

BATMAN: REVENGE (2003)

Directed by Jonathan Markiewitz

Written by Jonathan Markiewitz

Starring: More Bat-related LEGOs than you can shake a stick at!

Genre: Comic Book / Short / LEGOs | **Rated:** NR

I generally despise most fan attempts at tackling genre material. For every person that gets it right, there are usually ten idiots making their version of "The Phantom Menace" in their backyard. Still, sometimes people can get it right. While no one who makes films based on the material of others should expect to actually see them get any real studio recognition, it's a good place to learn film grammar, and when the right people work in such a fashion, wonderful things can happen.

"Batman: Revenge" is wedged comfortably in the space between "Batman Forever" and "Batman & Robin." While it still represents a pre-"Batman Begins" Bat-universe, it embodies Tim Burton's original neo-gothic outlook. The film opens with the Riddler being sprung from Arkham Asylum. It's not too long before he's returning to similar schemes that he concocted in "Batman Forever." The Riddler and his thugs carry on their crime spree, until they managed to kidnap Commissioner Gordon.

The problem is that they've got the attention of the Batman. So, we get a few nice scenes of LEGO on LEGO violence. The film ends with a nice sense of closure and a promise of more adventures. Working with what appears to be a carefully placed digital camera and way too many LEGOs, Markiewitz has demonstrated a wonderful sense of guerilla filmmaking. He has taken the bull by the horns and reshaped a comic book icon into a previously unseen form.

All of this leads into my previous point about guerilla and burgeoning filmmakers. A new breed of filmmakers is being developed in the first wave of truly digital filmmakers. Though some people criticize them for making digital files and not art, I beg to differ. Film has always been about technology. The entire format started with the technological breakthroughs of Thomas Edison and the Lumiere Brothers.

Markiewitz has brought a creative eye to this project that draws on all Batman media images from the pre-"Batman Begins" world. The choice of the bizarre angles seems to evoke the Adam West television series, but I'm not sure how much of that is intentional or not. That doesn't matter as much as the solid narrative of the flick. So, do yourself a favor and check out the flick; it's better than "Flightplan" and "Into the Blue" put together.

As a final note, I want the attention of all burgeoning filmmakers out there. The folks here at Living Corpse love flicks of all sorts, so don't be afraid to send your flicks in to be reviewed. I can also swing an interview to help promote your flick. Just contact me at troy@livingcorpse.com (ED: or pick your favorite reviewer). I answer all reader mail.

The message is, don't be intimidated by our reviews of such flicks as "Wolf Creek" and "A Nightmare on Elm Street 2: Freddy's Revenge." We're nice people who have a strong sense of what's shit and what works. That's why this flick gets my highest verdict.

