



THE CINEMA LASER DVD REVIEW



HORROR



Director Dante Tomaselli's **HORROR** (\$20) is like a drug-induced nightmare, by way of an Italian art house horror movie festival. Tomaselli's imagery sometimes gives the impression that he had taken an entire group of Italian horror movies, dropped them in a blender, and then hit frappe. For this reason, the plot of **HORROR** is hard to describe, lets

just say one has to take in the whole movie, before they can even begin to unravel it all. Elements of the story involve a kidnapped girl, escapees from a juvenile rehab center, heavy drug use, unorthodox men of the cloth, plus a wandering goat that would appear to be an embodiment of the devil. The cast of **HORROR** is made up of virtual unknowns, except for The Amazing Kreskin- who delivers a mesmerizing performance, but Olivier, he is not. **HORROR** is the kind of off the wall genre offering that you will either love or hate- there is no middle ground here. Some are going to dig the surreal style that Director Tomaselli creates with **HORROR**, while others are certain to be put off by it. If you were into Tomaselli's first film **DESECRATION**, then you should get a lot out of **HORROR**.

Elite Entertainment Inc. has made **HORROR** available on DVD in a 1.85:1 wide screen presentation that has NOT been enhanced for playback on 16:9 displays. The transfer leaves a lot to be desired, especially on big screen 16:9 monitors. Grain is a serious issue, and in places it looks alike a snowstorm with a weird solarization effect going on. Maybe it's intentional, maybe it's a side effect of ultra low budget 16mm filmmaking, but it doesn't look very appealing on a large display. Otherwise the image is reasonably crisp and well defined. Colors are saturated at a fairly natural level and remain pretty stable. Blacks seem accurate and shadow detail is respectable. Digital compression artifacts seem well concealed, but I keep thinking about that weird solarized snow.



The packaging claims Dolby Digital 5.1, but the DVD only offer 2.0 matrixed stereo surround. Even for regular surround, the track is atmospheric and effective. The rear channels are well deployed for ambient effects and musical envelopment. The forward soundstage is sufficiently loud to allow effects to leap out and creep out the viewer. One can usually

understand the words coming out of the actors' mouths, although it won't necessarily help one to make head nor tail of the plot. Full motion video, animation and sound serve to enhance the DVD's interactive menus. Through the menus, one has access to the standard scene selection and set up features, as well as an audio commentary with Dante Tomaselli, trailers for **HORROR** and **DESECRATION**, some behind the scenes footage of both films, plus another bit that focuses on Kreskin and a photo gallery.

Although not to everyone's taste, Dante Tomaselli's **HORROR** is a surreal, but visually interesting genre offering. If you liked **DESECRATION**, then **HORROR** is definitely worth checking out. However, had the presentation been stronger (ie 16:9 enhanced), the DVD would have made it to the purchase category, instead of just being a rental.



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