

The Theatre Bizarre (2011)

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Starring: Udo Kier, Virginia Newcomb, Amanda Marquardt

Writers: All listed in the review

Directors: All listed in the review



Holy fucking WOW! The only thing I knew about this flick before buying it on a whim was that it was an anthology, and a couple of friends I trust thought it was awesome. Well, I made a good choice, because this shit blew my mind. I've done two anthology movie reviews in the past ([Stephen King's Cat's Eye](#) & [Trick 'r Treat](#)), but I'm gonna have to handle this one a bit differently, since it's still fairly new. Don't wanna give too much away 'n all that jazz. What I will say right here and now is that *The Theatre Bizarre* is one big fucking mash of everything I was in the mood for last night. Tons of insane visuals, unique storytelling, some bad ass creature and gore FX, lots and lots of sex, a crap-ton of titties, girl and dude asses, etc.... This shit ruled.

Theatre Guignol:

This is the narrative that we'll see throughout, introducing us to all the stories within this film, while evolving itself as it goes along. A woman gazes from a building window down on an abandoned theatre located across the street. She seems almost infatuated with this place, so one night she ends up sneaking in and plops her ass down in one of the seats for a show like no other. The host is a puppet like man with six tales of insanity.

Jeremy Kasten (*The Attic Expeditions*) directs this segment and Zach Chassler handles the screenplay. They've worked together in the past on the *Wizard of Gore* remake, which I honestly had one hell of a time sitting through, but this shit is pretty awesome. There are some great visuals in these sections --such as some hyper fast front to back focusing-- and goddamn epic red lighting schemes inside the run-down theatre, which immediately put Argento in mind. Udo Kier (*Flesh For Frankenstein*) is at his absolute creepiest as the theatre host. He's got his marionette-like movements down pat. This shit gets more bonkers as the film moves along.

Mother of Toads:

Two lovers traveling abroad buy some H.P. Lovecraft earrings from a horny as fuck old witch lady, and that's all I can say about this one.

Richard 'motha fuckin' Stanley directed two films back in the day that I hold in pretty high regard- *Hardware* and *Dust Devil*. After all the bullshit mishaps with the *Island of Dr. Moreau* remake, he seemed to fall into obscurity for a while, at least from the horror world. Well, *Mother of Toads* is a pretty great return. This story is co-written by Stanley, Scarlett Amaris and Emiliano Ramzini, inspired by the works of H.P. Lovecraft and Clark Ashton Smith -- actually based off of his short story, *Mother of Toads*. This yarn is exotic as hell with all kinds of fantastic camera work; Great cinematography capturing all the winding roads draped around the story's mountainous setting. Some great POV (including solarized visuals), shaky cam and underwater shots. Wrap this up with some kick ass creature FX and this makes for a great first story.

I Love You:

A lady looking for a way out of a controlling as hell relationship with her lover is finally at her wits end.

Buddy Giovinazzo writes and directs this one, and I can imagine it being every sick, fucking twisted, asshole control freak's worst nightmare come true. *I Love You* contains some fantastic performances from Andre Hennicke and Susan Annbeh, as the leads. Lots of great flashback storytelling, littered with some insanely awesome bloody nastiness.

Wet Dreams:

An unfaithful and abusive husband's dreams begin to blur the thin line of fantasy and reality.

Tom Savini directs and co-stars in this story alongside Debbie Rochon and James Gil, written by John Esposito (*The Walking Dead*, *Graveyard Shift*). To be honest, I was afraid this would come out kinda hokey with Savini in a starring role, but luckily the dude surprised me. He did damn well as the husband's psychiatrist. *Wet Dreams* will probably win over fans of dream sequences in films that make you wonder if they are in fact dreams or not. The story definitely pulls no punches when it comes to the gore, either.

The Accident:

A little girl is curious about the "hows" and "whys" of death.

Douglas Buck (*Sisters* remake) writes and directs, and this may seem odd to some, but it's my absolute favorite segment from the whole lot. Here's why- I have a 4 year old daughter who is already very curious to know about the goings-on of the world, and sometimes I have one helluva time coming up with a correct way to provide the answers. Hopefully it doesn't sound cheesy, but that alone made me feel more connected with this story over any

other in *The Theatre Bizarre*. Aside from that, there's some beautiful scenery during driving segments of a wintery countryside, containing trees with fall colored leaves seemingly still trying to stay alive amidst the blankets of snow. Great use of complete silence, as well as slow, ambient music that really hits a home run for the cold mood this story has. Fucking loved it. Unless my mind was playing tricks, *The Accident* is the shortest story in the whole film, but damn it stuck with me. Some pretty convincing FX here, too.

Vision Stains:

A murderous female fuels her addiction by extracting victims' memories from their mother fucking eyeballs.

Written and directed by Karim Hussain (*Subconscious Cruelty, Ascension*). Gotta say, *Vision Stains* is my second favorite here, and hands down one of the most unique stories I can think of in a long ass time. Goddamn there are a ton of moments to wince at, all shown with crazy sick camera editing. I did feel towards the middle that the ball is dropped, as the story hints to go somewhere extremely fucking hardcore. It doesn't do exactly what I expected. It's not really a cop-out, I was just kinda bummed. However, the conclusion completely makes up for it, and I dug the shit out of the story's overall message. Really got on with the instrumental rock jams, too. Good shit.

Sweets:

A couple have a sexual infatuation for sweets, and their relationship begins to crumble.

David Gregory (*Plague Town*) writes and directs the final story here. Call me crazy, but with all the other tales in *The Theatre Bizarre* leaking a great bit of gore out of their asses, this one is the nastiest. Lindsay Goranson gives one fan-fucking-tastic deadpan performance (and holy balls does she look hot), and Guilford Adams matches it with his portrayal of a heartbroken man going insane. They make for most fucked couple of the decade, easily. The transitions from highly colorful and lively flashbacks to the the grossly raunchy present setting of their apartment are excellent. Also, there's numerous oddly sexy as hell makeout scenes, and I'd be lying if I said I wasn't turned the fuck on. Fill the gaps in with circus style music, and *Sweets* is one awesome way to close out the stories being told.

Final Thoughts:

I can't promise that everyone will enjoy every single story here as much as I did, but the diversity is incredible, and that's really the beauty of anthology films. *The Theatre Bizarre* definitely has a lot going for it, and I'd recommend it to any fan who enjoys their horror heavy with blood flow, sex, and "what the fuck?" moments. Honestly, it's one of the best things I have seen this year, thus far.