

John Carpenter's "THE WARD" update

Written by Trevor Parker
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Earlier this week, legendary director John Carpenter was kind enough to take some time out of a hectic postproduction schedule for *THE WARD* and give us the latest on the film, his much-anticipated return to theatrical horror, *THE WARD*. "It's getting to the point where I'm working on the effects and music, and entering the final editing stage," he tells Fango.

Carpenter's official website has previously stated that fans could expect to see the movie this July, and Carpenter says, "As far as I'm concerned, it will be on schedule. But I don't know what the release plans are."



THE WARD stars busy genre actress Amber Heard (pictured right) as a young woman committed to a psychiatric ward. Drugged and disoriented, she must unravel the mystery of her rapidly vanishing cellmates before she becomes the next to disappear. The movie marks a return to the intimate, suffocating locales of earlier Carpenter works after bigger-budgeted journeys to Mars and a postapocalyptic Los Angeles. "This script [by Michael Rasmussen and Shawn Rasmussen] came along, and it had some nice features I wanted to try," the director recalls. "It was limited to a small scope, so I didn't have to kill myself physically making the film. It was a chance to have some fun, and I really enjoyed the hell out of making it." He adds that the film features "essentially an all-girl cast"—also including *THE CRAZIES*' Danielle Panabaker, *KICK-ASS*' Lyndsy Fonseca, Mika Boorem and Mamie Gummer—which will make an interesting counterpoint in his filmography, considering the noted all-male ensemble in his masterpiece *THE THING*.

THE WARD marks the end of Carpenter's nearly decade-long hiatus from directing, interrupted only by two episodes of TV's *MASTERS OF HORROR*. He admits he was burned out "big time" after completing his last theatrical offering, 2001's *GHOSTS OF MARS*. "I'm glad I took time off," he says. "There were several elements involved in my decision not to work for almost 10 years. There were some family issues... I needed to get away from the movie business for a

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while. I just wasn't having any fun anymore." He laughs and adds, "I suppose the fact that [GHOSTS OF MARS] tanked at the box office didn't help either."

One piece of news that may sadden aficionados of Carpenter's distinctive scores is that neither he nor his son Cody (who provided the music for his father's MASTERS episodes) will be involved with THE WARD's soundtrack. Instead, these duties will fall to Mark Kilian, a young composer described by Carpenter as "very, very talented." For more on THE WARD and Carpenter's other current and future projects, keep you eye on the pages of Fango this summer.

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