



A VISIT FROM ST. DANIEL

by Shawn J. Poole

'Twas the week before Christmas '08
and, all in their seats,
Philly horror-film fans gathered
for two Christmas-themed treats.

Exhumedfilms.com took their usual great care
in acquiring rare prints and exhibiting their wares.

Up on the big screen there shone a bright light:
the films CHRISTMAS EVIL and SILENT NIGHT, DEADLY NIGHT.

Both films turn Santa into a figure to dread,
but of the two, CHRISTMAS EVIL seems light-years ahead.

In fact, SILENT NIGHT.... is exploitative and bad,
while CHRISTMAS EVIL is creative and stars Fiona Apple's dad!

Lewis Jackson, its director, spoke at the show.

He told us lots of things that were interesting to know.

First released in 1980, it played for years in Times Square
back before Disney and others "sanitized" everything there.

My wife and I sat with the rest of the crowd
and learned the film's original title: YOU BETTER WATCH OUT!
Dave Marsh, I should've recalled, cited that title in his first Bruce book
and soon I saw why Springsteen fans should give this flick a look.

For who before our wandering eyes should briefly appear
but the late, great Danny Federici playing a "Jingle Bells" to hear!
Like a Christmas angel, his beaming baby-face looks forever young
as he plays the accordion, backed by saxophone and drums.

Until then, I forgot reading that he was in this film before,
but now have a first-viewing gift that will last forevermore.

What a wonderful Christmas surprise, in the year that he passed,
to find a Christmasy memory of Danny that will eternally last.

So thank you, Lewis Jackson, for putting this film in the can
and preserving the Christmas spirit of our beloved Phantom Dan.

(photo courtesy of Jack Scarangella)