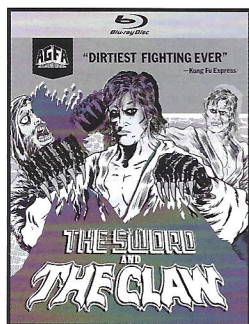


DVDementia

Arriving on Blu-ray courtesy of the American Genre Film Archive (AGFA), the Turkish 1975 historical adventure **THE SWORD AND THE CLAW** [Kiliç Aslan] (MVDvisual) first trickled into US theatres in the early-'80s, occasionally under the title **LION MAN VS. THE BARBARIANS**. Starring Turkish screen idol Cüneyt Arkin (here credited as "Steve" Arkin), this is an undeniably terrible film, but its colorful, hyper-active mix of non-stop carnage, overwrought melodrama and hackneyed dubbing is incredibly entertaining!... In a war-torn Byzantine empire, King Solomon (Arkin) is assassinated by the treacherous Sir Antoine, but the monarch's pregnant wife escapes and gives birth in mid-chase, with her baby boy raised by friendly lions in the forest. As an adult, this feral Lion Man (once again, Arkin) sports Tarzan-style furs, feasts on raw meat and cavorts about the woods with his feline family. Embraced by the people as their saviour, Lion Man viciously claws the faces of Antoine's soldiers and dispatches scores of extras. Even after caustic acid destroys his hands, it's no big deal, because Lion Man is then equipped with razor-sharp steel paws! Arkin throws himself into this absurdly acrobatic

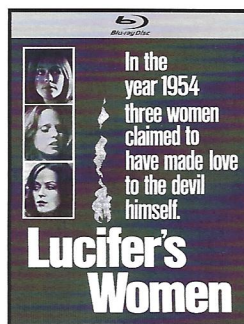


role, with his swarthy, super-strong Lion Man (thanks to being "raised on lion's milk") hilariously ripping huge tree trunks out of the ground and clubbing his enemies with them, punching through flimsy little shields and literally bouncing through the marshlands. Meanwhile, director Natuk Baytan overstuffs the film with romance, betrayal, dastardly villains, parentage mix-ups, an insane rescue-climax, and wall-to-wall unintentional laughs, with this English dubbed print's cartoonishly peppy score only adding to the schlocky fun... If that wasn't enough excitement for you, we also get 1978's **BRAWL BUSTERS**, a fitfully-amusingly HK martial arts mess directed by "Tommy Kim." Posing as a royal prostitute, a female assassin takes out a local warlord and his son pledges to track down the killer. It seems that the lady responsible, Mistress Kow, is avenging the slaughter of her own family and plans to knock off this entire ruling clan. Facing off against the Emperor's disposable minions with her deadly "tornado feet" and female entourage, she's continually aided by a mysterious wanderer. An incoherent excuse for slapdash chopsocky combat and wuxia-on-a-budget gags, it includes typically clumsy English dubbing and a print that's definitely seen better days... The set includes an assortment of "super" selections from AGFA's outrageous trailer stash, including **ARGOMAN THE FANTASTIC SUPERMAN** and **SUPERARGO AND THE FACELESS GIANTS**.

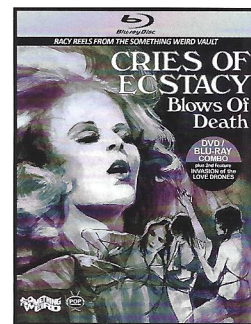
In 1971, Berkeley professor Paul Aratow co-founded the Northern California restaurant phenomenon Chez Panisse, but left the food biz to pursue filmmaking. The result? 1977's **LUCIFER'S WOMEN** (Vinegar Syndrome), a heady goulash of sex, drugs, death, Satanism, and bare female flesh... Best-selling author John Wainwright (Larry Hankin) slaps on a fake goatate and baby-blue

