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French film connects while 'The Kid' misses

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McKewon

"Scary Movie"

Director: Keenan Ivory Wayans,

Stars: Marlon Wayans, Shawn Wayans, Anna Farris
Rating: R

I must say that I am a fan of horror flicks — classics, slashers, crappy ones and even comic spoofs on my favorite genre.

However, after spending most of my life watching horror films in all shapes and sizes I was a bit skeptical at the thought of the Wayans' brothers latest endeavor, "Scary Movie." (The last Wayans film I remember was "Mo' Money," and I'm still trying to get back my \$4.50 from the crappy movie police.)

The theater was packed with unsuspecting patrons, and let me tell you there was an awesome energy in the crowd as the opening scene, well, opened.

Carmen Electra plays "Drew" in the opening scene; a play off of "Scream's" opening scene-stealer (and most likely its original box office draw) Drew

Barrymore. With the music in "Scary Movie" emulating that of "Scream" perfectly, the sound of shrieks of fright) was the difference between the two films.

I almost peed my pants laughing. The corny gags, which I'm not usually a fan of, really worked with the quick flow of this film, especially in the first half.

I must admit that the butt and fart jokes got rote after the first half of the film, but other elements saved its life.

For instance, picking out the many parodied films was entertaining. There were bits from "American Pie," "I Know What you did Last Summer," "The Blair Witch Project," "The Matrix" and "The Usual Suspects" with thick elements from "There's Something About Mary."

It's not a deep, thought-provoking flick, nor does it pretend to be. Its sharpest line comes after the camera pans from press van to press van after a murder, and someone makes the comment that "The press only wants to interview the most ignorant person they can find."

Not bad, not good.

"Scary Movie" also isn't too big on character development. I feel this is all right, because there is so much parodying going on, the character's have already been developed for us — in past films. And if you haven't seen any of these past movies then YOU NEED TO GET OUT MORE.

The characters are typical (late 20-somethings passing for high schoolers) for the 1990s horror-film genre we have been pummeled with since "Scream's" debut.

One character who can stay in his trailer is the stoner, Shorty, played by Marlon Wayans, who is nothing short of completely annoying. His mannerisms were a little overboard, and he grinned too much. Stoners just aren't as funny as they think they are, and I want to start a coalition to keep them out of films.

While stealing scenes from different movies, one of the coolest tricks the Wayans' brothers do is to morph the music to fit the movie being made fun of. There is a sharp synthesizer blast when "The Matrix" is being hoaxed, and there is a subtle shift from the sharp violin sound in "Scream" to the more subtle

"scary noises" in "I Know What you did Last Summer." Trust me, it's cooler than I have just described.

Again, the film has its low points (If you're really not into genitalia then maybe you'd better rent "Annie" instead of going to see this), but it's subtle creative blips, like the post-modern aspect to some of the scenes, that perhaps lack originality but are nice to see being used in a low-brow horror-spoof flick.

It's funny to me (as it should be to you) to see the camera dolly in to Cindy and have it hit her head and she cries a howl of pain.

Another time Cindy is being wooed by her boyfriend into having sex and he says, "It's only a movie. See, there's a script guy, a sound supervisor ..." Then we see a shot of the script guy and the sound supervisor.

All in all, if the middle part of the movie lacks in greatness, then the beginning and end are worth the trip to the theater. And for all you girls out there who have a major crush on Dawson Creek's James Van Der Beek, well just look for his two-second cameo — you won't be disappointed. ★★ — Karen Brown

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'Shadow' thin on plot, high on shock

By CHRISTY LEMIRE
For The Associated Press

This may sound difficult, but try imagining a cross between "Eyes Wide Shut" and "Clerks." The result is a movie called "Shadow Hours," which has no real point and apparently was made for pure shock value.

Michael Holloway (Balthazar Getty, who looks eerily like Charlie Sheen) is a recovering drug addict expecting his first child with wife Chloe (Rebecca Gayheart), the woman who stuck by him as he got sober. To make ends meet, he works the graveyard shift at a gas station in a seedy section of Los Angeles, where sundry freaks accost him throughout the night.

One night, a sleek, well-dressed man (Peter Weller) pulls up in a Porsche. He says he's a writer named Stuart Chappell, and, improbably, invites Michael to come along as he does research for a book on Los Angeles nightlife.

The two men go out over a series of nights, with each destination getting darker and darker. They begin at strip bars, then progress to drug dens and S&M clubs. There's even a warehouse reminiscent of "Fight Club,"

where bare-chested men beat each other bloody while others cheer and place bets.

Each place tempts Michael to return to his addiction and cheat on his doting wife, and each place is more ridiculous than the last. It's hard not to laugh at times, such as when the refined Stuart orders an expensive French wine at a topless bar.

Later, a visit to a warehouse where gun-toting midgets play a high-stakes game of Russian roulette also is good for a few unintentional laughs.

Then there's a useless subplot about a serial killer (who may or may not be Stuart) who snaps women's necks, and the bumbling cops who try to nail him.

So, what's the point? Surely it can't be that it's better to stay home with your wife than go bar hopping with a mysterious stranger. If that's the only message, then "Shadow Hours" was made just to be shocking.

A documentary on performance art and people who take part in these fetish clubs would have been more interesting. At least then we might learn something.

Director Isaac Eaton begins the film as if it were an episode of "Melrose Place," with the obligatory montage of Los

Angeles images — the Sunset Strip, the busy freeways, the skyline.

Later, he relies too heavily on a repetitive gimmick to indicate the passage of time during Michael's long, monotonous shift. He shows the digital display on a gas pump ticking off gallons, then cuts to the clock on the wall, then cuts to the cash register opening and closing, with techno music thumping in the background.

Once is enough with this trick.

Eaton, who wrote and co-produced, does get the details right on Los Angeles at night. The clubs and the weirdos seem accurate.

Far more fun than the movie itself, though, are the closing credits. If you can endure the first 95 minutes, it's worth sticking around a little longer to find out who played "Second Transvestite," "Man Licking Toes" and "Man with Hooks In Face."

"Shadow Hours," a CanWest release, somehow managed to get shown at this year's Sundance Film Festival. It is rated R for strong violence, sex, drug use and language.

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