

“MY SUPER PSYCHO SWEET 16 2” (Film Review)

Written by Michael Gingold

Wednesday, 13 October 2010 15:02



Who'da thought that a made-for-MTV movie would turn out to be one of the better slasher movies and better genre sequels lately? Not this reviewer, until I watched MY SUPER PSYCHO SWEET 16 2, which plays tonight at LA's Screamfest prior to its MTV premiere next Friday, October 22.

One of MY SUPER PSYCHO 2's positives is that it's a true sequel, unlike so many recent direct-to-disc/cable follow-ups that simply rehash the plots of their predecessors (sometimes with a few of the same actors, sometimes not). This one is actually a logical dramatic continuation of the previous story, catching up with Skye Rotter (returning actress Lauren McKnight) a short time after she fled the Roller Dome massacre perpetrated by her psychopathic father Charlie. Anxious to disappear into a new life (and still feeling kinda guilty about leaving mean girl Madison Penrose to die at Charlie's hands), Skye tracks down Carolyn (Myndy Crist), the mother who abandoned her when she was very young. Carolyn's not entirely happy to see Skye, and her teen daughter Alex (Kirsten Prout) isn't thrilled either to be suddenly introduced to the half-sister she never knew about.



Despite the initial distrust, the three women begin to develop a bond, and the scenes between them are allowed by director Jacob Gentry (also back from the original) to breathe in a naturalistic, dramatic manner one doesn't often see in youth-centric fright films. The characters are also more likable than usual for this sort of fare—McKnight and Prout are both quite sympathetic and develop believable half-sibling chemistry—with the exception of the snotty crowd Alex runs with. They're led by a real beeyotch named Zoe (Stella Maeve), who knows how to push Alex's buttons and pretty soon has Skye's number too. Zoe convinces Alex that throwing a really cool party will help Alex win the guy she's into—and wouldn't you know it, Alex's dad is a real-estate developer who just happens to be in the planning stages of turning a

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shuttered strip club called The Boneyard into retail space. With Alex’s access to the keys, what better place to throw the ultimate bash? Oh, and did I mention that Skye’s could-be boyfriend Brigg (Chris Zylka) and computer-geek best pal Derek (Matt Angel) have figured out where Skye went and set out on a road trip to track her down?

It’s not hard to predict how all these subplots are going to collide, and the script by encoring writer/producers Jed Elinoff and Scott Thomas doesn’t attempt the whodunit aspect engaged in by the previous MY SUPER PSYCHO; we’re shown early on that Charlie (Alex Van) is still out and about and on his wayward daughter’s trail as well. Yet from the snazzy, Facebook-styled expository opening title sequence onward, it’s clear that Gentry et al. have taken the care to craft something of a higher standard than just another opportunistic knockoff. The director and cinematographer Eric Maddison whip up some nice suburban-Gothic atmosphere, plus a pair of long tracking shots that border on the Argento-esque (certainly, more than anything Argento himself has done lately). Also worthy of vintage gialli is the manner in which one of the last victims is dispatched, and in general, Gentry pulls off the murder scenes with panache, and as much blood as Standards and Practices will allow. Even the obligatory nightmare scene in which Skye is confronted by Madison’s specter is given a nasty and grisly—but appropriate in context—little twist.

While there’s the potential to overstate the modest virtues of MY SUPER PSYCHO SWEET 16 2, it would also be easy—and unfair—to dismiss it sight unseen due to its MTV-sequel status. Yes, it has the expected conventional aspects and concessions to the target audience, but it has clearly been made with respect for horror movies and the desire to deliver a good one—and that’s something you don’t often feel in youth-oriented fright features these days. Perhaps I’m grading on a curve, but based on its own qualities as well as expectations, MY SUPER PSYCHO SWEET 16 2 rates...



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