

REVIEW: 'Beetlejuice Beetlejuice' can't hold a candle to the 1988 original



CHENNAI: Often it needs just a single work for a director to emerge out of the shadows and shine. For Tim Burton that happened in 1988 with “Beetlejuice,” a camp horror that straddled the line between comedy and the macabre.



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It was a turning point for the 26-year-old director who shot straight to the big leagues and returned to the now-concluded Venice Film Festival with the sequel, “Beetlejuice Beetlejuice,” in September.

With headlining names like Michael Keaton, Winona Ryder and Jenna Ortega, one of the sequel's first scenes shows Italian icon Monica Bellucci as Delores the ghost all cut into pieces lying in several boxes. She begins to pin herself together with a stapler and proceeds to suck the souls of dead men and women, all set to a soundtrack of “Tragedy” by the Bee Gees. Gory but fun — and very on brand for Tim Burton.

The movie begins in a clumsy manner with the characters being arranged in what felt like a chess game, with the key pieces spread out. The sequel follows Winona Ryder's Lydia Deetz, the former goth teen who is now a psychic mediator with her own paranormal television show.

Deetz's supernatural abilities are brushed off by her daughter, Astrid (Ortega), who believes her mother's visions are pure delusion and soon enough Catherine O'Hara returns to her role as Lydia's narcissistic artist stepmother.

Keaton reprises his part as the titular ghost, but he was far more eccentric and engaging in the first film — his performance here feels like a watered-down version of what we saw earlier.

This largely sum up what seems to be the point of the film — a nostalgia-fuelled look-back at a high-camp horror for Burton fans to enjoy during the Halloween season.

Unfortunately, the movie feels lethargic, dispirited and soulless. Far from the 1988 work that was peppy and praiseworthy.
