

“TOMB” It May Concern

Written by Nick Masercola

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Edgar Allan Poe. His name isn't just synonymous with horror; he's one of the prized few who have given it artistic validity. And if you want to adapt any of his work, you damn well better do it right, or fear the wrath of his rabid fan base—always a tough crowd. Stepping up to the plate is **THE TOMB**, a modern reimagining of Poe's short story “Ligeia” and one of the films in the **FANGORIA** FrightFest lineup (along with **PIG HUNT**, **FRAGILE**, **ROAD KILL**, **DARK HOUSE**, **THE HAUNTING**, **GRIMM LOVE** and **HUNGER**), which are currently available exclusively through Blockbuster stores and Blockbuster By Mail, as well as digitally via Blockbuster On Demand.

Not familiar with the original tale? Don't sweat it. While supposedly Poe's favorite, “Ligeia” isn't as well-known as classics such as “The Black Cat” or “The Raven.” The basic premise involves an unreliable, opium-addicted narrator discussing his love for and the eventual demise of his wife Ligeia, who, on her deathbed, said that she would find a way to become immortal. Soon after her passing, he begins to see her in his new fiancée, Rowena, and is unsure if it's just in his mind, or if his love is really coming back from beyond the grave.

The film, directed by Michael Staininger (see interview [here](#)), however, follows scholar Jonathan Merrick (Wes Bentley) as he falls under the spell of the irresistible, beautiful Ligeia (Sofya Skya). She's fighting a fatal illness, and stealing the souls of others to stay alive; now she begins tricking Jonathan into helping her, slowly pulling him away from his fiancée Rowena and into her dark, depraved world.



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Bit of a difference, isn't there? “It was screenwriter John Shirley’s idea to adapt the short story,” says the film’s producer, Jeff Most, who previously collaborated with the scribe on *THE CROW*. “I was very excited, as I am a big Edgar Allan Poe fan, and I told him I’d love to be involved with developing the script and producing the film. John Shirley is a celebrated novelist with well over 60 published novels and short-story collections to his credit, and he sought to insure that we stayed as close to the original source material as possible. We needed to strike a delicate balance in adapting Poe’s tale for the screen, in order to remain as faithful as possible and not alienate fans, and yet extend the story to one worthy of feature length.”

To bring that story to life, the filmmakers went to great lengths in gathering a well-rounded, talented cast, which includes Michael Madsen, Eric Roberts, Cary Hiriyoki-Tagawa, Kaitlin Doubleday, Christa Campbell and Mackenzie Rosman. “Michael was very passionate about putting together a great ensemble of actors,” Most says. “He wanted to use them in roles where they were going to work against type in some cases, and in others in roles we haven’t seen them play before.

“Nonetheless,” he adds, “we struggled for quite a while, working to insure we had exactly the right group who could bring the material to life. We were honored to be graced by such amazing talents as Wes, Michael, Eric, Cary and Mackenzie, and young stars on the rise like Kaitlin and Sofya.”

In addition to stocking the film with great actors, the team assured the film is also great to look at. The cinematography by Chris Benson is terrific, and many of the shots could be slapped on the back of postcards. “Even though we were working with a low budget, we employed incredibly talented crews in the cities where we filmed,” says the producer. “We were very fortunate in having the opportunity to work on wonderful locations in St. Louis, Missouri, where the majority of the film was shot, and in the cities of Yalta, Balaklava, Sevastopol and Crimea, Ukraine. The director and I, along with Chris and the film’s production designer, Cat Cacciatore, took great pains to ensure that the film’s look and the locations themselves would be as evocative of the material as possible.”

While Most tended to all the usual producer’s duties on *THE TOMB*, he also likes to make creative contributions to the films he works on, and this one was no exception. He served as the 2nd unit director, and also brought the movie’s composer on board. “We were very blessed to have the renowned Patrick Cassidy working with us,” Most says. “I had known Patrick for many years, but we hadn’t had the chance to work together on a film. He’s a classically trained musician who has done amazing work, and has collaborated with such masterful directors as Ridley Scott on *KINGDOM OF HEAVEN*. I introduced him to Michael and they clicked right

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away, and once we were into the nitty-gritty of getting the score designed and tailored to support the film’s pacing, the editor, Danny Sapphire—an amazing editor who has an incredible understanding of how the score needs to work with the story and energy of each scene—began working very closely with Patrick to design a very specific tone for each scene. Out of this very tight collaboration between composer, director and editor came a beautifully crafted, powerful, evocative, eloquent and memorable score.”

Now, the final result has been released with Fango’s help, and Most raves, “I’m a huge fan of FANGORIA and have a tremendous respect for the magazine and the brand. I’m delighted that THE TOMB was chosen to be distributed under the FrightFest label. It was the subject of a great deal of interest from a number of distributors, but once FANGORIA entered the fray, I felt we had a wonderful association that gave us a badge of honor we could display alongside our title.”

With THE TOMB now available to viewers, Most has his hands full producing the remake of THE CROW. “I’m very excited about it,” he says. “[Director] Steve Norrington is one of the most talented genre filmmakers in the world, and I believe he will surprise and delight fans of THE CROW with the efforts he is making with the franchise.”

But that’s not all the busy producer is working on. “I’m currently finishing off two films which are in postproduction. SOLDIERS OF FORTUNE is an action franchise I developed with Robert Crombie for Christian Slater, and I’m in finishing a romantic comedy called SLIGHTLY SINGLE IN L.A., which I produced with my partner Jeff Rice and deals with the dating world in Los Angeles.”

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