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DVD Review

To take a look at the cover of *Banshee!!!*, you might suspect you've been banished to straight-to-DVD hell. Surprisingly, though, despite obvious budget restraints, *Banshee!!!* is actually a helluva indie fear feast and its budget restraints aren't obvious by way of shitty effects or acting by non-actors or any of the other things that usually hamper shoestring budget fare. I suspect the budget here was more than a shoestring, but it still wasn't huge. Which makes it even more remarkable that *Banshee!!!* fares as well as it does. The acting varies from decent to good (and always functional enough for the movie's purposes) and the effects are startlingly good, especially given the restraints. Plus, knowing that there is computer animation involved leaves me even more impressed. I'm not a huge CGI fan as it is, even with big budget Hollywood blockbuster mind-numbers. I've seen enough bad indie films to know that - as a rule - indie folks shouldn't even bother with CGI. If Hollywood has a hard time making it convincing sometimes (and to me, it does), then people paying for their movie out of their worn out velcro wallet sure as hell shouldn't fuck around with it. Well, *Banshee!!!* is the exception that proves the rule. One thing that helps is that, while the monster appears frequently, the camera is never allowed to linger too long on it. It (the beastie) leaps about in fast-paced action sequences and we see enough of him to be satisfied but not so much that suspension of disbelief goes out the window. Toward the end, when we get a good look at his face, we find that even this final reveal holds up. Not to mention the fact that the monster design is pretty nifty. It's the face and head of the monster that bring it together and give it some originality. The gore is also effectively handled. I've grown weary of bad gore and dull death scenes that are supposed to be thrilling. *Banshee!!!* did not add to my weariness (or my being wary of this sort of thing). The deaths tended toward creativity in execution (pun intended) and, what's more, the movie wastes no time getting around to the kill-off. Not too much time wasted with the batch of replaceable teens (one of whom, Lake, is annoying as hell but one of the best-performed characters in the film, the other solid acting outing belonging to the tough, grizzled old dude and the female police officer - the rest are adequate, at least). And when the kills do kick in, right off we get a slaying that, with more technology and a slightly different angle, could have been a neat 3D death. Then there's the techy-glitchy way the film presents the hallucinations and distortion of reality the banshee employs when screwing with the heads of its intended victims. That is a small, but nice touch. All told, a shockingly good horror outing. Visit www.mvdb2b.com.

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Upchuck Undergrind listens to a little bit of a lot of things - just note the eclecticism of his reviews. He also reads voraciously and loves movies. He is a very open-minded Episcopalian (and student of Buddhism and Hinduism) who thinks Slayer is one of the greatest metal bands. Ever. In addition to his work with Corazine -

for which he has written since its inception (he is a Fishcomcollective veteran) - he also writes for DJFix.com and B-Scared.com (his horror/exploitation review site).

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