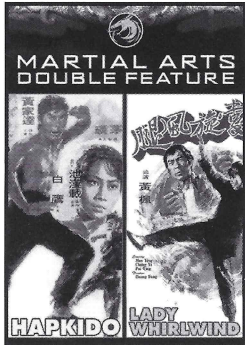


Angela Mao was one of the Deuce's first martial arts starlets and **Shout! Factory** celebrates her chopsocky legacy with a 1972 Golden Harvest double bill, **HAPKIDO** and **LADY WHIRLWIND**. Both directed by Feng Huang, these widescreen period pieces probably won't win over new fans, but they're a blast for anyone suffering from grindhouse nostalgia... **HAPKIDO** (originally released in the US as **LADY KUNG FU**) has a simple premise — righteous martial artists versus nasty ones — swaddled in nationalistic tensions and bursts of kickass combat, with Mao starring as Yu Ying, a

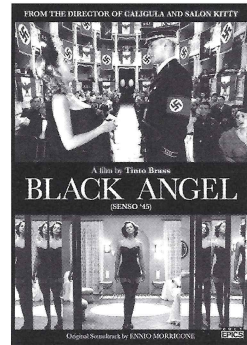


Chinese woman living in 1934 Japan-occupied Seoul. Skilled in the Korean art of Hapkido, she and male colleagues Kao Chang (**BIG TROUBLE IN LITTLE CHINA**'s Carter Wong, in his film debut) and hotheaded young Fan Wei (20-year-old Sammo Hung) are forced to leave their school after a dust-up with evil Japanese oppressors. Resettling in Cangzhou, China, the trio open their own Flying Eagle Hapkido school, only to face the competing Black Bear Dojo. But even as annoyingly-patient Yu Ying urges a peaceful resolution against these bullies, both guys provide the highlights by singlehandedly beating the bejesus out of all enemies. When Yu Ying is *finally* pushed too far and flies into action, she's athletic enough but unconvincing, with Sammo delivering some of the film's most kinetic combat and Hapkido Grandmaster Ing-Sik Whang energizing the big finale... In **LADY WHIRLWIND** (retitled **DEEP THRUST** for US auds), Mao's Tien Li Chun is on a mission to avenge her dead sister, which entails pummeling a gambling den full of thugs in the first reel. Years earlier, Ling Shih Hao (Chang Yi) knocked up her sibling, who then committed suicide, and bad-ass Tien is now in search of this jerk. Mean-while, a local gang (with Sammo Hung popping up as a scarred flunkie) is worried that this nosy dame will figure out that they murdered Shih Hao three years earlier. What nobody realizes is that 'dead' Shih Hao has actually been in hiding all this time, cared for by an obviously-smitten woman, with Mao's one-note character vanishing for large hunks of the film and leaving the fisticuffs to Shih Hao, who begins whittling down this gang. Overstuffed with love, revenge, mistaken identities, and out-of-left-field subplots (like Shih Hao aiding an old Korean man, who rewards him with the secrets of "God Given Tai Chi Palm"), its martial arts too often take a back seat to middling melodrama. The disc includes interviews with Mao, Carter Wong and Sammo Hung.

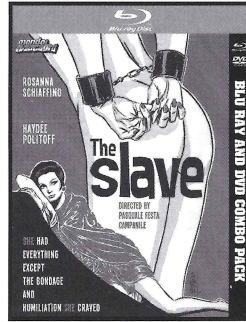
Two lovely ladies indulge in a nonsexual submissive scenario in the 1969 fetish-fest **THE SLAVE** [**Scacco Alla Regina; a.k.a. Check to the Queen**] (**Mondo Macabro**) from director Pasquale Festa Campanile (**THE LIBERTINE**), who had a knack for pushing Italian sexploitation into kinkier directions. Scripted by longtime-Fellini-colaborators Brunello Rondi and Tullio Pinelli (8-1/2, **JULIET OF THE SPIRITS**), it's strange, seductive and stuffed with gorgeously groovy fashions, furnishings and make-up. When her husband goes away on business, lovely young Silvia (Haydée Politoff) looks for a way to stave off the ennui. Far-out fantasies of getting bound, stripped and whipped by costumed extras aren't enough for this alluring waif, so she takes the job of a live-in servant for wealthy actress/model Margaret (Ros-

anna Schiaffino, wife of the film's producer, Alfredo Bini). Her new employer's palatial home is packed with crazy pop art (such as a life-sized mechanical horse!), and Margaret gets off on insulting, embarrassing and demanding total control over her staff, with Silvia becoming her newest target. Some of her "slave" responsibilities are simple, like being used as a foot rest; others are more complex, such as getting covered head-to-toe in white make-up and turned into a living nude statue for a posh cocktail party. All of this looks utterly fabulous, but there's little character depth beyond the central situation, with Margaret acting like an entitled bitch and Silvia remaining a blank slate. Is she slow? Crazy? The thing is, while Margaret enjoys watching people cruelly dehumanized, Silvia *wants* to be treated like an object, so it's difficult to tell who exactly is using who. Meanwhile, fans of more traditional sex-flick fare will savor the copious nudity from its two female leads, who're continually disrobing or bathing. The Blu-ray/DVD set includes an interview with film historian Roberto Curti on Campanile's eclectic career, plus a conversation with Filmbar 70's Justin Harries about Italian genre cinema.

