

EIFF 2017 – Guardians (2017)

94mins **



A Russian superhero movie, that revolves around the “Patriot” project and set in modern day, and a story of a team created in Cold War Soviet Union to protect the USSR is a simple enough tale.

With the end of the hostile stand-off came the end of the team and they are now spread far and wide across the former nations. The return of August Kurtanov, the scientist who created them, the Army has no choice but to turn back to these heroes and asks them to stand against him.

The plot is one that Western audiences will predict from the first moment and so it is reminiscent of eighties action movies that offered very little in the form of character development or even plot development.

But that’s not derogatory to this film. It embraces all of that. It makes it a part of the film’s charm. This makes Guardians a member of the well-loved B-Movie genre.

The actors are somewhat limited by the basic nature of the script, with Ler (Sebastien Sisak) regularly chewing out ham-fisted dialogue that, whether by design or not, generates a snigger. Arsus and Kseniya have a small arc that is hinted at and is suddenly wrapped up in a one line comment, and the villain struts about in prosthetics that seem unattached to the rest of his body.

Visually, Guardians has some stunning footage and great visuals, even if in some moments the special effects are wanting. But again I think that adds to charm of it. It is a great nod to the superheroes movies of the past. It reminded

me of the Incredible Hulk TV show or the Captain America movie, and whether by choice or accident it worked for me.

Guardians will never be a classic, and will never be a box office success, but it will be shown in art houses cinemas with much hype, it will be quoted (How could it not with lines like "But I don't know what happens when I go full Bear"?) And it will be loved by a core audience.

Guardians isn't for everyone, but for fans of the B-movie genre, this is a must.

