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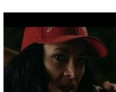
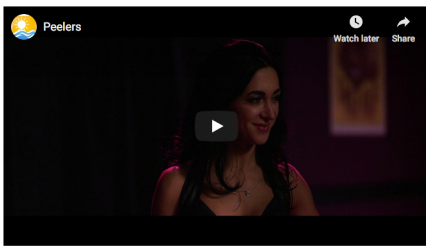
MOVIES, BOOKS, AND MORE



'PEELERS' / ANDREW BUCKNER / AWORDOFDREAMS / LISA DEVITA / UNCORK'D ENTERTAINMENT

“Peelers” – (Movie Review)

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By Andrew Buckner

Rating: ****1/2 out of ****.

Two of the most celebrated ingredients in cinematic horror are flesh and blood. *Peelers* (2016), a wildly entertaining ninety-five-minute feature from director Seve Schelenz and writer Lisa DeVita (who also did the casting), submits this in gleeful excess. Such is most notable in the all-embracing structure. Schelenz and DeVita set the affair up in a semi-traditional manner. This transpires within the initial forty-minutes. These flashes operate as a collage of sumptuously staged and captivatingly shot strip show sequences. This is mixed in with an equal dose of slyly delivered character and story development.

Utilizing nearly the initial half of the film to revel in the formerly stated attribute could've easily become monotonous. It could've also slowed down the fluent, meticulous pace of the effort immeasurably. But, there is a range of certainly unique themes that accompanies these segments. Never once are any of these notions repeated. Such a decision helps save the undertaking from such a fate. These sections fuse with the aforesaid exposition seamlessly.

The consequence of such an action paints a more thorough portrait of the occupational lives of our leads. For many related entries in the field, this would be enough to sell the flick. Yet, Schelenz's project has a consistently successful wit. There is also an abundance of creative ideas coursing throughout the exertion. Not to mention, the progressive build-up of terror events unveiled in this section are just as effectively and organically administered as those stated above. For example, there is a memorable third act happenstance which incorporates these components. It involves our central figure, Blue Jean Douglas (in a charismatic and ever-watchable performance from Wren Walker), taking out an infected antagonist with a baseball. The brilliance of this bit, besides being a nod to her former profession, is that it is modeled after the conventional slow-motion sports-associated pitch commonly elucidated in movies. Much of the last fifty-five-minutes function just as well in this fashion. This is as the proceedings are crafted into an all-out parade of gore, grandiose fright and brilliantly honed humor. This is even if the configuration proves somewhat more engaging early on. Such is because of the method in with relationships bud and circumstances unveil in predictable fashion in the latter portion. Yet, the work never fails to be anything less than raunchy, low-budget fun. Best of all, it rarely resorts to artificial jump scares to punctuate its various episodes of intensity.

The narrative commences with an ominous and certainly attention-garnering scene. It transpires in a hospital. Over the course of its two-and-a-half minutes, the macabre allure of this piece establishes a jolting, though quietly eerie and foreboding, tone. Such becomes an early highlight of the venture. This is as it suggests the variety of great things to come. Simultaneously, it immediately begins to form questions in our mind as to what exactly we are seeing and why. It is a masterful foundation. Schelenz follows this up with a visually stunning arrangement that mechanizes just as triumphantly. There is a smooth marriage of music and sensual imagery augmented in this composition. Such particulars make the configuration play like a bravura inaugural extract of cast and crew recognition from an X-rated installment in the James Bond franchise. Moreover, LaLaa Love's body language expressive presentation as the dancer viewed in this unit compliments the sheer artistry at hand. Such creates the ingenious rhythm of alternating fear and sensuality upon which the design stands.

As the tale unfolds, we find manager Blue Jean quietly pining. It is her last day as owner of The Happy Hour. Such is the erotically charged club where the narrative solely takes place. A nefarious businessman known as Chromagnum (in an exhibition from Al Dales that spectacularly personifies the efficiently sinister rich man archetype), has bought her out. He intends on using the building to his own whims officially at the stroke of midnight. When a group of miners arrive at the area, it is soon noted that these individuals seem to be covered in a strange ooze. Striking up conversation with one of the laborers, it is discovered that this group believes to have struck oil. They also state that they are planning to go back tomorrow. This is to see if they can uncover more of the presumed liquid. Such explains their festival-like spirit. It is also cause for their reasoning for stopping at Blue Jean's venue. Yet, this scheme is abruptly halted. This is as the substance morphs these toilers, and everyone else in the building, into infected, zombie-like monsters who hurl black and green fluids. Such erupts moments prior to transformation.



