

AURORA 663 MOVIE REVIEW

by

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TERROR FILM FESTIVAL

After much anticipation, I was very surprised after viewing "AURORA 663". Watched it twice as a matter of fact. When Terror Film Festival was a live event, I watched and reviewed thousands of films, and I must say the surreal films were some of my favorites. So this is my humble review. "AURORA 663" definitely falls into the surreal and Lynchian categories. The visual aesthetic with dream like images, and dialogue with almost cryptic, perplexing undertones makes it surreal and Lynchian. Wait a minute you say, is Lynchian even a category? Yes, most definitely. There are a lot of definitions of what "Lynchian" criteria is - a tone, a sense, an atmosphere or experience that you fully understand but can't quite describe.

Don Dingas is the writer and director, but also takes on the phenomenal challenge of playing the main character, the Traveler. When I heard the plot, with the main character basically carrying the film (with the action taking place mostly out in the woods) I thought this was risky. I wondered if he could pull this off in a feature, a short maybe, but a feature? Yet he does and does it very well. From the very beginning it becomes evident the elements of the story structure assists him in this. The dualism of the Traveler becomes quite apparent with the juxtaposition of his conscience, or subconscious, speaking to him throughout the film. This internal dialogue is interesting in showing self preservation, but also self exploration. A real battle is going on in the Traveler's head.

The narrative structure of this film is non-linear, the sequencing of events has a zigzagging and random pattern, making the film journey feel a little disjointed, jolting, and chaotic, and actually enhances the chaos in the Traveler's mind. This is brilliant and not an easy element to execute - it works perfectly in this film. The character's portrayals and the sentiment of their dialogue reveals an esoteric and dark underlying meaning. You get the sense they all know the inherent truth. The Little Girl is most assuredly guiding and protecting the Traveler.

The prosecutor, judge, and public defender give excellent supporting performances. Their questioning has subtle undertones and an elusive motivation. The dream like, eerie, macabre set makes us feel a fragment removed from reality. Not all is what it seems. All in all, the actors performances are striking and really convey a sense of mystery. The sound design and music is meticulous in enhancing and emphasizing the atmosphere of this film. A mundane scene, such as walking around, lost in the woods, suddenly becomes suspenseful and intriguing.

To sum it up, I loved this film. It was shot and paced very well. The hour and forty minutes went by quickly, always a good sign. "AURORA 663" has a style similar to "The Avengers" and "The Prisoner", television shows from the sixties. Since this film is a non-linear, fragmented narrative, there is some ambiguity and left me with a lot of questions. I could list them all, but I don't want to impinge on anyone's personal interpretation, or reveal too much about the film for those who have not seen it yet. Personally, I don't think there are any clear cut answers. I refer to an essay written by Lewis Bond on Lynch - he reports that "Lynch believes films should never be explained". It is said that Lynch makes the audience work (and work hard, I think) to find their own meaning. And I think that is probably the case in this film. Enjoy! "AURORA 663."