

## “THE PIT & THE PENDULUM” (DVD Review)

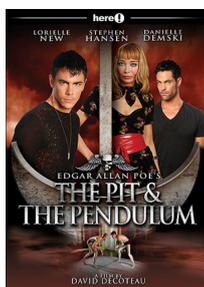
Written by Siobhan Greene  
Friday, 12 March 2010 16:48

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The story of David DeCoteau’s THE PIT & THE PENDULUM is a little different than the one I read by Edgar Allan Poe. Actually, file that one under the “giant understatement” category. In DeCoteau’s new-to-DVD (from here! and E1) release, seven good-looking college athletes—well, really six; one is a storm chaser—come to the house of a mysterious woman who plans to push each through the pain barrier via the use of hypnosis.

By removing physical or mental obstacles, the athletes will be able to achieve superhuman feats and be unstoppable forces within their sports. Of course, removing those barriers creates its own set of problems, as each of the group now pushes themselves much further than they should, thereby tearing down their bodies and ultimately rendering themselves useless.



Now, we’ve all seen enough horror movies to know that when the mad scientist, J.B. Divay (played here by the delicious Lorielle New), starts getting disappointed in the results, it becomes time to move on to new “experimentation.” That’s the series of events in THE PIT & THE PENDULUM, but what I didn’t mention is that the lovely Ms. Divay does not confine herself to pleasure from only one sex. That’s a fancy way of saying she swings both ways, just like her pendulum...

But it’s not just New who swings, it’s the entire cast. For once, it’s not just a matter of a couple of beautiful young ladies getting all hot and bothered and then jumping into the shower to soap each other up for 20 minutes or so. Now, we’re also treated to a couple of chiseled-male-flesh moments—one with two hunky wrestlers going at it and another featuring two guys groping in bed. The juxtaposition between the girl/girl and guy/guy scenes is particularly revealing, as the women are shown taking their time, exploring each other at a slow, languid pace, while the guys are off to the races in a lustful craze.

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While the semi-naked-wrestling scene isn't as powerful as the one in *WOMEN IN LOVE* with Alan Bates and Oliver Reed, DeCoteau isn't trying to create a film with that kind of staying power. He's attempting a fun, erotic evening with some chills and a voyeur's delight at scoping out good-looking skin. Most of the budget for *PIT & THE PENDULUM* must have gone into New's wardrobe; it certainly didn't go into the sets, as DeCoteau reuses the location he employed for *HOUSE OF USHER* and *ALIEN PRESENCE*. It certainly didn't go into extensive rewrites of the dialogue, as most of the lines would have been rejected by Ed Wood as being inane and contrived.

The DVD's "special" features aren't what you would call very special either. I guess "so-so features" or "fairly lame features" just wouldn't cut it as a marketing ploy, but it would be fair. The only extras included are the trailer, which would be cool if it was a better movie, or at least one that received theatrical release, and a behind-the-scenes look at the shoot. Again, this would be exciting if there were any special FX worth investigating, or if the production was intriguing enough to warrant further investigation. Not much danger of either of those happening—I've seen better FX in middle-school Super-8 efforts, and I doubt that anyone outside of the families of the people who made the movie will want to lift the veil and watch more.

Campy, only semi-erotic and the kind of movie that is not going to satisfy most viewers, *PIT & THE PENDULUM* is an OK way to spend a cold night, but I can also think of much better ways to pass the same time.

MOVIE: \*1/2

DVD PACKAGE: \*1/2

{jcomments on}