eye-shadow when performing his kinky hypnotism nightclub act (e.g., scissoring the clothes off of a mesmerized female volunteer) and finds a "pure soul" in kind-hearted exotic dancer Trilby (Jane Brunel-Cohen). But even as devilish publisher Sir Stephen plots to steal this beauty's "psychic energy" during a human sacrifice, Wainwright begins to fall for her — while also trying not to become possessed by the soul of Sven-gali. Yep, it's all quite confusing, plus Aratow pads out the thin plot with stage performances (Noel the topless butterfly-girl, Vic Kirk's deaf-mute magician) and softcore tidbits (a ceremony involving a spaced-out hooker and some goat-headed dude, Trilby masturbating to a sapphic comic book). Hankin, a longtime member of San Francisco's improv troupe The Committee, comes off more silly than sinister; Brunel-Cohen has an appealing naturalism, but is also painfully one-note; while adult film legend Paul Thomas plays a believably-abusive nightclub manager. For such an obviously low-budget effort, it's surprisingly well shot (courtesy of future two-time Emmy-winner Robbie Greenberg) and boasts an overall weird vibe more common to '70s underground cinema. There's also a soundtrack by Ed Bogas, who later composed the music for animated Peanuts and Garfield TV-specials, editor David Webb Peoples went onto script **BLADE RUNNER** and **UNFORGIVEN**, plus Church of Satan's Anton LaVey is listed as a technical consultant. **LUCIFER'S WOMEN** played a handful of small markets in 1977, only to end up purchased by Independent-International Pictures, with Al Adamson doing one of his notorious cut-and-paste bastardizations on the film in order to add it to a TV-package deal as **DOCTOR DRACULA**, which is also included in this set. Shooting new footage featuring John Carradine, Donald "Red" Barry, the uniquely untalented Regina Carrol, plus a noticeably-older Hankin, its plot is even more convoluted than before. A vampire lothario (Geoffrey Land) is attacking women, Carradine and Barry hope to solve a murder and Hankin faces off with Dracula, with Adamson slicing out all of the nudity and almost completely eliminating several supporting characters — a corrupt cop, Wainwright's snooty butler, Trilby's roommate, and most of Thomas' role, in favor of Carradine jabbering away. The Blu-ray/DVD set includes a career interview with Paul Thomas.

This sci-fi-themed "Racy Reels From the Something Weird Vault" set begins with director Antony Weber's **CRIES OF ECSTASY, BLOWS OF DEATH** (POP Cinema/Something Weird), a 1973 post-apocalyptic trip that straddles both the grindhouse and the arthouse with its depressing, dystopian scenario strewn with sex, despair and bursts of ridiculous martial arts. In the year 2062, civilization has been ravaged by pollution and political fuckwits, bloodthirsty bikers and government stormtroopers are on the prowl, and a handful of baggy-robed, gas-masked men and women live in domed, inflatable-plastic tents in the middle of nowhere, defending their pathetic chunk of turf



with archery sets. Although these survivors are running low on clean air, with only hours to live, there's still time for romantic tensions between retired General Bryon White (Michael Abbott) and girlfriend Dala (Sandra Carey), as well as a few newcomers to their dying community, including Uschi Digard and Dianne Bishop's ass-kicking, pig-tailed waif Keisha. Sex is the only response in the face of such utter hopelessness, and bleak moments abound — gunning down a pregnant woman; a couple makes love in the dirt, while gasping for air; or perhaps just committing suicide — complete with skimpy faux-futuristic costumes, groovy cars, ugly mod-furnishings, plus an underlying EL TOPO meets '60s STAR TREK quality. Weber previously helmed such similarly unconventional sexploitation as **THE MAGIC MIRROR** [a.k.a. Love and the Giant Grunt], and gives this whole mystifying concoction an enjoyably off-kilter, nihilistic-art-school-dropout vibe, from its lyrically-scored screwing scenes to a dreamy climax that cuts off all too abruptly... Shifting gears in a major way, director Jerome Hamlin's **INVASION OF THE LOVE DRONES** is a 1977 potpourri of extraterrestrial goofiness shot over a two-year period. Hovering above our planet, a phallic UFO beams an unsuspecting New Yorker (Eric Edwards) up to their ship and transforms him into a sex-drone. Looking the same but speaking in a ridiculous monotone, his mission back on Earth is to infect as many women as possible — from his girlfriend, to the volunteers at a neighborhood sex clinic. But as this alien takeover spreads across the globe (as seen in comical international news-casts), a female sex-doctor has a somewhat drastic method to stop this threat. Never taking itself



seriously, the script is laced with one-liners and just wait until these drones display their true form, mid-coitus (à la the final scene in **THEY LIVE**), or introduce their freaky, bald, body-painted alien queen. Co-stars include Bree Anthony and Tony Richards (who also paired up as Tweedledee and Tweedledum in the X-rated **ALICE IN WONDERLAND**) having spaceship sex; Sarah Nicholson (star of Wes Craven's early porno, **FIREWORKS WOMAN**) as a government agent who's raped on a glass patio table; plus Jamie Gillis heads up a sex-drone dance-orgy... But wait, don't forget about its bonus title! 64 minutes long, but with about 90 seconds of actual plot, **THE DOUBLE D EXPERIMENT** [a.k.a. Dr. Dildo's Experiment] is a meandering, 1970 softcore braincell-destroyer. Allergic to the opposite sex, Aussie-accented Dr. Andre Dildo (Pete Dawson) decides to grow his own woman in a secret laboratory, even if it means abducting lovely ladies in the process. The Doc's friend Ernie (Tommy Toole) uncovers Dildo's quartet of nude, knocked-out test subjects, yet decides to help him create this perfect specimen of feminine pulchritude (complete with bikini tan lines, even though she just evolved from a fetal-looking lump of clay). The 'actors' stumble over their lines; the Doc's lab looks like random shit 'borrowed'