



## THE CINEMA LASER DVD REVIEW



### DESECRATION

If you are a fan of Italian horror movies, then **DESECRATION** (\$25) is a film that will appeal to your sensibilities. **DESECRATION** is a very creepy little offering that has all the stylistic earmarks of a European import- even the director's name lulls one into believing that they are watching a foreign film. Of course, appearances can be deceiving; this independent horror feature was produced in the exotic locale of New Jersey.

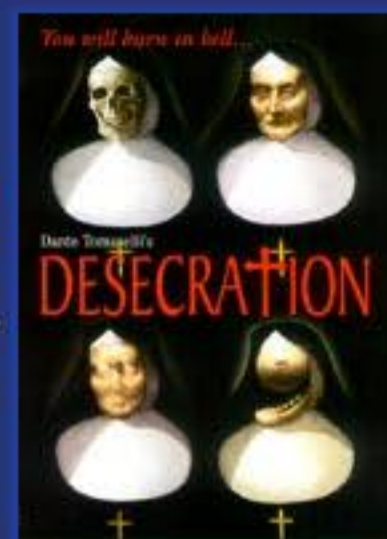
Made for less money than Hollywood usually spends for catering on a big budget extravaganza, **DESECRATION** marks the auspicious feature film debut of writer/director Dante Tomaselli. Tomaselli, whose visual style is obviously influenced by Italian masters like Dario Argento and Mario Bava, has crafted a film that seems like one long waking nightmare. There is a surreal quality to all of the film's visuals, and like any good Italian horror movie, the forced dialogue seems even more surreal. The plot of **DESECRATION** is little more than a framing device that allows Tomaselli to create an oppressive atmosphere of dread punctuated by shocking visuals. **DESECRATION** tells the story of Bobby, a teenaged boy who witnessed his mother's sudden death at the age of five. Now attending a low-rent Catholic Academy, Bobby hasn't seen the last of traumatic experiences. While playing, the radio control device for his model airplane goes dead, which allows the plane to crash into a nun- killing her in a rather bloody fashion. Unfortunately for Bobby, the sister's death unleashes some sort of malevolent force that manifests itself in the form of the dead nun prowling the school grounds. Bobby soon finds himself isolated from everyone, including his elderly grandmother, who seems to know the name of evil that has come calling for the boy. The cast of **DESECRATION** features Irma St. Paule, Christie Sanford, Danny Lopes, Salvatore Paul Piro and Vincent Lamberti.

Image Entertainment has done a good job with their DVD edition of **DESECRATION**. While the wide screen transfer is nice, the movie would have been better served with an anamorphic enhanced picture. Despite the lack of the enhancement, **DESECRATION** looks quite nice. The image is relatively sharp and well defined throughout, although the daylight sequences do fair better than the interiors for overall clarity. Colors are well reproduced, with natural to slightly more vivid saturation. There is also a sepia toned sequence that is also pleasingly rendered. Blacks appear fairly accurate and the image produces a decent amount of shadow detail. **DESECRATION** was shot in Super 16mm, so film grain is more noticeable than in a 35mm production. Still, for a movie that cost \$150,000.00, the level of film grain never becomes objectionable. There are a few blemishes on the film element utilized for the transfer, but nothing severe.

The film's soundtrack is listed as two-channel Dolby Digital stereo, but my receiver was producing a better than fair amount of surround information. Eerie sound effects and music found its way into the rear channels, so I am willing to bet that this is a deliberate surround sound mix. Dialogue reproduction was adequate, but not exemplary; actually, the film works better during sequences where there is very little or no dialogue. Overall, the sound mix is quite effective, which is somewhat surprising, considering the film's budgetary constraints.

The very basic interactive menus give one access to the standard scene selection feature, as well as a brief clip from director Tomaselli's original short film version of **DESECRATION**.

**DESECRATION** isn't a perfect movie, but it packs a visual punch that is certain please fans of Italian horror movies. Personally, I look forward to Tomaselli's next feature, which I hope will meld a stronger script and larger budget to the director's keen visual style. That combination could create the next "must see" horror movie.



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