

Lucha Underground – January 27, 2016 (Season 2 Premiere): This Is Going To Be Fun

Lucha Underground

Date: January 27, 2016

Location: Lucha Underground Temple, Boyle Heights, California

Commentators: Matt Striker, Vampiro

It's FINALLY back. This is one of the most interesting wrestling shows you'll ever see with some long form storytelling that can only be rivaled by companies like Chikara which are just as out there as this one. The first season ended with Mil Muertes and Catrina dominating everyone else and Dario Cueto running away from the temple, meaning we're likely to start with some fallout. Let's get to it.

We open in a psychiatric ward with Vampiro (called Ian here) having violent flashbacks to his match with Pentagon Jr. from Ultima Lucha, though denying that he has them anymore. The doctor gives him anti-psychotic pills which he promises that he'll take. He's also told to avoid the people and places that trigger these episodes, prompting him to fantasize about beating up the medical staff. That's enough to warrant a release...into the desert, where Matt Striker picks him up in a vintage convertible (under a sheet for some reason). There's an invitation for them to return to the Temple, but it's a much darker place.

This is an AWESOME way to start the new season as it felt like a teaser scene instead of just another opening sequence. The production values feel like something out of a studio TV show instead of the run of the mill wrestling style that has been the same for going on twenty years now. I don't know if it's the Robert Rodriguez influence or what but as Randy Savage said about all the robes he bought: if you look like something important, people will think you're something important.

We go to Cueto's former office which has been taken over by Catrina. Fenix comes in with the Gift of the Gods Title, which he plans to cash in

tonight. Catrina says wait until next week (which was the rule) because tonight, he defends it against King Cuerno. "Run along now little birdie."

Mil Muertes now sits on a throne above the temple (where the band used to be, which is a welcome subtraction) in an awesome visual.

Gift of the Gods Title: King Cuerno vs. Fenix

Fenix is defending. They trade some armdrags to start with Fenix snapping off a standing moonsault for no cover. Striker: "THIS IS LUCHA UNDERGROUND!" Oh man it's going to be a long season. Cuerno bails to the floor but catches a baseball slide for a hanging DDT. Well that accelerated quickly. The big suicide dive sends Fenix into the barricade for two but the champ comes right back with a springboard dropkick.

Another springboard into an armdrag sets up a Lethal Injection (still hate that move) and Cuerno heads outside again, only to get taken down by a huge corkscrew plancha. Back in and a Helluva Kick staggers Cuerno, only to have him come back with a running forearm to the jaw. A second Lethal Injection into a dragon sleeper (top that Jay) has Cuerno in trouble but he escapes into a surfboard.

That's not it either though as he pulls Fenix down into a dragon sleeper of his own before kicking Fenix face first into the middle buckle. Back up and Fenix loads up a superplex, only to get behind Cuerno for a top rope double stomp to the back of the head. Cuerno's Thrill of the Hunt gets two and he stomps a mudhole in the corner. Fenix pops up again and misses a springboard 450, allowing Cuerno to debut a package tombstone piledriver for the pin and the title.

Rating: B. Oh yeah they're back. I know the style (and the severe lack of selling) can be an issue if you're not used to it but these matches are some of the most fun you'll have watching wrestling. The piledriver is a great finisher for Cuerno, though I'm not sure he can use it on everyone, including Muertes. Really good start to the season though.

Son of Havoc, Angelico and Ivelisse arrive on their motorcycles, presumably fresh from White Castle.

We get a quick look at Johnny Mundo's workout. I love little segments like that as they make the show feel bigger.

Catrina tells Ivelisse/Havoc/Angelico that Muertes wants to see them fight...each other. Havoc isn't happy but it's for a shot at Muertes' title. Ivelisse accepts for the team because she wants to beat up Katrina after she wins.

Catrina comes to the ring and whispers something in Melissa Santos' ear.

Cuerno (looking ridiculous in a cowboy shirt and hat) is leaving when Katrina comes in and says to remember their deal. The new champion says she and Katrina have nothing to worry about.

