

Fango Flashback: “MEET THE FEEBLES”

Written by Allan Dart
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I remember when I first learned of Peter Jackson’s perversely subversive, delightfully dissolute, pricelessly profligate MEET THE FEEBLES. I had never heard of the film or director Peter Jackson before, but after reading the VHS review in FANGORIA Magazine (I was a teenage reader back then) and seeing it billed as “The Muppets on acid,” I immediately started making phone calls to the video stores in my area.

After a series of deflating “No”s, I finally hit paydirt when a store 30 minutes from where I lived confirmed that they did indeed have a copy of MEET THE FEEBLES. Following some desperate pleading, they agreed to go against company policy and hold the movie for one hour. I told my friends, we made the trip, bought some pizza and beer (um...I mean soda) and excitedly prepared for offensively obscene puppet mayhem. We weren’t disappointed.



BAD TASTE was Jackson’s first movie, and while that title is appropriate for that grossly entertaining 1987 aliens-killing-humans-for-fast-food film, MEET THE FEEBLES (which was made in ’89 but wasn’t released theatrically in the U.S. until early 1995, followed by its VHS debut) sinks to *much* lower levels of bad taste, vulgarity and depravity. And that’s a good thing!

A loathsome walrus involved in the drug and porn industry. A promiscuous rabbit dying of a sexually transmitted disease referred to as “The Big One.” A homosexual fox stage director who ends the film with his musical number “Sodomy.” A porn actress cow with prodigiously pierced, enormous udders who’s shooting an S&M video with a cockroach. A knife-throwing frog who’s addicted to heroin and suffers from DEER HUNTER-like Vietnam flashbacks. Fuzzballs that piss and vomit all over the place. Sex. Drugs. Violence. MEET THE FEEBLES has it all!

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MEET THE FEEBLES is also the title of the movie’s MUPPET SHOW-inspired musical variety program. The show is on the verge of a lucrative syndication deal that’s dependent upon their next live network broadcast. The detestable and lecherous Betch the walrus produces the show (as well as adult movies), and when he’s not getting blow jobs from his Siamese cat mistress or setting up a drug deal with Mr. Big (a monster unseen till the end), he’s trying to keep the crazy and corrupt Feebles’ offstage antics to a minimum—usually depending on his odious henchman, Trevor the rat, or Sebastian the fox, his effete and demanding stage director, to keep them in line.

If you thought the behind-the-scenes moments on THE MUPPET SHOW were off-the-wall, just wait until you meet the Feebles. Other than new troupe member Robert the hedgehog and Lucille, the poodle chorus girl whom he has a crush on, pretty much the entire cast and crew are degenerates—obscene, repulsive, backstabbing, morally ignoble reprobates who are a far cry from the sweet and lovable likes of Kermit the Frog, Fozzie Bear and even Miss Piggy.

Horror fans know better than most that while Jackson is famous worldwide for the reputable and Oscar-honored LORD OF THE RINGS trilogy, KING KONG and THE LOVELY BONES, his résumé is also compromised of deliriously demented and entertainingly extreme movies like FEEBLES, BAD TASTE and DEAD ALIVE (a.k.a. BRAINDEAD). And MEET THE FEEBLES is unequivocally and amusingly deranged. Have you ever seen a rabbit in a threesome? A frog suffering through withdrawal on a grimy bathroom floor until he finally gets his fix? An anteater having nasal sex with a cow? A chicken-elephant baby?! And the ending? Think THE WILD BUNCH with puppets. FEEBLES’ excessively violent and bloody finale would’ve made Sam Peckinpah proud.

MEET THE FEEBLES is a film you either love or loathe. I love it. And while rewatching it on my old VHS, with its terrible image quality and awful contrast, didn’t bother me (the movie is visually pretty crude), this is a flick that deserves a DVD and Blu-ray special edition. I’d love to have an excuse to get together with my old buddies, order pizza, drink some beers and enjoy meeting the Feebles all over again.

{jcomments on}