sum of its parts. The introspective narration provided by Print, as well as the seemingly unconnected opening/closing involving a Native American shaman, seems to really want to suggest a spirituality and otherworldliness. The problem with The Scarlet Worm is that it doesn't know how to do so



Musings on the darker side of movies, music, literature, and other oddities. Occasionally there will be some original fiction by yours truly.

You've seen all those other blogs, right?

Well...here's one more.



A celebration of the worst horror and cult movies ever made.

- AMITYVILLE 4: THE EVIL ESCAPES
- THE AMITYVILLE HAUNTING
 - BASKET CASE
- BEWARE: CHILDREN AT PLAY
 - BLOOD FEAST
- BURIAL GROUND: NIGHTS OF TERROR
 - CHOPPING MALL
- CRAZY FAT ETHEL aka CRIMINALLY INSANE
 - CRAZY FAT ETHEL 2
- DEATH BED: THE BED THAT EATS
 - FOR YOUR HEIGHT ONLY
- JASON GOES TO HELL: THE FINAL FRIDAY
 - JAWS 5: CRUEL JAWS
 - NAIL GUN MASSACRE
 - THE RAVEN
 - SILENT NIGHT, DEADLY NIGHT: PART 2
- THE SLUMBER PARTY MASSACRE
- SORORITY HOUSE MASSACRE 2
 - THE UNDYING
- WEASELS RIP MY FLESH

with enough confidence. The pace is a plodding one, causing the viewer not to stop and smell the flowers, but rather to check their watch. It falls victim to the problems that plague most low budget features. While the direction is assured, the performances aren't confident, the tone isn't consistent, and the editing is way too loose. Shots linger far longer than necessary, something "Twin Peaks" director David Lynch does on purpose to flip convention on its ears. Meaning, watch a man laugh for too long and it becomes uncomfortable; watch a woman cry for too long and it becomes funny. Doing this on purpose is a tactic rarely utilized, but doing it by accident is just plain unfortunate. And the audio, my god, the audio! Someone buy this crew a windscreen for their mics, please! Nearly every outdoor scene sounds just as poorly recorded as your uncle's camcorder capture of your soccer match from autumn, 1989.

Stielstra as Print provides the strongest performance, but even he falters from time to time, not quite infusing it with enough bravado. At times he seems unsure of the antiquated western jargon his character must unfurl, and such instances lose the viewer almost immediately.



Van Husen as Heinrich Kley is consistently effective, and his understated evil provides a nice complement to Print's understated good. His biblical reiteration of the crimson (aka scarlet) worm is very well done, and might be the strongest and most assured scene.

Director Michael Fredianelli has talent – there is no denying that. Though the movie might be an inconsistent mess, he has a keen eye, and he beautifully captures the bright surroundings of the sandy landscape, utilizing natural light in most scenes to illuminate every nook and cranny of the location. Many of the shots are beautiful, almost heavenly... until the wind blows directly into the mic and sends you screaming from the room.

Seriously, folks! Wind screens!

Any person attempting a western – especially one with a low budget – deserves accolades. It's a genre most consider dead, and one which even the most seasoned veterans won't touch. It's just a shame it didn't make for a better experience.

Posted by TEOS at 12:21 AM

[Recommend this on Google](#)

Labels: MVD, the scarlet worm, western

No comments:

Post a Comment



Unheralded horror that deserves a second (or even first) look.

- INTRO
- THE CALLER
- COPYCAT
- DOLORES CLAIBORNE
 - FRAILTY
 - GHOSTWATCH
 - LAKE MUNGO
- THE MOTHMAN PROPHECIES
 - THE NIGHT FLIER
 - RAVENOUS
 - STIR OF ECHOES

MOST READ THIS WEEK



UNSUNG HORRORS: THE CALLER

Every once in a while, a genuinely great horror movie—one that would rightfully be considered a classic, had it gotten more exposure and lov...



SHITTY FLICKS: THE AMITYVILLE HAUNTING

Shitty Flicks is an ongoing column that celebrates the most hilariously incompetent, amusingly pedestrian, and mind-bogglingly stupid movies...



REVIEW: ABSENTIA

Absentia is a cool little movie. The story is unique, the acting is genuine, but the best part? Abundant creep. The budget was obviously s...



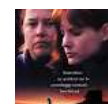
THE CURSE OF THE CRYING BOY!

The Curse of 'The Crying Boy' was born in September, 1985, by infamous UK tabloid The Sun . In the article, "Blazing Curse of the Crying ...



RANT: FRIDAY THE 13th (2009)

This past Friday the 13th led me to rediscover my love for the perpetual film franchise of the same name. I've been watching Jason run amu...



UNSUNG HORRORS: DOLORES CLAIBORNE

Every once in a while, a genuinely great horror movie—one that would rightfully be considered a classic, had it gotten more exposure and lov...



DUDE, BRO! GHOSTS!

Possessions. Voodoo. Ghost sex. It's all in a day's work for the hosts of Ghost Adventures, a highly entertaining ghost hunting show enigm...

REVIEW: ABRAHAM LINCOLN VS. ZOMBIES