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MIL MASCARAS VS. THE AZTEC MUMMY (Film Review)

Ghastly Reviews – Film

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If you are a Luchador aficionado, the mere mention of a title like MIL MASCARAS VS. THE AZTEC MUMMY would have you salivating in anticipation of a good old fashioned butt kicking action adventure story with masked heroes who are not only champion wrestlers but also scientists, archaeologists, philosophers, and statesmen who have the ear of the very powerful – including the president of the United States. If you aren't a fan, you are probably very confused right about now.

The Luchadores of Mexico have a long history of starring in quickie exploitation films, where in addition to the Aztec Mummy, they fought vampires, werewolves, Frankenstein, evil doctors, bloody apes, and just about anything else that the scriptwriters could conjure up. Most of these films stayed south of the border, but as some of the population moved El Norte, the movies naturally followed. (FANGORIA covered the genre in several issues in 1982.)

The last time Mil Mascaras, the Man of a Thousand Masks, was widely seen in a movie, he, Santo, and the Blue Demon were jet boating their way into the Bermuda Triangle, where their boat exploded. This was supposed to be an emphatic end to the Luchadore films, but try telling that to Dr. Jeffrey Uhlmann, a classically trained academic who teaches Robotics at the University of Missouri. Somewhere along the line he was bitten by the Luchadore bug and became the driving force behind MIL MASCARAS VS. THE AZTEC MUMMY making what may be the granddaddy of all Luchadore movies.



Trying to explain the plot is somewhat akin to describing an LSD trip through interpretive dance. The evil Aztec Mummy has been resurrected via a blood sacrifice and he is going to go on a rampage to take over the world. The only person that can stop him is Mil Mascaras, the wrestler and goodwill ambassador to all mankind. While Mil is in town to wrestle a couple of high-profile matches (one as a part of a tag team with El Hijo Del Santo, the son of the original wrestling movie star El Santo), the police ask for his help getting to the bottom of a series of baffling blood bank break-ins. Try saying that one three times fast.

Mil and his friend the Professor (Kurt Mirtsching) figure out what's going on and must discover a way to defeat the evil Mummy before he and his minions can take over the world. Along the way there are more wrestling matches, a giant robot, vampire twins, groovy dancing, Mil flying a plane to Washington D.C., and Harley Race and P.J. Soles calling a wrestling match. Harley I can understand, after all, he's a former world champion, but P.J.? Her glory days were several years ago when she racked up appearances in movies like CARRIE, ROCK 'N' ROLL HIGH SCHOOL, HALLOWEEN, BREAKING AWAY, PRIVATE BENJAMIN, and STRIPES. I had honestly forgotten that she had been in THE DEVIL'S REJECTS until I looked her up. Still, she had been a favorite of mine once, and it's good to see her getting back to her exploitation roots.



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Uhlmann has written the kind of script that is both an homage to the original Luchadore movies, and a little tongue-in-cheek at the same time. He even gets into the act by playing the Aztec Mummy as well as the giant Robot Idaktor. Mexican wrestling-horror movies are an acquired taste and you must be willing to completely suspend your disbelief if you are going to accept that these wrestlers would be allowed to hold down scientific jobs while wearing masks. Mil Mascaras lives up to his nickname of The Man of a Thousand Masks by wearing a different one in every scene - often coordinating his outfit to match. Once you can accept the cartoon surreal nature of the film,

you'll have a great time.



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