

Edinburgh International Film Festival 2018 – Review: Anna and the Apocalypse ****



Ella Hunt stars in *Anna and The Apocalypse* (image credit Blazing Griffin)

Anna and the Apocalypse is a teen-zombie-musical-comedy, a strange but thankfully well executed premise. The film's tone is almost indefinable but imagine a mashup of *High School Musical* and *Night of the Living Dead*, set in Scotland. At Christmas.

An invasion of the undead threatens the sleepy town of Little Haven forcing Anna (Ella Hunt) and her high school friends to fight, sing and slash their way to survival with a fast-spreading zombie throng in relentless pursuit. Teaming up with her best friend John (Malcolm Cumming), Anna and her school

mates battle with zombified snowmen and teenage hormones to try and save family and teachers alike. They soon discover that no one is safe and the only people who can be trusted are each other.

Anna and the Apocalypse started life as a 2010 YouTube short called *Zombie Musical*, written and directed by Ryan McHenry, who planned to direct this feature, but died of cancer in 2015 at just 27-years-old. John McPhail took over directing duties after McHenry's passing and successfully navigates a tricky mix of genres and allows the largely unknown cast to shine. The film also features the most creative use of household items to defeat zombies since *Shaun of the Dead*.

A sensational soundtrack from Roddy Hart and Tommy Reilly ensures the musical numbers are catchy, upbeat and fun but the film draws a line at dancing zombies, this isn't *Thriller*. One sorrowful pop song involves a whole cafeteria in a dance number as Anna and John lament that real life doesn't get happy endings like in the movies.

The film's greatest accomplishment is the determination to play the protagonists' emotions straight and acknowledge why they'd feel real and valid, even when the entire scenario around the characters is pointedly ridiculous, ironic and absurd.

Anna and the Apocalypse has its UK Premiere at the Edinburgh Film Festival on 29 June at Odeon, Lothian Road at 6pm with an additional screening on 30 June at 11.05pm at Filmhouse.

The film will go on general release in December 2018.

[More information and booking details here.](#)