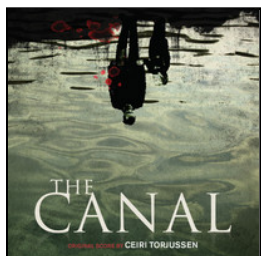


The Canal ****



CEIRI TORJUSSEN
Lakeshore (download)
23 tracks - 50:34

With a plot that sounds like an amalgam of *Dead Again* (1991) and *What Lies Beneath* (2000), *The Canal* features Rupert Evans as a film archivist who suspects his wife is cheating on him, and who also discovers that the home they're living in was the scene of a brutal murder back in 1902. Director-Writer Ivan Kavanagh's fifth film appeared last April at Tribeca and continued on the festival circuit before receiving a wider release in mid October. The frightening music is by Ceiri Torjussen, who has a number of scores to his credit and has provided a host of orchestrations and additional music for the likes of Marco Beltrami, Harold Kloser and James Venable.

The score wastes little time establishing its point of view: "Body Fishing" features a variety of eerie sounds set against a pedal point. This atmospheric backdrop is intensified in "[Psychotic Visions](#)," where Torjussen takes a variety of "found" objects and instruments to create disturbing atonal and aleatoric textures. The use of manipulated sounds continues throughout the score, adding distinctive stings and a host of contemporary orchestral techniques that involve unusual bowings, breathing sounds, and clicks ("The Lady in the Grass").

The center of "The Sewer of the Mind" is a tour de force of technique and extreme tension building. The addition of a recessed old song in the end credits track, "Down by the Old Bleak Stream," provides even less relief. Following this track are two selections that are more tonally based. The first, "Wake Once More," features brass swells with sparse orchestral textures, all seemingly applied at random. A final "Canal Improvisation" provides an overview of some of the textural ideas and techniques used in the score.

"Believe Me Sophie" has a brief moment of "theme," which feels out of place by the time it appears on the album, serving only to add to the creepiness. The use of bell tones in "Putrid Premonitions" further glistens like a knife in the darkness, and the moaning sounds created by bowing techniques may have you on the edge of your seat.

Though *The Canal* is not the sort of score one pops into the player for a relaxing listen, there's no denying the craft at work here. The fact that most of this is done with acoustic instruments is not necessarily remarkable, as this was often the norm

40 years ago, but that someone can do this and make it work dramatically today is a rare feat. Perhaps some less creepy scoring opportunities will allow a larger audience to discover Torjussen's work in future. —**Steven A. Kennedy**

Comments regarding this review can be sent to: stev4uth@hotmail.com.