Written by Chris Alexander Wednesday, 29 December 2010 11:45



There weren't enough awesome horror films in 2010 that left a deep impression in me to make a Top Ten. But I did manage a Top Five.

The following are the pictures that I can recall staying with me the longest this year.

5. SHUTTER ISLAND

Sure, you could see the twist coming a mile away (from frame one if you're savvy to this sort of film), but Martin Scorsese's adaptation of Dennis Lehane's novel offers many of the chief reasons I watch horror movies: to enter a world that is dark, disrupting and beautiful, and have my senses inundated with sound and image and ultimately, just allow myself to be expertly manipulated by a master. Leo DiCaprio offers yet another solid turn as a US Marshall in the early 1950's, who ventures to remote Shutter Island Hospital in Boston, where a mental patient has gone missing. What he finds is possible conspiracy, murder and plenty of gorgeously rendered and deeply upsetting hallucinatory visions. Scorsese was admittedly influenced by Italian horror; specifically the swirly, colorful abstract work of Mario Bava. It all works. Slow, strange, weird and compulsively watchable. Robby Robertson from THE BAND creates a score from a double CD release worth of existing tracks—some classical, some pop, some blues, some big band, some just plain weird—and t's the glue that holds the American movie maestro Marty's cauldron of black blood together.



4. PARASOMNIA

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William Malone is pitifully underrated as a stylist, a point I tried to make in the pages of FANGORIA #295 and that was happily embraced by many readers. Not enough however, as PARASOMNIA kind of came and went, dumped on to home video and forgotten. Shame that. Although flawed (most of Malone's work is), PARASOMNIA offers everything I love about his work amped up to impossible degrees; wall to wall style, perversions of noir tropes, nightmarish creatures, atmosphere and a refreshingly unpretentious desire to sculpt airtight, unpretentious pulp horror. In a year filled with lazy big studio re-hashes and overrated indie garbage, PARASOMNIA was the secret handshake, a work of vision and heart. Check it out now. You have no excuse.



3. THE WOLFMAN

Okay, don't kill me. I know the world at large hated THE WOLFMAN. I know critics slammed it for being disjointed, melodramatic, narratively uninspired...and yeah, maybe that's all true. But fuck you Charlie. I loved this movie. See, I worship at the shrine of Hammer Horror and all of the finger points that audiences and journo's directed toward THE WOLFMAN could easily be awarded to any number of Hammer classics. Like Hammer, THE WOLFMAN's many strengths – to me, anyway – crushed its many shortcomings. This thing felt like a deluxe Hammer film. Gothic, moody, somber, beautifully designed, ambiguous (whether by design or accident) and featuring lush costumes. Hell, Danny Elfman's thundering score, Rick Baker's digitally tweaked werewolf transformations, ample gore and Anthony Hopkins (pound for pound, ounce for ounce, my favorite actor) chewing scenery with relish as the mad patriarch of the Talbot dynasty, are more than enough reason for THE WOLFMAN to endure and be re-discovered. Every time I watch THE WOLFMAN, I just want to watch it again. It's comforting. Like a good Hammer movie or a warm werewolf, er blanket.

2010: The Year in Horror— Chris Alexander's Top 5 Movies

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