

Director Tibor Takacs talks “SPIDERS”

Written by Bekah McKendry
Wednesday, 30 January 2013 11:09



The 3D creature feature SPIDERS, creeping into select theatres nationwide February 8 from Millennium Films and screening for free tonight in Los Angeles (see details [here](#)), is the latest creepy creation of director Tibor Takacs. The director made a name for himself in the 1980s, helming horror flicks like THE GATE and I, MADMAN; his more recent fare has turned more toward the aggressive-animal side, with movies such as RATS, MEGA SNAKE and another arachnid opus, ICE SPIDERS. Fango spoke to Takacs about unleashing eight-legged killers in three dimensions.

FANGORIA: How did you become involved in SPIDERS?

TIBOR TAKACS: About three or four years ago, Boaz Davidson at Nu Image started talking to me about the possibility of doing a giant-creature movie. What horror fan doesn't have a nostalgic love for the classic monster movies like GODZILLA or MOTHRA? Around that time, there was a surge of interest in 3D production, and being a fan of stereo photography and 3D movies, I saw SPIDERS as an opportunity to make my own. I've always been intrigued by 3D's creative possibilities, but until now the size of the cameras and the complexity of the process didn't appeal to my sensibilities as a director. As new 3D software and hardware became available, I realized that it was feasible, with some knowhow, to do good 3D on a budget. Boaz supported the 3D idea, and the SPIDERS project got its go-ahead.



FANG: Do you have a fear of spiders personally?

TAKACS: Even though they are intriguing, noble creatures worthy of our respect, I've always

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been totally creeped out by spiders of all sizes. A few years ago, my wife was bitten by a spider and ended up in the emergency room with a horrible, nasty wound just below her bellybutton. A spider she never saw must have bitten her in her sleep.

FANG: SPIDERS’ New York City sets look great, including the subway scenes. Where was the movie shot, and how did you recreate Manhattan?

TAKACS: We’ve had a lot of positive comments about our New York sets and how we incorporated CG extensions to make it all believable. We filmed in Bulgaria on a studio backlot that includes several blocks of what looks like Greenwich Village. The studio also had several full-size subway cars that we incorporated into the story, and wide shots of the real city are peppered throughout to complete the illusion.

FANG: Was shooting in 3D different from what you’re used to?

TAKACS: Filming in 3D is very different than shooting in 2D: bigger and heavier cameras, longer setup times, more light needed, etc. It was way more difficult. I’ve always used constantly moving cameras to reveal and exaggerate depth in a scene, and this style could have been problematic in 3D. But by using the latest technology, incorporating lightweight cameras and portable 3D rigs, I found that my typical shooting approach translated very well to getting good 3D on a short schedule. With the budget we were given, I wanted to keep the shoot as close to the 2D process as possible.

FANG: The cast does a great job responding to the CG giant spiders. What was it like on set allowing for the addition of digital creatures later?

TAKACS: It’s always a challenge when you need to play along with nonexistent elements in a scene. This is where experience comes in handy, yet even after years of directing, it’s still daunting to create performances and action that will match the CGI planned for a particular shot. On SPIDERS, all we had on set was one 3-foot-long soldier-spider claw. Casting the right actors for this type of work is critical. You really need people who can play along at full tilt while imagining the absurd thing that’s going to be added into the scene later, without any nudges or winks to the audience.

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FANG: You’ve worked with Christa Campbell on several prior features. Why do you feel you work so well together?

TAKACS: I think it’s mostly because Christa is a team player with experience who really gets the tone of the kind of movies we make. She understands my shorthand, and there’s no learning curve to take up scarce resources of a short schedule.

FANG: Do you have any upcoming projects you would like to tell us about?

TAKACS: I’m promoting and pitching a project called BITS AND PIECES right now. It’s a tight psychotriller that I also hope to shoot in 3D.