

Carrie [Encore Edition]

IF YOU'VE GOT A TASTE FOR TERROR... TAKE CARRIE TO THE PROM

In 1976, director Brian De Palma had already established a reputation as a cult director of such films as *Greetings, Hi, Mom*, and more importantly, *Sisters*, *Phantom of the Paradise*, and *Obsession*. But it was his film of Stephen King's classic, best-selling first novel, *Carrie*, that would catapult him into major director status. Many directors have tackled Stephen King, including King himself, all to varying degrees of success, but *Carrie* is the film that leads the pack.

De Palma got everything right – the casting (an amazing group of actors, including Sissy Spacek, Piper Laurie, Amy Irving, William Katt, John Travolta, Nancy Allen, P.J. Soles, and Betty Buckley), the adaptation by Lawrence D. Cohen, the art direction (Jack Fisk and Bill Kenney), camerawork (Mario Tosi), editing (Paul Hirsch) – everything just came together magically and perfectly. The film works so well because there is not only great horror (as to be expected), but also a large helping of emotion and pathos (thanks to Sissy Spacek's affecting and brilliant performance as Carrie). There is a depth to the characterizations that elevate the film way beyond a simple scary movie. The film also has a sly sense of humor and it's just fun in a way horror films seldom are – thrills, chills, laughs, and one of the most amazing jump-out-of-your seat scares in the history of cinema. The audience literally jumped out of their seats and the collective scream was unbelievable – a moment that's been ripped off countless times. The film became an instant classic and a box-office triumph, grossing close to thirty-four million dollars on a budget under two million dollars (at a time when that kind of money actually meant something). There was a lot of repeat business (no home video back then), so people could watch their friends squirm and scream.

Horror films are rarely nominated for Academy Awards, but *Carrie* was one of

the exceptions with Sissy Spacek getting a Best Actress nod and Piper Laurie getting one for Best Supporting Actress. Over the years, the film has never lost on iota of its popularity, thanks to numerous releases on every home video format, most recently on blu-ray.

Of all the decisions De Palma made, one of the most important was choosing Pino Donaggio as composer. De Palma had used Bernard Herrmann on two of his films – *Sisters* and *Obsession*, but Herrmann had passed away in 1975. In 1976, Donaggio only had one major film to his credit, but his score to that film was masterful – Nicholas Roeg's *Don't Look Now*. However De Palma came to choose Donaggio, it was a perfect marriage of composer and film. Donaggio's score hits all the right notes (pun intended) – he brings out every emotion and all the subtext, with great suspense and horror music, plaintive and yearning music for the character of Carrie, two songs for the prom sequence (with lyrics by Merritt Malloy) that help make that sequence so magical and memorable, and light and infectious music for the calisthenics sequence and the scene at the tux shop. It is, in fact, a perfect score, a masterpiece of film scoring, with unforgettable themes that capture every nuance of the film.

Donaggio and De Palma continued their director/ composer relationship over the next few years, with Donaggio providing terrific scores for *Home Movies*, *Dressed To Kill*, *Blow Out*, *Body Double*, and *Raising Cain*. Donaggio has done many great scores for a variety of directors, including *Piranha*, *The Howling*, *Tourist Trap*, *The Fan*, and many others. United Artists released the soundtrack album on LP. It was an odd presentation in that almost all of the music was from the film's second half, save for the main title sequence (which was repeated verbatim at the end of the album). The album, as was the fashion back then, ran thirty-five minutes – but you got most of the themes and the two vocals (out of film order on the LP). That LP was released twice on CD – first by

Ryko (with dialogue snippets included to pad out the running time), and then by Varese Sarabande (with the dialogue snippets gone). Ryko used the album master, and the Varese was a clone of the Ryko release (the pop songs used in the film were not available to them or to us).

When I found out the rights were available for license the first thought was why do a third CD release? The answer to that was simple: I love the film and the score. But I knew it would be a tough sell unless we could find a bonus track or two and make it sound better. I had the MGM vault pull all the tapes and was delighted and surprised to find a huge number of sixteen-track tapes. I had no idea what was on the tapes, actually – whether it was just what had been included on the original LP or if there were some additional cues. It was hard to tell from the cue sheets. So, we put up the first reel and found the two instrumental versions of the songs – and there was reason enough to do a third release – two unreleased bonus cues. The cue numbers were sequential, from one to thirty-two. I kept hoping against hope that all those early numbers would be from the first part of the film – and a day later, when CDRs were delivered to me of everything on the tapes I knew the story – we had every note of the score, about twenty-five minutes of additional score cues than those used on the LP and CD releases. Since both film and score are iconic, it was the greatest kind of discovery we could have made.

The entire score was remixed from the sixteen-track session tapes. The fidelity on the tapes was really incredible. So, it is with great pleasure that we offer the complete score to *Carrie* in film order, with the two instrumentals of the songs included as bonus material.

— Bruce Kimmel