Prince Puma is the luchador of the week (complete with a sponsor). Again, nice touch that makes the place look more professional and important. We get a quick profile and some highlights.

Ivelisse vs. Son of Havoc vs. Angelico

The winner gets the title shot. It seems that Katrina came out to tell Melissa the match because the announcers didn't know what they were about to see. Sweet goodness THAT ACTUALLY MAKES SENSE! They trade rollups to start and it's a three way standoff to some nice applause. Ivelisse starts striking and knocks both guys into different corners, only to have Angelico blast her with a running knee.

Now it's Havoc getting hit in the face over and over for two but Ivelisse comes back with a high cross body for two on Angelico. Ivelisse sends both guys together but Havoc drops her again. Angelico and Ivelisse are both sent outside for back to back suicide dives (a VERY popular move around here) before Havoc's standing moonsault gets two on Angelico back inside. Ivelisse crotches Havoc on top though and grabs a quick rollup on Angelico for the pin and the title shot.

Rating: C+. Another fun match here as Ivelisse gets to show off a bit without having a broken ankle. It's also quite the surprise as you really wouldn't have expected her to get the win and actually set up a man vs. woman title shot, especially in Muertes' first title defense. This was

more fun than good, but that's Lucha Underground in a nutshell.

Three guys are 375 miles from Boyle Heights when they run into Black Lotus. They're looking for the Temple (of course) and she tells them to follow her.

Lucha Underground Title: Mil Muertes vs. Ivelisse

Muertes is defending of course. Before the match, cue the Disciples of Death to carry off Angelico and Son of Havoc to keep this one on one. Muertes shoves her down to start as Striker tries to explain how Ivelisse can win. A backbreaker has Ivelisse in trouble and a kick to the chest drops her again.

Back up and Ivelisse tries a guillotine for as much success as you would expect before being thrown down. She stays at it with an armbreaker over the ropes and Muertes actually holds his wrist for a second. A tornado DDT gets two and sends Striker through the roof. Catrina gets in with the rock but gets speared by mistake, giving Ivelisse a VERY hot two count. Not that it matters as the Flatliner retains the title a few seconds later.

Rating: C+. For a less than five minute match, this was as fun and close to making you believe something was going to happen as it was going to be. There was no way they were changing the title on the first show but at least we had a great near fall and Muertes showing the slightest bit of vulnerability. That helps set things up going forward and keeps Ivelisse, who was weakened coming in, looking strong. Well done.

Post match Catrina teases the Lick of Death but opts for more punishment from Muertes instead. Cue Prince Puma for the big staredown but he saves Ivelisse instead of fighting like a true hero. Puma bails so here's Pentagon Jr. (sending Vampiro into a near trance), now clearly a cult hero and BIG face, to drop Muertes with a Backstabber and break his arm. You knew this was coming but it was actually more awesome than I was expecting.

Post credits, Lotus and the three guys arrive. Before they get inside, they run into Dario Cueto. The guys don't believe the hype so Lotus beats

one of them up without looking at him. They have to pay \$20 each to get in and Cueto unlocks the door. He lets them in and you can hear Matanza slaughtering all three of them to wrap things up.

Overall Rating: A-. Oh yeah it's back. One of the biggest worries I had about this season was a big letdown coming off the awesome first season. However, this was full speed ahead and felt like they really did just pick up six months later. Everything is bigger and better this season and I'm really curious to see where they're going. You have to assume that Pentagon vs. Muertes is the first title program but I can't imagine they stretch that all the way out to Ultima Lucha. Throw in all the Muertes/Catrina stuff and Cuerno possibly being on the evil side and I'm really looking forward to where this stuff goes.

It's a true alternative to WWE, unlike so many companies which claim to be and are really just another wrestling show like so many others you can find. Now that they have a bigger budget (in theory) and A TON of hype coming into this season, it should be interesting to see how far they can go. It's an excellent start to the second season and this should be excellent going forward.

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