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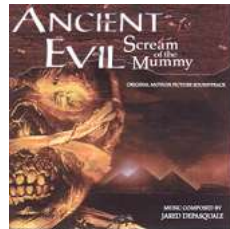
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© Jared Depasquale

ANCIENT EVIL: SCREAM OF THE MUMMY - a persuasive orchestra, choir, and synth score that far exceeded the film it was heard in.

Soundtrax
Music to Sooth the Frightening Screams that Hate the Living – Part Two

Ancient evil in the secret garden with composer Jared Depasquale

Dateline: Wednesday, March 5, 2003

By: RANDALL D. LARSON
 By: Columnist

Last week we began to take a look at the horror film music of newcomer Jared Depasquale, whose inventive scores

*have enhanced low-budget, direct-to-video releases like **WITCHHOUSE, THE DEAD HATE THE LIVING, WITCHHOUSE 2, THE FRIGHTENING,** and **ANCIENT EVIL: SCREAM OF THE MUMMY.** We conclude our interview here.*

Depasquale accomplishes his composing at the keyboards, accessing a good-sized synthesizer/sampler rig and a computer based sequencer program. "I achieve some of the sound textures differently with each film. On the film **THE FRIGHTENING** I hired out five orchestral percussion students from Vanderbilt University and we recorded hours of crazy sonic textures. Based on the way the film was edited I knew that the score needed to be punchy, violent, and sometimes eerie, so we wheeled out every percussive item the school had and went to town. I imported all of those sound files into my sequencer and wrote around them. On **THE DEAD HATE THE LIVING** [director] Dave Parker told me that he wanted a score with a metallic edge, so my brother [mixer Adam Depasquale] and I rented out a piano room where we recorded about an hour of these 'evil duets.' We both played the inside of the piano with various objects – we really played off each other and came up with some creepy sounds. I then sampled and manipulated them to fit over a handful of scenes. For the **ANCIENT EVIL** score, I brought in a small choir and we recorded about an hour of a gibberish language I made up plus strange vocal textures. Once again, I sampled them and put them over specific scenes. In some of the larger action scenes, I played a slit drum, dumbek, and small hand percussion to create a moving rhythmic bed."



WITCHHOUSE 2 reunited Depasquale with the world of his first feature effort, with a "gut-pounding" score derived from that of the first film.

© Full Moon

ANCIENT EVIL: SCREAM OF THE MUMMY (a video sequel to Jeff Obrow's **BRAM STOKER'S LEGEND OF THE MUMMY**) contains one of Jared's most persuasive scores. Although the film itself has been much-maligned in critical circles, many have called the music out for praise. Depasquale merges inventive electronic tonalities and orchestral surgings into an intriguing and affecting musical sound design, featuring a healthy dose of "black mass" chorale chanting not unlike that from **THE OMEN**.

"There is no denying the influences of **THE OMEN** on that score," Jared admits. "I want to say right off the bat that I think Jerry Goldsmith's score is one of the finest horror scores ever conceived. That music still scares the pants off me! On **ANCIENT EVIL**, David DeCoteau said he wanted a score like **THE OMEN**, but when I saw the film I didn't think it would work. There are many reasons why the score in the original film **THE OMEN** works so well; the compelling story itself, the very human side of this dark plot, the deep characters, and the way the film is shot and edited. I did my best to incorporate an element of **THE OMEN** into **ANCIENT EVIL**, but upon delivery, David wasn't happy at all. He said that it wasn't **THE OMEN**

generally, David wasn't happy at all. He said that it wasn't **THE SPY** and I needed to fix a lot of the score. I listened to his comments and asked him to sit with the score for a few days. I knew it was different than what he envisioned, but I also knew it worked for the film. I rewrote some scenes and re-mixed a couple cues for him. The funny thing is that he grew to *love* it, and I also get the most comments from critics and fans about that score."



THE SECRET GARDEN, an audio dramatization of the book from Focus

on the Family, gave Depasquale a change of pace after a half dozen horror video scores.

© Focus on the Family

Jared recognizes the tendency to be typecast as a horror composer, and has made sure to take enough assignments in other areas to avoid becoming pigeonholed. "As a film composer, I think it is impossible not to stylistically repeat yourself, but if you're honest with yourself you know when you're moving forward and when you are taking steps backward. I try to be very honest with myself."

He composed a number of films for the Christian organization Focus on the Family, including **THE SECRET GARDEN**, and a 2001 version of **LES MISERABLES**, and several independent documentaries. He also composed 2001's **LAST WRITES**, a film featured in Cannes in 2002, and John Turbyne's 2002 science fiction indie, **TRANSFER**.

"I love all forms of music," Depasquale says. "I love the challenges that each style of music brings, and I love to solve those challenges. About a year ago however, I made a choice to not take projects that don't somehow bring something positive into our world. That doesn't rule out horror films altogether, but it does rule out many of them. In contrast, the process in which all Christian projects are made aren't always done in the most positive manner, so I don't accept everything that is offered to me either. When I got the opportunity to work with Focus on the Family, I realized how rewarding music could be when you score stories that move you. They have recently contracted me to write a new score for their adaptation of **LITTLE WOMEN**. The project will require me to write about 100 minutes of music, and I'll get to record about 80% of it with a live orchestra. Those scores have been wonderful opportunities."

Depasquale also remains quite realistic about the purpose of music in film, and feels that should remain the primary goal of composers working in films. "Film music has to serve the needs of the film – and there might be many different needs," Depasquale says. "Anything else that comes from a particular score is completely secondary and almost unintentional. I have been hired to compose music that will enhance a film, not to compose a self-indulgent piece of music. I have personally heard a lot of music critiques about soundtrack releases and I'm not sure that is always fair to the composer. The music wasn't intended to be separated from the film. If it is listenable on its own, then I consider that an added bonus."



Composer Jared Depasquale
© Jared Depasquale

As a newcomer to the film scoring community, where would Depasquale like to see himself in five years? "I have to honestly say that I don't have a specific vision of where I want to be in five years; at least not like I used to when I was younger," he says. "I am trying to live in the present and trying to be content with where I am. I'm trying to enjoy whatever current project I have, enjoy the creative process, and not look too far down the road."

These scores are not commercially available but may be had via Depasquale's web site at www.mindspring.com/~depasquale.

Soundtrax is our weekly Movie Soundtrack column.

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