

Jeff Kirkendall's Thoughts For The Month Column

Thoughts, Opinions, Reviews, Commentary & More!

Hello and Welcome! My name is Jeff Kirkendall and I'm an independent filmmaker and actor from the Upstate New York area. This is the section of the Very Scary Productions website where I write about topics related to independent filmmaking, digital video production, acting, movies in general, horror movies in particular, my own indie movies, as well as anything and everything related or in between.

I decided to create this commentary page because I find that I often come across things that either interest me, excite me, intrigue me, or maybe just bug me. Any topic related to movies and cinema is fair game, from the most mainstream to the most controversial. For example I'll often read about movie projects that I have a strong interest in or opinion on, for one reason or another. This page gives me a forum to discuss these things. It's all about discussion and furthering understanding of our pop culture. Anyone who has feedback concerning what I have to say here, feel free to contact me (see the contact link at <http://www.veryscaryproductions.com/>).

I'd also like to point out that the following is just my opinion, and everyone is free to agree or disagree with what I have to say. Enjoy, and to all the Indies out there: Keep on Filming!

SUBJECT: Movie Recommendation - ***Brutal Massacre: A Comedy*** - February 2010

Hello everyone. I'm back after a couple months of interesting guest columns. Here I'd like to wrap up some old business and give thumbs-up to a movie I saw in 2008 (it is actually a 2007 film). It would've been one of my "Best Of 2008" movies discussed in a 2009 column, but it didn't make the cut in 09' because other topics took precedence. Follow all that (LOL)? Anyway, on to the review...

Brutal Massacre is a "mockumentary" starring David Naughton (from ***An American Werewolf in London***) as fictional horror director Harry Penderecki. The movie begins at a Fangoria horror film convention where the affable artist is speaking after just having completed his hoped-for genre comeback movie ***Brutal Massacre***. Following this we flash back to the making of the movie from beginning to end, during which time everything that could possibly go wrong does (in typical low-budget horror movie tradition). The movie features a slew of cult and horror film stars such as Ken Foree (from ***Dawn of the Dead***), Gunnar Hansen (from ***The Texas Chainsaw Massacre***), Brian O'Halloran (from ***Clerks I & II***) and Ellen Sandweiss (from ***The Evil Dead***), among others.

I really enjoyed this film and chuckled from start to finish. Being a low-budget filmmaker I could definitely relate to some of the mishaps on the set, and in fact watching the crazy things that Penderecki had to deal with made some of my own experiences seem tame by comparison. David Naughton is great as the unapologetic director who takes everything in stride, from minor setbacks to major catastrophes. There are just so many funny scenes in this movie it's hard to single out just one, but a favorite of mine is a scene where Naughton and O'Halloran ride an elevator in a potential investor's house. That was just plain comic weirdness. Additionally, Gunnar Hansen's role as an angry, foul-mouthed landowner is equal parts funny and disturbing. Hansen definitely knows

how to play an imposing character. And Ellen Sandweiss is fun to watch as a beleaguered producer, who one just knows will stick with Penderecki right to the bitter end no matter what happens.

Being a fan of the horror genre and having attended many conventions and shows over the years, it is almost inconceivable for me not to like this movie. From the opening scene at the (mock) Fangoria convention with the likes of (Fangoria Editor) Tony Timpone and superstar producer-director Mick Garris, to Penderecki's adventures on the set, the film is a testament to the spirit of independent filmmaking and the horror genre. Those not so familiar with the horror genre, horror film personalities, and/or horror film conventions may not view the film with such affinity; however even to the layperson this comedy of errors should produce more than a few chuckles... highly recommended.