

FANGORIA

• THE FIRST IN FRIGHT SINCE 1979 •

“SCREAM IN THE DARK” (CD Review)

Filmmaker Dante Tomaselli (pictured, creator of TORTURE CHAMBER, SATAN'S PLAYGROUND and others) recently released SCREAM IN THE DARK, his first standalone audio CD. This seems like a perfectly natural progression, as Tomaselli pays just as much attention to scoring his films as he does to the exploits of his characters.

Tomaselli often creates the music for his movies before he even begins penning the script—creating just the right atmosphere and ensuring that every audio cue is in the right place, and every sound serves a purpose and enhances his work. He seems to have long been out to capture the auditory magic of films like HALLOWEEN and SUSPIRIA, and SCREAM sounds like it was intended to be put on at a Halloween party, to set the mood for a spooky evening, or maybe greet—and terrify—trick-or-treaters. It would also be a perfect soundtrack for any kind of haunted attraction. Tomaselli's work is atmospheric and very moody—a horror-movie soundtrack without the horror movie.

There are multiple jump-inducing tracks on SCREAM IN THE DARK—several instances where you may find yourself startled when the music is interrupted by an unexpected and chilling scream. That initial surprise will probably wear off upon subsequent listening, but the disc still warrants repeated listening. There are also numerous instances of total cacophony that creep up on the listener when they're not expecting it. Unlike when watching a horror movie, you won't know these aural assaults are coming, and it's impossible to predict when a particularly unsettling moment may crop up.

Tomaselli packs a variety of creepy sounds into SCREAM IN THE DARK: There are sinister carnival noises, plenty of spooky screams, choking sounds, ominous organ music, creaking doors and more. Certain moments sound like someone being tortured by his or her ruthless captor—very unsettling stuff—and “Death's Door” features samples of what sounds like a gas chamber, accompanied by a victim's helpless screams. “Chamber of Horrors” is set to the sound of creaky doors opening and closing, followed by footsteps running down a long hallway, as if their maker is fleeing a tormentor.

“The Basement” reminded this reviewer of something out of a vintage horror film; the organ tones sound like Dracula himself could be playing them. “Bad Dreams” sounds just like how you would expect a nightmare would: It's bizarre, creepy and highly unsettling. This track sports a mixture of peculiar elements flowing together in close succession, including cricket sounds, synth music and a host of other resonances one might never have thought would work well together, yet combine to create a very creepy auditory journey.

The only real complaint is that four of the pieces—“Chamber of Horrors,” “Bad Dreams,” “Death's Door” and “The Devil's Rain”—are over seven minutes long, a bit lengthier than this critic would have liked. Yet given that SCREAM IN THE DARK is neither a conventional CD nor necessarily the kind of music one is likely to listen to year round, the existence of a few lengthier tracks is not entirely a bad thing. SCREAM IN THE DARK stands as a sound investment for fans of all things macabre; it's like Christmas music, in the sense that you'll look forward to the chance to pull it out to set the mood for one of your favorite holidays. It's also available as an MP3 album, and it would be great to see SCREAM released on vinyl, as it's the perfect kind of music to hear through a record player for the ambience that only that medium can provide.



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