

Fresh from the Archives: “MY BLOODY VALENTINE 3D” (2009; Film Review)

Written by Ed Patrick

Monday, 14 February 2011 16:51



It's Valentine's Day—that Hallmark holiday for gullible, sentimental dunderheads who saccharinely subscribe to the ridiculously risible notion that you can testify your love for someone on a solitary day by (if you're a dude) ingratiatingly purchasing confectionary (aren't people unhealthy enough?), flowers (which will eventually die, like your love for each other) and that aforementioned Hallmark greeting card with its sickeningly syrupy and cornball pronouncement of eternal and undying affection (which she'll throw away with your flowers in a week's time). Hogwash! So what amatory-inducing movie should you see with your loved one tonight? How about eschewing the customary and gag-inducing Sandra Bullock/Jennifer Aniston/Drew Barrymore rom-com and instead sliding up to your main squeeze and watching *the*

only February 14th flick worth viewing on this most consumer and unromantic of holidays: Patrick Lussier's 2009 redux MY BLOODY VALENTINE. Here's Ed Patrick's review of the film. (And if you want to make it a double-feature, watch George Mihalka's original as well.) “Sarah, be my bloody Valentine!”

The most obvious critique applied to pretty much any 3-D movie is, would this film work as well without the 3-D? In most instances the answer is no, and in the case of MY BLOODY VALENTINE 3D, that's more or less the case.

Take the 3-D out of it and VALENTINE is really no different from average direct-to-DVD slasher fodder, albeit not a bad example by any means. And as the current slate of remakes goes, this new MY BLOODY VALENTINE measures up decently to the original, which was neither the best nor the worst of the lot (though it works better now as a nostalgia piece), and is a fairly respectful retelling. But all of this is irrelevant, since the new BLOODY VALENTINE was made to be seen and experienced in three dimensions (the first horror film shot with the Real D process) and this is what gives the film the large majority of its entertainment value. If you don't experience this one in a theater in 3-D, you'll be missing out on all the fun.

For those who are fans of the original, you'll be pleased to know that MY BLOODY VALENTINE 3D is not a “reimagining” of the original but rather a pretty straightforward remake, keeping a large majority of the 1981 film's storyline and characters and making certain changes that work for the better. One of the things that set the first movie apart was the fact that it was populated mainly by adults and not horny teenagers, and the new version takes the same course, although these leads are mainly *young* adults. It retains the same plot structure—deranged miner slaughters his co-workers and townsfolk before supposedly being killed himself, and a new series of murders occur years later, along with the love-triangle subplot and

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murder-mystery aspect (which Todd Farmer and Zane Smith’s script works fairly hard to keep us guessing about). None of this makes for truly riveting drama, but it all works as best it can, and as a plotline to basically connect a bunch of gory 3-D killings, it is reasonably watchable on these terms.



The casting is actually a big help, and the performers all acquit themselves nicely under the circumstances: SUPERNATURAL’s Jensen Ackles is able to keep his character’s sanity questionable while still giving us a reason to care for his plight, while Jaime King takes her somewhat thankless role beyond being a mere scream queen, and Betsy Rue has a memorably lengthy full-frontal nude scene that she plays so well, you eventually forget the nudity and focus on the scene (and considering how good she looks, that’s saying something). But it’s old pros Kevin (LOST) Tighe and the great Tom (CREEPSHOW) Atkins who add real zest to the film, and it’s especially wonderful to see Atkins back in the horror genre again, almost as if nothing has changed. It’s also to the film’s credit that his casting doesn’t serve as just an in-joke for the fans, but as simply getting the best actor possible for the role.

Of course, it’s the last part of MY BLOODY VALENTINE 3D’s title that is the film’s real *raison d’etre*. Say what you will about the overall feature, but you can’t deny that director Patrick Lussier delivers the 3-D goods, but *real* good. Lussier is also Wes Craven’s editor and he certainly knows his pacing, but VALENTINE’s opening 15 minutes are so enjoyably over-the-top, and know how to meet audience expectations so well, that once the film settles down into its story, the director’s already got us where he wants us. There’s at least one cool dimensional highlight per reel, and the movie piles on so much gore that you have to wonder what the MPAA saw before VALENTINE that made them so jaded that they gave this one a pass. It’s delightfully old-school in the blood-’n’-guts department, and while there may not be as memorable a death as the laundromat scene in the previous version (though Rue’s nude demise comes pretty darn close), the filmmakers take so much delight in delivering all the mayhem in 3-D that it easily brushes the film’s shortcomings aside.

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Like most slashers, MY BLOODY VALENTINE 3D isn't great art or even great horror cinema, but it proves that with a little showmanship, you can have no problem sitting back and enjoying yourself or recommending it to friends. This is not one of those instances where you can tell people to wait for the DVD, because without the 3-D experience (especially if the theater is packed with fellow fans), it would lose its luster and what you'd be left with, while decent, is nothing too special. But once you put on those 3-D glasses, you'll be dodging pickaxes and shielding yourself from blood that doesn't quite make its way from the screen onto you, and that's what MY BLOODY VALENTINE 3D is really all about. I'm not sure if nothing says date movie like a 3-D ride to hell, but a good time at the movies like this will certainly give you something to remember past Valentine's Day.



{comments on}