



SUPERSHARK/Jeff Walton/Screamworks

Among the latest in the affectionately quirky over-the-top exploitation subgenre of **MEGA**-this and **GIANT**-that, **DINO**-whatsis and **CROCO**-whosit, and this-**NADO** and that-**OPUS** is Fred Olen Ray's saga of a **SUPERSHARK**, a giant primordial shark freed from the ocean's subsurface during an offshore drilling accident.

Unlike a lot of the films of this questionable but fun ilk, **SUPERSHARK** is Grade-A cheese – a solid, campy B-monster movie that worked. Ray co-wrote and directed this tale of a prehistoric shark awakened from its slumber to terrorize a beach community; due to its size it is able to fin-walk across the sand and also leap a hundred feet into the air to bite helicopters. It's still hokey as hell, its science and animal behavior quotient is preposterous, but it's fun and

entertaining. There's a consistent internal logic to the story and the characters actually behave like human beings (mostly). The music is the work of Texan film composer Jeff Walton, no stranger in these cinematic parts, having scored Ray's **ATTACK OF THE 60-FOOT CENTERFOLDS** (1995) and **CURSE OF THE PUPPET MASTER** (1998) and David DeCoteau's **THE BROTHERHOOD** (2001) and its sequel, not to mention several additional fistfuls of obscure indie productions. Walton's music for **SUPER SHARK** is terrifically straightforward action music, playing the story absolutely straight and lending the film's outrageous imagery and camp dialog a dramatic honesty that suits the story's quieter moments as well as providing the necessary aggression for the shark's frequent attacks, as well as plenty of potent suspense music in anticipation of the ferocious fish's arrival. Walton makes the best of his digital samples, which sound pretty credible, gathering together to form a potent orchestral force, such as "On The Radar," heard when the monster shark attacks and destroys a Navy sub. Walton's interaction of blasting horns and storming percussion, growing steadily stronger in velocity and impact, serves up a very potent musical surge that really energizes the scene. In other moments, when the film's CGI fails to truly capture the moment, Walton's score gives it the extra charge it needs to remain dramatically sound. Low piano string scrapes often portend the hungry shark's appearance, as in the opening of "1 Shark, 2 Girls," reaching a climax of exuded horns when the shark makes his appearance. A rhythmic pulse of low horns and metallic percussion serves as Walton's own "shark ostinato," propelling the fish into view with an orchestral snarl and a cruelly beating black heart ("What Is That?"). A kind of quasi-echoplex effect accompanies the military onto the beach in an attempt to eradicate the shark with a special weapon ("On The Beach"), only to have the colossal *Carcharodon* fin-walk across the sand and gobble them up like popcorn, while gentler moments such as a soldier's remembrance of a shark attack ("Something Big Came Out of the Sea") is fraught with tentative gestures and empathetic tonalities. Walton's orchestration includes enough interesting nuances and textured patterns to make the score attractive as well as functional, and the score's climactic moments ("Special Prototype" and "Engage the Enemy") are furiously wrangled, the robust orchestral attacks controlled and strenuous. It's an articulate and accomplished score that serves both film and album quite well.