

## ‘Anna and The Apocalypse’ is UnDead on Arrival

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on December 8, 2018 - 8:59am

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Rating: **1.5/5.0**

CHICAGO – Arriving a few years too late after the great movie mashup craze, “Anna and The Apocalypse” is a zombie Christmas musical. The signature (and only) joke is that teens are dancing and singing amid the blood, guts, and gore spurting in gushers around them. But it’s less a feature film and more akin to a late run episode of “Glee,” when its creators had clearly run out of any ideas.

The film is set at a high school in Scotland on the eve of the big Christmas pageant, when a plague of the undead descends upon the production. Anna (Ella Hunt) is the daughter of the school janitor and decides she wants to see the world before heading to University. Her best friend John (Malcolm Cumming) is clearly in love with her, while she’s enamored with a thoughtless school bully Nick (Ben Wiggins). There’s also American lesbian transplant Steph (Sarah Swire) doing battle with petty tyrant school principal played by Paul Kaye. It’s fairly simple John Hughes type high school drama here, without any of the fleshed out characters.



Under the Gristletoe: Ella Hunt as the Title Character in ‘Anna and the Apocalypse’

*Photo credit: Orion Pictures*

While there are zombies galore dressed in santa suits, elf costumes, and snowmen, and Anna does most of her blood splattering head



smacking with a giant pointy candy cane, the end result is never the giddy delight it was supposed to be. The closest it comes is during a wildly inappropriate “Santa Baby” type dance number involving the star of the school Christmas pageant cooing double entendres to her boyfriend surrounded by shirtless male dancers.

The problem lies with the music. Musicals are inherently silly affairs, but the best ones sweep you up in their melodies and make you forget about the awkwardness of characters spontaneously grinding the action to a halt to break into song. But the musical numbers in “Anna” never get beyond competently forgettable, so they become all the more awkward while she stops to sing about her feelings while flesh-eating zombies are literally right next to her.

“Anna and the Apocalypse” is based on a 2010 short film, and it perhaps it should have stayed that length. I found its genre smashing mashup to be fairly lifeless, and found myself consumed by technical matters instead. Such as the inconsistent amount of gore involved when a zombie is killed. At one point a zombie has his head smashed by two bowling balls and it explodes like a paper bag full of ketchup. While other times a character wields a baseball bat and the zombies just turn and fall with no gore whatsoever.



I'll Be Headless for Xmas: Cause and Effect in 'Anna and the Apocalypse'

Photo credit: Orion Pictures

The film felt infinitely longer than its trim 97 minutes, in the desperate attempt to become some kind of musical gore hounds midnight movie. For that certain segment of the populace this may well become a cult classic. All others should steer clear of this un-dead zone.

*“Anna and the Apocalypse” continues its nationwide release in Chicago on December 7th. See local listings for theaters and show times. Featuring Ella Hunt, Malcolm Cumming, Ben Wiggins, Sarah Swire and Paul Kaye. Written by Alan McDonald and Ryan McHenry. Directed by John McPhail. Rated “R”*



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