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## “THE DOLL” (CD Review)

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The latest album by horror auteur Dante Tomaselli, *THE DOLL* is the soundtrack to his in-development film of the same name (see details [here](#)), and a creepy, nightmarish auditory journey that will immediately unsettle anyone who listens to it. The disc is catchy at times and perfectly frightful at others—a hallucinogenic trip to a dark and uncomfortable place.

One might be concerned that this would be a retread of Tomaselli's *SCREAM IN THE DARK* CD, but the remarkable thing about *THE DOLL* (Elite Entertainment/MVD Audio) is that it's nothing like Tomaselli's previous audio adventure. It brings totally original material to the table, managing to be every bit as unsettling as that prior effort without recycling what worked in the past. It's clear that Tomaselli's audio engineer Don Olson has gone to great lengths to capture authentic sounds, and that Tomaselli has painstakingly weaved them together to insure that *THE DOLL* will seriously freak out its listening audience.

Religious dialogue spoken in the background of the first, titular track sounds like it's being delivered by a deluded cult leader addressing his followers—echoing the ongoing struggle with religion that is present in all of Tomaselli's work. The second cut, “Toys,” mixes sounds that could be indicative of sexual pleasure or outright agony—it's difficult to say for sure. Tomaselli is the type of creative visionary who finds beauty in pleasure, pain, joy, sadness and everything in between, and the album reflects that. There are several instances on “Toys” where we hear children's voices—perhaps on an abandoned playground—and then a completely unexpected, disturbing audio cue follows. The listener gets the impression that these kids are not safe, that they're very close to a source of great evil, which adds to the mounting sense of dread the album has already begun to build.

“Séance” plays like actual audio from a ritual gone wrong: At first, we hear a group of people cackling, and then, seemingly supernatural sounds take over and the voices and laughter are replaced by gasps for air. “Apparition” sounds just as the title implies, providing the distinct sensation that a malevolent wraith is running amuck, leaving a path of destruction in its wake. “Damned” is a standout track, combining purely tranquil music with terrified whispers and sudden cacophony that catches listeners off guard, and is likely to make them jump out of their seats.

“Mannequins” is the disc's least interesting cut; it's not poorly put together or necessarily inferior to its fellow entries, it just has less going on, and doesn't stand out in the same ways the others do. The only other complaint is that, as on *SCREAM IN THE DARK*, some of the tracks are a little too lengthy, particularly “The Den”; 12 minutes and 57 seconds is longer than one might want to spend listening to a single piece. But in its defense, “The Den” does play out like several shorter segments, giving the impression not of one 13-minute work but several four-minute tunes linked together.

“Skeletons” is filled with sounds evoking mental imagery of medieval torture, and the cackling that goes along with them conjures up images of bystanders watching as the presumably guilty party is publicly tortured. “Halloween” is not as reminiscent of *SCREAM IN THE DARK* as one might suspect, given that that album was engineered to be something of a soundtrack for October 31 festivities; instead, it's a mixture of rainfall, synth sounds and occasional whispers in a foreign dialect that, if translated, seem likely to be a curse or incantation. “Halloween” is both spooky and unique in the musical elements it brings together. Track 10, “The Eye,” further proves how eclectic and original Tomaselli's musical stylings are, sounding almost extraterrestrial in nature. It could be the music that accompanies an outer-space landing in a science fiction film, and while it doesn't quite fit with *THE DOLL*'s other entries, it is still a welcome stylistic addition.

*THE DOLL* is scarier and more perverse than *SCREAM IN THE DARK*: it is dark, terrifying and intense, and the film for which this music was created seems likely to be equally terrifying. *THE DOLL* is an investment worth making for any fan of Tomaselli's work or general fan of the macabre, and the perfect auditory accompaniment to reading a horror novel. It's available on audio CD and as a digital download, though it would be great to see Elite and MVD issue a vinyl version, as that would only add to the creepy ambiance.



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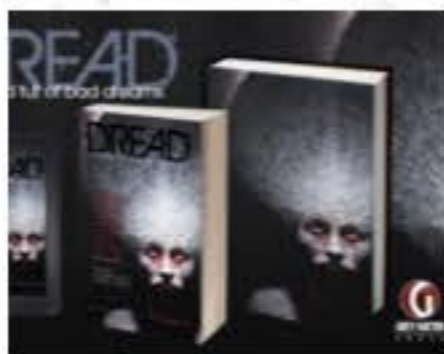
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## About the author



**Tyler Doupe**

Tyler Doupe is a longtime fan of cinema. He has a Bachelor of Arts degree in Technical Writing from Eastern Washington University. He has contributed to FANGORIA and Rue Morgue magazine, as well as Shock Till You Drop, FEARnet and Fandango, as well as ComingSoon.Net.

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