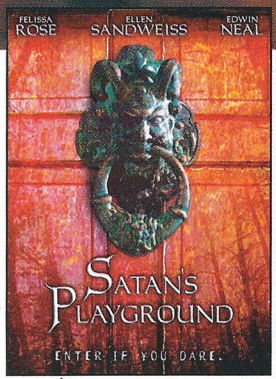

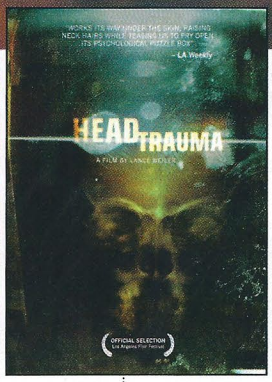

chopped out of it once filming began!). In the current DVD climate of ridiculously overlong special-edition rereleases, how disarmingly honest it is for Fuest to state that his film is just too damn long and would benefit from the loss of about 20 minutes! Certainly there's no arguing with him after watching nearly 10 minutes of people endlessly melting at *Rain*'s highly promoted climax.

Despite the pacing problems and some less-than-engrossing scriptwriting, the movie is beautifully lensed in 2.35:1 widescreen with rich colors. and occasionally exquisite compositional choices (16x9-enhanced for this release, unlike the previously issued VCI DVD). To the film's credit and enduring popularity as a seriously flawed curiosity with a stellar ensemble, I can't praise it enough for having one of the most depressing, evocative and *frisson*-inducing final images in horror history (right up there with the finale of Lucio Fulci's *The Beyond*). And if that's all viewers get out of watching it, for that alone I recommend *Devil's Rain*.

DVD RATING:

—Scooter McCrae

With **SATAN'S PLAYGROUND** (Anchor Bay), filmmaker Dante Tomaselli uses a traditional drive-in movie story as a way to anchor the hallucinogenic style of his previous films. This tale of a vacationing family lost in the woods, assaulted by a supernatural entity and a freaky backwoods clan, is "old-fashioned," as Tomaselli says on his commentary, "but laced with LSD." Running a taut and feverish 81 minutes, this visually striking throwback to 1970s horror classics was shot in 1.85:1 widescreen (16x9-enhanced here) and the atmosphere of dread is immeasurably aided by highly evocative Dolby Digital 5.1 audio. Tomaselli draws strong performances from genre heroines Felissa Rose and Ellen Sandweiss as potential victims and *Texas Chainsaw* hitchhiker Ed Neal as one of the crazies, which only adds to the retro feel.

Even though Tomaselli clearly loves *The Evil Dead* and frequently tips his hat, his portrait of a dysfunctional family under pressure feels personal and sometimes scathing. It's never artsy for its own sake, though, and can just as easily be enjoyed as a spooky funhouse ride—a character's paranoid walk down a hallway toward a secret room is a nail-biter that builds to a brutally abrupt jolt. While his commentary and an on-camera interview with Tomaselli reveal him as a passionate genre filmmaker, the behind-the-scenes featurette is unfortunately an uninspired puff piece. For a more in-depth look at the director, we'll have to wait for Christopher P. Garetano's upcoming documentary *The Horror of Dante Tomaselli* (trailered here)—but until then, this DVD is a fine addition to a strong filmmaker's growing body of work.

DVD RATING:

—Jeremiah Kipp

Like his *Last Broadcast* co-creator Stefan Avalos' *The Ghosts of Edendale*, writer/director Lance Weiler's follow-up, **HEAD TRAUMA** (Heretic), is a low-key mood piece about a haunting—only here, the

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