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REVIEW: HUDSON HORROR SHOW FILM FEST

by V. Kennedy. Photos by Frank White

On May 22, The South Hills Mall in Poughkeepsie played host to the inaugural Hudson Horror Show film festival. Scores of classically inclined horror fanatics fled from the warmth and sunshine of a pleasant spring day, opting instead to take refuge for 10+ hours in a dark and chilled movie theater. Oh the horror...

Curated by resident metal and horror aficionado Chris Alo and Tad Leger from local thrash heroes Toxik, the festival was a celebration of all things classic from the world of horror. Run in conjunction with Grindhouse Releasing, the show opened with a short by Putnam Valley's own horror director Glen Baisley. The crowd ewwwed and awwwed their way through a series of independent horror shorts as well as a series of mock grindhouse film trailers. A perfect blend of horror and comedy kept all in attendance entertained thoroughly during the opening hours of the festival. Of particular interest was a couple shorts by Teller (of Penn & Teller fame), in the shorts, which are aptly titled *& Teller*, Teller is one of a few survivors of a sudden zombie epidemic, even his long time stage partner Penn has been turned. The result is a series of pensively amusing observations by the now lone Teller.

During short intermissions, the crowd would file into the lobby to stretch their legs and browse the vendor tables. Present was a table selling official Grind-

house Releasing merchandise, a vendor with a variety of horror inspired t-shirts, local horror author Jason Gehlert (with his latest novel *Demon Revolver*) and a table of DVDs from Light & Dark Productions, which is helmed by the aforementioned Glen Baisley (lightanddark.net).



The first feature of the day was *Night of the Living dead: Reanimated*, an interesting re-envisioning of the Romero classic. One of the chief sponsors of the film was internet torrent pioneer Demonoid.com (that alone is enough to earn my praise). Assembled by Mike Schneider (www.notldr.com), scores of artists from around the globe contributed their personal animated visions for the film. Keeping the original score and dialogue intact, each scene of the iconic film was reinterpreted through various forms of animations. From hand drawn to clay-mation, from computer to stop motion. The assembled artists breathed new life into the classic, birthing a unique vision of horror. The stop motion Ferbie-zombies

were a particular hit with the crowd.

The day's horror program then took a break for a preview of Toxik's new DVD *Think Again*. Co-host of the festivities, and drummer from the band, Tad Leger gave a short introduction, then showed the preview which included interviews and recently discovered footage from shows at the Paramount and on the waterfront in Peekskill, New York from the late 80s. After a short break, the meat and potatoes of the day would begin: the 35mm trailers and feature films.



Provided by Grindhouse Releasing (GrindHouseReleasing.com), the features of the day were the 1982 tongue in cheek slasher film *Pieces*, the classic Italian horror film by Lucio Fulci *Zombie* and the camp classic (helmed by *Spiderman1-3* director, Sam Rami), *Evil Dead*. The features were intermingled with vintage film trailers and even an amusing anti-cable TV commercial from the early 1980s. The antiquated commercial was an artifact from a bygone age, when film studios

viewed the emerging cable market as a competitor and not an extension of their market (see the above mentioned *NOTLD: R* sponsor Demonoid.com for a possible present day comparison). As host Chris Alo wryly observed, "It didn't work."

The first Hudson Horror Show proved itself to be a success and worthy endeavor for all in attendance. The film selection, along with the various shorts and trailers, drew film fans from around the region to bear witness to this collection of classic films, presented in their true gory glory on the big screen and in their original 35mm format. The festival gave an opportunity to a generation of film fans, who may have never had the opportunity to experience such iconic films on the big screen, to see them as they were intended to be seen.

The success of the first Hudson Horror Show has ensured a sequel (in good horror tradition...) which is planned for this coming Halloween season. Judging by the enthusiasm of those who were fortunate enough to attend the inaugural event, and the strictly limited number of seats available, the ticket for October's event promises to be a eagerly sought after item. You would be wise to head on over to HudsonHorror.com (make sure to join their facebook page as well!) and join their official email list for feature updates and future ticket information. You don't want to be left out in the cold on this one. 🍷