

Interview: Legendary Dario Argento Tackles Classic in 'Dracula 3D'

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CHICAGO – Revered horror director Dario Argento has numerous classics to his name, including “Suspiria” and “Deep Red,” which have cemented him to a designation in which filmmakers like Quentin Tarantino, Brian De Palma, and James Wan cite him as an influence. As a writer, he has numerous co-writing credits, including story work on “Once Upon a Time in the West” with Bernardo Bertolucci and the film’s director, Sergio Leone.

Following 2009’s “Giallo,” Argento returns to the horror genre with his latest film, “Argento’s Dracula,” which is currently available to rent on iTunes, and is expanding across the country to limited theaters. Utilizing the same stereoscopic 3D cameras that Martin Scorsese used to make “Hugo,” the film marks a new visual venture for Argento, who previously wanted to remake his film “Deep Red” in 3D, but lost that project when “Giallo” failed commercially.

“Argento’s Dracula” (known also as “Dracula 3D”) is a strikingly different version from Bram Stoker’s original text, featuring a particular emphasis on nudity, blood, and strange special effects. Thomas Kretschmann plays the famous Dracula, while Argento’s daughter Asia plays Lucy; Rutger Hauer wields the stakes of classic hunter Van Helsing. “Argento’s Dracula” was presented out of competition at the Cannes Film Festival in 2012, and screened in Chicago at the recent 49th Annual Chicago International Film Festival, where Argento was an honored guest. Despite the hundreds of characters that have met bloody finales in his famed giallo films, Argento is a kind man, albeit with some stern opinions to share about modern American horror movies, movie critics, and other 3D films.



Dracula 3D

Photo credit: IFC Midnight

HOLLYWOODCHICAGO.COM: You recently did voiceover work for the Italian dubs of video game “Dead Space” (as Dr. Kyne). Do you think video games could assume the same type of prestige as an art form that film has?

DARIO ARGENTO: I did the video game because a friend asked me. It was an experience for me. I do understand though that the video games now are very important in the business, that people like them a lot.

HOLLYWOODCHICAGO.COM: Do you have any interest in working with video games yourself?

ARGENTO: No, no.



Dracula 3D
Photo credit: IFC Midnight

HOLLYWOODCHICAGO.COM: Did you watch any other 3D films to prepare you for your own undertaking of the filmmaking form?

ARGENTO: No. I don't like most of the films. They are always effects, things coming from the screen to the audience, and [it's] always the same things. And I know the experience, to see the depth, the profundity. This is the important aspect; [3D] is not just to stupefy the audience. Doing that is far too easy.

HOLLYWOODCHICAGO.COM: Have you seen other 3D films that have provided depth?

ARGENTO: I have seen some films. I saw one film from Alfred Hitchcock, “Dial M for Murder.” I saw it in a retrospective and it was in 3D. It was marvelous. It was shooting all over the room. It was very good. Hitchcock explored the possibility to see the depth and the distance from one character to the other. That is the real 3D. That is genius.

HOLLYWOODCHICAGO.COM: Did you see Martin Scorsese’s “Hugo”?

ARGENTO: Yes. I liked that a lot. I used the same technology from that film, the ALEXA camera. It was a new kind of way to do film.

HOLLYWOODCHICAGO.COM: Given your experience with 3D in this film, do you now wish that somehow your previous films could have been made with the same format?

ARGENTO: Yes. But, that's impossible [laughs].



Dracula 3D
Photo credit: IFC Midnight

HOLLYWOODCHICAGO.COM: Before you were a director, you were a film critic. What do you think the role of the movie critic is today?

ARGENTO: The critics are just telling the story of the film, naming the actors, and then they're finished [laughs]. They are not profound with

the story. I don't like the critics of today; it's not real criticism. They don't explain the film, or its references.

HOLLYWOODCHICAGO.COM: Do you see this project as your own criticism or analysis of other Dracula films?

ARGENTO: The other Dracula films weren't important to me. The only one that was important to me was the Hammer films, with Christopher Lee, which were very interesting. The others I don't like. Most of them are ridiculous. I like that film. I tried to do a film romantically about the subject.

HOLLYWOODCHICAGO.COM: The character of Dracula has been around for over a hundred years. Even before Bram Stoker's Dracula, vampires have always intrigued us.

ARGENTO: Before Bram Stoker, the vampire was strange, and the story of legend. But Bram Stoker did the real story. After Stoker, the vampire was different. Every vampire after Bram Stoker is similar to his story.