

Indie Horror Films

All genres of suspense, terror, and horror will be reviewed by Richard Gary. His address to send preview copies supplied upon request to rbf55@msn.com.

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Review: Surge of Power: Revenge of the Sequel

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Surge of Power: Revenge of the Sequel

Directed by Antonio Lexterot

Lexterot Enterprises / Surge of Power Enterprises LLC /

Indie Rights Movies / Salty Horror Productions

90 minutes, 2016 / 2018

www.surgeofpower.org

Surge of Power (Surge for short) may not be the first gay comic-style superhero, but he *is* quite possibly “cinema’s first gay superhero” (emphasis mine), as the publicity for the live-action film proudly states. The original was the 2004 release, *Surge of Power: The Stuff of Heroes*, but there is a 17-episode television show, “Surge of Power: Big City Chronicles” either out (no pun intended) or in process, which is also a talk/interview show; shades of 1993-2008’s “Space Ghost: Coast to Coast!”

Getting back to Surge and crew, I have to be candid and say that I have seen neither the original film, nor the television show, so I’m going at this as a stand-alone. Also I am approaching *SoP* as an Ally straight white male. There, now that the formalities are out of the way...

Most superhero films these days are not just multi-million-dollar extravaganzas, they are *big*; much bigger than they need to be to be interesting, actually, in my opinion. Be it Marvel (*X-Men*, *Black Panther*, etc.) or DC (*Wonder Woman*, *Batman vs. Superman*, to name just a couple), they go on for hours and have multiple plot-

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lines; *Panther*, for example, had at least three stories in it that would have made that many decent films, rather than three-in-one abbreviated tales, as is the trend. The digital SFX are *so* huge, that the stories lose the humanity in them through the chase for the *WOW* factor. This is why I don't see many of them anymore, though I still consider myself a comic geek.

In this much smaller-scale indie film that thinks big, Gavin Lucas (co-writer, Vincent J. Roth) is the alias of Surge, who can focus energy, living in Big City, California. His adventures in the first film, to get us newbies up to speed, is expositioned (yes I know that's not really a word) in abbreviated – and animated – form during the opening credits. Basically, through a Flash-like accident, super powers show up in Gavin and his co-worker (and ex-lover) Hector Harris, who becomes the Magneto-like Metal Master (John Venturini, another of the film's co-writers). Also like Magneto, MM is Jewish (indicated at first by seeing him sitting alone at a bar, spinning a dreidel). The first part of the film feels like it's his story, more than about Surge.



Vincent J. Roth

Stripped of his powers (in the first film) and recently out of prison, MM is turned away by his parents (played by Linda Blair and Gil "Buck Rogers" Girard), who are more disturbed about him being gay than a master criminal. The Jew is me barked at these seemingly non-Orthodox (but religious) Jews reacting that way; religious-niks, I can somewhat understand, though I am repulsed by homophobia by any religious group, though especially my own. Spurned and angry, MM is looking for a way to get back in the Evil game, and a Magical being named Augur (Eric Roberts) has an evil plan – and agenda – to help MM out in that direction. After the first 20 minutes or so, the focus is back on our Christian hero, Surge.

I won't go into the story too much, I promise. The action does take us from California to Las Vegas and the Hoover Dam in search of a mysterious crystal called Celinedonium (if you don't get it, say it out loud), drag queens, and a possible new love for Surge-io. In case you haven't gotten this yet, it's all very campy and silly, and abundantly enjoyable fun.



Gil Gerard and Linda Blair

The humor is broad (oxymoron pun *intended* this time), with a near-constant stream of jokes and *ohhh-yeah* references. Some of it is a bit subtle, such as many in the cast reading the book *Zen and the Art of Super Vehicle Maintenance*, or the knowing looks some characters give the audience directly by looking at the camera.

There is a lot of blatant and subtle (there's that word again) references by characters of the Marvel, DC, Transformer, Roddenberry and LucasFilms universes. Part of how they get away with this is whenever there is a newscast, the scroll underneath the conversations that usually contains *other* news stories is actually an announcement that recognizes the copyrights of Disney, LucasFilms, etc. If you're a comic nerd, there are multiple bells and whistles that will make you smile.

The acting is quite decent (though Roberts does his best *John Lithgow sit-com* level purposeful over-acting), and the tone is way more chill than most superhero films of these days.

Rather than angst-filled heroes who are fighting their own demons as well as foes, other than MM and his parents, the deepest worry is whether Surge will find a romantic interlude. Other than cameos (which I will discuss shortly) there is a high level of gay characters that the odd straight one seems out of place, which is smile-worthy. I don't seem to recall any lesbians though... perhaps in the next film? What can I say; I'm an Ally to all.



John Venturini and Eric Roberts

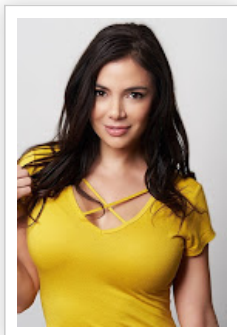


Nichelle Nichols

What really makes this film sparkle is the sheer multitude of cameos, which are Legion. The obvious ones are Blair, Girard, etc., but the others come and go really fast. In full James Balsamo mode, the crew went to conventions and got some great names that way, but there are just too many to mention all, such as the last appearances of television's Jimmy Olson and Lois Lane, namely Jack Larson (d. 2015) and Noel Neill (d. 2016) from "Adventures of Superman" (1952-58). Some are listed in the trailer below, but there are so many others, like

(and this is such a partial, factional list) various Power Rangers, Walter Koenig, Michael Gray of TV's "Shazam!" (1974-76), Cathy Garver (a voice in many television Marvel superhero cartoons, and was also Cissy in "Family Affair" [1966-71] for my generation), and... Jeez,

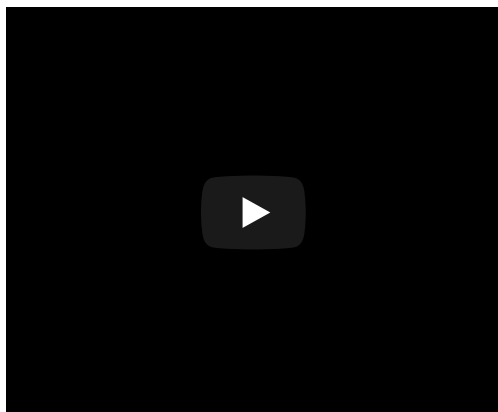
I could just go into IMDB and spend hours looking everyone up, it's quite stunning. Often, there is some hint of the association, such as Rebecca Holden standing with the original K.I.T.T. It's enjoyable to view just for this alone, but the story is equally watchable.



Mariann Gavelo

Unlike most of the superhero films being released these days, this one doesn't take itself too seriously, and the better for it. And, as a straight white male, there is something for me, too, in the form of the relatively ironically named Mariann Gayelo. And then there's also Dawn Wells. 'Nuff said.

Meanwhile, I'm hoping a third film will come soon, and it won't take more than 10 years.



Posted by [Robert Barry Francos](#) at [1:01 AM](#)




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