Director Tinto Brass first explored the decadence of WWII Nazis in 1976's **SALON KITTY**, only to return to that backdrop for 2002's opulent **BLACK ANGEL** [**Senso '45**] (**Cult Epics**). Based on Camillo Boito's novella *Senso* (which was first adapted by Luchino Visconti in 1954), Brass shifts its setting from the 1866 war between Italy and the Austrian Empire to 1945, the final year of Venice's Fascist occupation, while adding his own distinctive fetishes to its torrid romance and flushing away all subtlety in the process... As married, middle-aged Livia Mazzoni (Anna Galiena) flees to Venice, in order to be with her much-younger German officer lover, flashbacks take us to their first encounter, when this wealthy

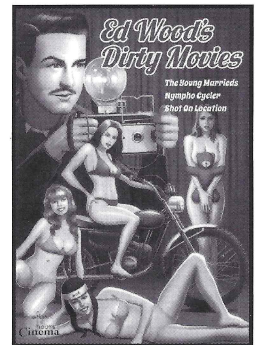


Italian socialite had a spontaneous orgasm at the mere sight of German Film Unit sociopath Lieutenant Helmut Schulz (Gabriel Garko), who's blonde, handsome, has crazy eyes, and takes whatever he desires. She's incapable of keeping her hands off of this Aryan hunk and soon the two are renting a secret apartment for their trysts (paid for by Livia, naturally), visiting a debauched **CABARET-on-Ecstasy** gambling den (complete with nude conga line!) and inflicting a little pain with their pleasure, until the dire events of wartime strip away the lies. The original story may have been tragic, but Brass takes a more garish approach, backed up by hammy performances, hollow dialogue and zero character depth. Blindly-in-love Livia is a manipulated moron, Schulz is a parasitic, cowardly creep, and it's ultimately just an overwrought affair between horrible, self-centered individuals. The film's technical aspects are impeccable though. Awash in sumptuous sets and costumes, it's undoubtedly one of the most ambitious



Naziplotation flicks ever made. You also get the impression that longtime pervert Brass doesn't take *any* of this seriously, because even during the film's most harrowing moments, like an innocent mother gunned down in the street, he's primarily interested in getting an upskirt crotch-shot of the corpse. Ah, some things never change... Extras include a 25-minute behind-the-scenes featurette, promo reel, plus Ennio Morricone's score.

Edward D. Wood, Jr. may have departed the realm of the living back in 1978, but his idiosyncratic cinematic legacy continues to fascinate film "archaeologists" like Dimitrios Otis, who discovered a 16mm print of Wood's 1971, X-rated **THE YOUNG MARRIEDS** amidst the vestiges of a Vancouver adult theatre. This 61-minute portrait of a 'modern' couple is the centerpiece of a disc entitled **ED WOOD'S DIRTY MOVIES (After Hours Cinema)**, and while our **PLAN 9** auteur might've used pseudonyms (director "Richard Trent" and writer "Hank Barnum") for this cheapjack gig, the distinctively over-ripe dialogue, hilarious marital melodrama and high-kitsch production values (you gotta *love* those hideous, bedroom bullfighting paintings!) are quintessential Ed Wood. Frustrated by his square wife Ginny (Patti Kramer), studly Ben (Louis Wolf) is searching for "the ideal woman." He ogles strippers at the long-defunct nightclub *The Losers* on N. La Cienega



Boulevard; offers a mini-skirted hitchhiker a lift in his groovy VW dune buggy and nails her on a blanket in the woods; proudly boasts about his hatred of "fags and queers"; and casually discusses the joys of swinging at his workplace. Ginny isn't quite as uptight as Ben thinks though. Taking dirty photos gets the gal's motor revving and soon she's masturbating on the couch while watching her soaps, with the pair eventually checking out a sparsely-attended suburban orgy, initially-reluctant Ginny unleashing her passions and homophobic Ben getting a humorous comeuppance. The print's image is grainy and often discolored, the hardcore scenes lack any erotic appeal, it sounds like the actors were recorded inside a toilet tank, and most of the cast is distinctively unattractive; yet in the hands of Ed Wood, all of these are miraculously transformed into *positive* attributes!... Next up, the 38-minute **NYPHO-CYCLER** (1971) is a more straightforward, simulated-sex outing, with Wood in front of the camera, frolicking in a hot tub and playing a flamboyant photographer who shares his nubile spouse Misty (Casey Larrain, who'd earlier appeared in Wood's **TAKE IT OUT IN TRADE**) with male colleagues. Tired of this phony marriage, insatiable Misty hops on a motorcycle in her skimpy sun-dress, has a grass-fueled lesbian threesome, screws a passing biker, and eventually partakes in his gang's tedious beach-bonfire-bacchanal. Alas, puffy 'n' scruffy Wood disappears once insufferably-bland Misty embarks on her roadtrip non-venture... The disc also includes director John Donne's **SHOT ON LOCATION** (1972), a tedious, hour-long, (supposedly) satirical glimpse into the randy movie biz that features a gum-smacking, teenage hillbilly (Sandy Dempsey) screwing her way into a producer's latest horse opera, amidst cheating couples, "on location" schtupping and a slapdash orgy, with Rene Bond, Ric Lutze and Eve Orton turning up amongst these showbiz lowlives.