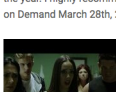
Such is a simple, but surely intriguing, impetus for a chronicle such as the one Schelenz conveys. It is a fiction that garners supplementary points by drawing a definitive parallel to John Gulager's stupendous *Feast* (2005). This is in its general setting and zany, go-for-the-jugular demeanor. Furthermore, our protagonists are all likable and diverse in personality. Best of all, they are undeniably outstandingly etched. The antagonists are also exceptional. This is especially true when considering them as a masterful illustration of the collaborative contribution of the thirty-eight people who make up the effects team. Though the look of the undead is a bit conventional, a mixture of the dark eyes uncovered so habitually in modern cinema and the writhing ick of a similar opus from the 1980's, they are still an enjoyable departure. This is from the stiff and unimaginative veneer of so many mutants perceived in today's full-length provisions. Correspondingly, the method devised to slaughter these entities is both convenient and clever. But, what shines the most is the endlessly confident and stylish direction from Schelenz. DeVita's screenplay continues to assist and augment the quality of the attempt. This is primarily with credible, yet often hilarious dialogue. There is also a smart balance of the serious and the comic, the bold and the interesting inherent in the penned material. Such makes the predictably wicked intentions Chromagnum has with Blu Jean's edifice, which are exposed in the final twenty-minutes, quickly forgivable.

The doggedly skillful on-screen portrayals only boost these sensibilities. Kirsty Peters as Licorice/ Carla, Nikki Wallin as Baby/ Elaine and Victoria Gomez as Tina are excellent in their principal roles. Caz Odin Darko as Remy, Madison J. Loos as Logan, Cameron Dent as Tony and Momona Komagota are also fantastic. Rafael Mateo as Pablo, David Torres as Mario, Edwin Perez as Jesus and Andrea Rosolia as Panuche are just as phenomenal in their respective enactments. The same can be said for Manny Jacinto as Travis, Emma Docker as Aja, Rob Scattergood as Officer Karl Robinson and Katherine Blaylock as Officer Simone Lacey. Lauren Martin as Nurse and Megan Duquette as Nasty Nanda are also impressive in their brief turns. The secondary cast of bar patrons, cooks (Jason Muller, Chadderton W. Thornton and Mike Hurley in slight, but transcendent, parts), a deejay (voiced by Tim Chisholm) and a waitress (in a magnificent demonstration from Tatyanna Prior) enrich this already layered endeavor. Additionally, Schelenz is scene-stealing in his representation of Officer Carter.



Schelenz also provides sharp and remarkable editing. The cinematography from Lindsay George is gorgeous and ever-immersive. Nikki Blais' costume as well as Todd Giroux and Schelenz's production design is authentic and inventive. The seven-person make-up squad offers terrific input. Vincent Mai's music, though evidently modeled after the conventional mechanisms of the genre score, is moody and unnerving. The art, electrical and camera, animation and sound department all afford an influence that is startlingly good.

Recorded in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, this Uncork'd Entertainment distribution and Pound (LBS) Pictures co-fabrication, is Internationally delightful, amusing and relentless. It is everything audiences seek when searching for escape via celluloid. There are instances of intentional camp. But, it is not so much that it weighs down the wallop Schelenz packs when he yearns to subject bystanders to genuine shocks. This poison makes the sum increasingly well-rounded and easy to admire. The open to interpretation shot which arises before the concluding acknowledging credits only adds to this category. Such is only a warm-up round for the astonishing mid-credits passage that is glimpsed later. When these become mutual with the last second jolt which finishes the photoplay, we smirk all the wider. This is as Schelenz appears to culminate the climax of his brainchild with another wholly new one. Such a radically over the top decision suits the overall attitude of the depiction beautifully. The title, an analogy that applies to the heroines as well as the overtaken, is just as perfect. When integrated, the outcome is an assuredly crowd-pleasing tour de force; a blood-soaked and ceaselessly engrossing reminder of why I originally fell in love with the genus of tongue-in-cheek revulsion. For those with similar affinities, this will prove to be one of the best movies of the year. I highly recommend seeking this out. You can do so when *Peelers* arrives on Video on Demand March 28th, 2017.



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