

UNCLE PECKERHEAD

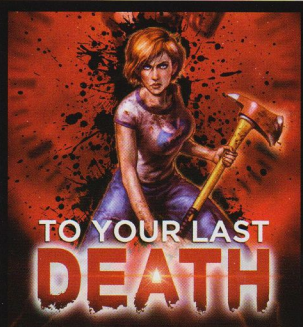
In the last several years, a number of horror films have strived to blend a perfect balance of horror, comedy, and music.

Uncle Peckerhead has risen to the occasion of doing just that. The film follows punk band trio DUH (Judy, Mel, and Max) as they are embarking on a regional tour. Broke musician circumstances put them in danger of cancelling it before it even starts as their van is repossessed the day they leave. A chance encounter puts them in the path of Peckerhead, a homeless man living out of his own van.

The film doesn't take long to get going and quickly throws the viewer into the struggle of indie musicians road-tripping gig to gig. You don't know what quite to expect from Peckerhead or his intentions. However, the band quickly learns that he is their friend and a roadie with a heart of gold, but he also has a thirst for blood.

Among the best aspects of this film are the performances — including the characters' singing, comedic timing, and believability of being in sheer terror. The songs and experience are totally punk, and punk carries a sort of "I am ready to rule the world" attitude, even when you're playing a gig with 10 people in the audience and the promoter ripped you off. Having made several shorts, this is the first feature from writer/director John Matthew Lawrence and what a fine debut. The sound, cinematography, music, and special effects are all top notch. Though this is an indie, it doesn't feel like it. 🍌

BY AUDERY LANE



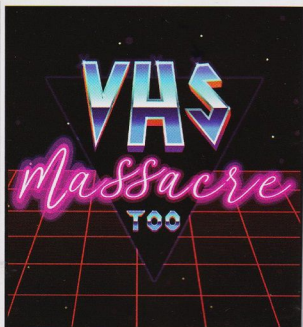
TO YOUR LAST DEATH

In motion-picture comic style, this film brings us brutality with a twisted sense of humor during a cosmic-level gambling game. This indie film delivers a handful of heavy-hitting talents. Ray Wise continues to prove that he can portray the evilest, yet likable villain, Cyrus, as this role feels catered to him. There's a surprisingly ominous narration from William Shatner that was unexpected, but quite satisfying. The lovely Morena Baccarin plays the Gamemaster, who has orchestrated this time and space-defying game. Horror fan favorite Bill Moseley plays a facially disfigured and sadistic henchman of Cyrus.

The highly dysfunctional Dekalb family is subject to a time-traveling game as entertainment for a number of supernatural beings which are betting on the end result. In an attempt to right the wrongs of her devious father, Miriam deKalb (Dani Lennon) fights for her own survival, as well as that of her siblings, deemed disappointments and a disgrace to his legacy as Cyrus enacts his revenge upon them before a terminal illness takes his life. There's inventive torture and gore in the vein of *Saw*. The visual aesthetic and themes of this film remind me of the classic video game, *Twisted Metal* and the animated '70s anthology of *Heavy Metal*, including a nice soundtrack.

Being its first feature, Jason Axinn provides us with a truly original treat with extremely dark tones for an animated film. It doesn't base itself on pointless vulgarity for the sake of it, yet sets the dial to high throughout its runtime. 🍌

BY GEORGE LANE



VHS MASSACRE TOO

Three years after the award-winning documentary *VHS Massacre* hit the fest trail, filmmaker Thomas Edward Seymour returns with a whole new clamshell of questions in the next chapter, titled *VHS Massacre Too*. Working off the foundation of the first documentary, part "Too" focuses on indie genre filmmaking, exploitation cinema, the impact of the few remaining video stores (including the last Blockbuster), the dirty truth on filmmaking, the role of streaming, the issues ahead for those who dare venture into the dark waters, and more.

Balancing personal observation and priceless experience, *VHS Massacre Too* features returning names like Troma's Lloyd Kaufman, horror historian Joe Bob Briggs, and actress/filmmaker Debbie Rochon. Joining them are a variety of professionals who share their stories and insight about the business that has evolved out of the VHS era. This includes not only Rochon for *Madel Hunger* but filmmaker Jason Carvey (*A New Wave*), who both answer questions about their experiences and struggles in filmmaking and with the business of distribution. Other names who are a part of this discussion include the podcast *VHS Massacre Radio*, Shawn Phillips, James Rolfe, and even an interview with filmmaker James Gunn. *VHS Massacre Too* addresses topics through a balanced edit, infused with nostalgia, humor, emotion, and passion. It doesn't redefine the subgenre of media documentaries, but Seymour and company without a doubt add something worth the watch. 🍌

BY JAY KAY