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Reviewed by Randall D. Larson

Ancient Evil: Scream of the Mummy

Jared DePasquale's score for this low-budget direct to video sequel to "Bram Stoker's Legend of the Mummy" makes the most of its budget limitations to concoct an effective and likeable horror score. Composer DePasquale (whose growing legacy of low-budget horror scores includes, *(WITCHOUSE, THE DEAD HATE THE LIVING!, and THE FRIGHTENING)*) proves to have an aptitude for the

kind of musical atmospheres that enhance these visual terror tales, and whose work frequently surpasses that of the films it accompanies. *ANCIENT EVIL*- wherein archeology students unearth an Ancient Aztec mummy and, of course, bring it to a furious life- has been reviled by most reviewers, and as a film it may well deserve it. But as a musical score, it's atmospheric and occasionally exotic, with frequent excursions into the musically ferocious.

DePasquale rises above the typical keyboard-created murmurings that accompany most bad terror videos by merging inventive electronic tonalities and sampled orchestral surgings into a hybrid horror offering that is both intriguing and affecting, supported by a consistently interesting sound design. A compelling main theme retains a subtle melodic figure for woodwinds (which actually suggests Egypt more than it does Mexico or the Aztecs) but soon morphs into an *OMEN*-like choral ostinato driven by crashing cymbal thunderings that create a relentless forward motion to the material. This is music that rushes ahead to grab the listener by the throat and hold him captive with mummified, squeezing fingers. (The director insisted on a "score like the *OMEN*," which accounts for the Goldsmithian choral chanting.

DePasquale mimicked moments of that Goldsmith Oscar-winner but ultimately launched the score into the less derivative and more exotic realms it needed to go to support the film's mummy curse premise.) The action material is enhanced with percussion elements (bell tree, wood blocks, etc.) and neat electronic textures that enliven the orchestration. DePasquale's brooding, suspense motifs, enhanced by interplay of low-end chorus and cavernous piano notation, become truly spooky. This music generates a lot of honest tension and is a superior effort among contemporary horror scores.

The score is not commercially available but can be had via DePasquale's website at www.mindspring.com/~depasquale

