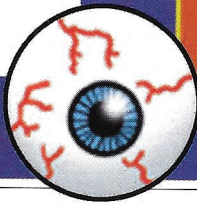
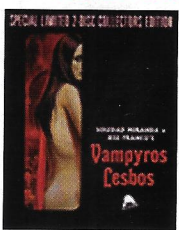


THE WIDE EYE of Dr. Cyclops



Two of Jess Franco's most beloved fever dreams to star the beautiful Soledad Miranda and to be produced by German exploitation king Arthur Brauner have made it to Blu-ray courtesy of one of Franco's most fervent flag-wavers, Severin Films. The results are a gift to the controversial filmmaker's devoted flock. Both **VAMPYROS LESBOS**



and **SHE KILLED IN ECSTASY** come housed in elegant packaging and are packed with bonus materials both

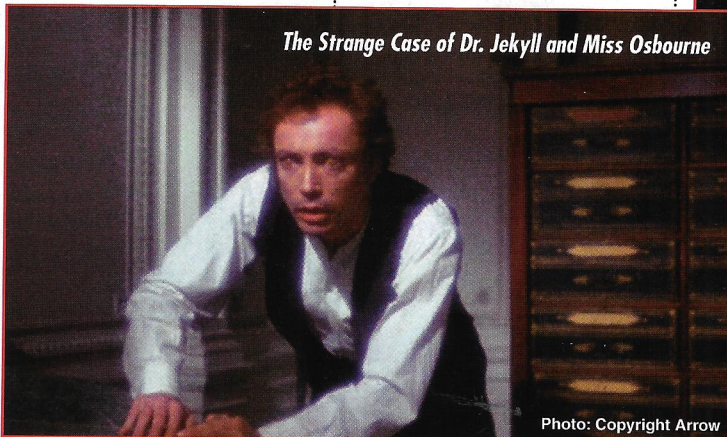
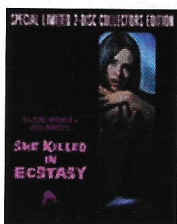
new and ported over from previous releases. And the transfers... *mein Gott!*

Lesbos is Franco's most recognized work, its soundtrack a staple of lounge and house DJs worldwide, and it has never looked lovelier than it does here.

her husband offs himself, goes after the people she believes drove him to it. The actress is just as uninhibited here as she is in *Lesbos*, but the role allows her to give a more layered emotional—as well as physical—performance.

Severin honcho David Gregory spent a great deal of time with Franco in Spain before he passed away and banked plenty of candid interviews, which are dispersed across both releases. With his few teeth, wild eyes and ever-lit cigarette, Franco

was a real character, and it's a joy to watch the somewhat frail auteur recount his memories of making the pictures, and moving to witness his obvious, still-present ache over Miranda's premature death. Also accompanying both movies are interviews with Franco



The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Miss Osbourne

Photo: Copyright Arrow

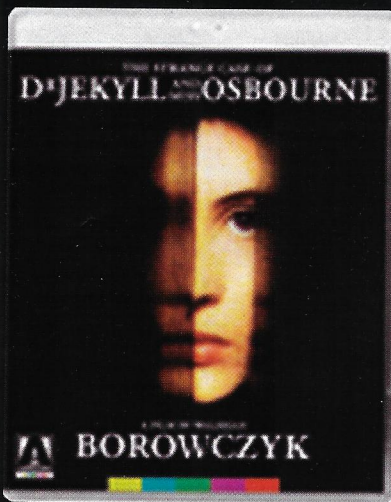
Spinning a female-centric riff on Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, the film is Franco (who directs under one of his many pseudonyms, Franco Manera) at his dreamiest, with Miranda's day-walking vampire countless slinking around the Mediterranean, bedding and sucking the wooden Ewa Stramberg, while Franco's zoom lens fixates on both her body and the lovely beachfront scenery. *Ecstasy* is less hallucinatory and more—for Franco anyway—a conventional thriller, and as such, it's pretty great. Miranda here plays a comely woman who, after

authority Stephen Thrower and Miranda historian Amy Brown. *Ecstasy* has a great bit with veteran Eurohorror actor Paul Muller, while *Lesbos* features the infamous clip wherein Franco swears that Yoda was modeled on his face, and a supplemental disc containing the variant Spanish-language cut of the film under the title *Las Vampiras*. Best of all, *Ecstasy* includes a bonus CD of the killer Hubler/Schwab scores for both flicks as well as another Franco/Miranda joint, *The Devil Came from Akasava*. Groovy.

We're running out of space to gush, so let's just throw an eye-

DISC OF THE MONTH

It's enough that Arrow Video, in one of its first U.S. releases after an impressive UK run, has given Walerian Borowczyk's **THE STRANGE CASE OF DR. JEKYLL AND MISS**



OSBOURNE its long-overdue Stateside disc debut. But the company has also loaded its Blu-ray/DVD combo with a staggering smorgasbord of extras that guide you deeper into Borowczyk's world. The movie makes a fine entry point for those who have yet to experience the director's particular brand of erotic cinema, freely adapting Robert Louis Stevenson's classic tale into an accessible old-dark-house whodunit framework shot through with graphic expressions of Borowczyk's obsessions. Udo Kier is

Jekyll, celebrating his engagement to Fanny Osbourne (a woman drawn not from Stevenson's fiction but his life—Osbourne was his wife) with a party in an opulent mansion; when ghastly sex murders begin, the culprit proves to be Jekyll's alter ego Mr. Hyde (Gérard Zalcberg). Incorporating philosophical discourse, anatomical explicitness and one of the most unique transformations in Hyde-film history, *Strange Case* is a thing of beauty, its colorful, often diffused photography (by Noël Véry) replicated with loving care in Arrow's ravishing 1.66:1 transfer. Both French and English dialogue tracks (go with the more detailed former) are included.

Among the extras, newbies to Borowczyk's oeuvre will want to start with Michael Brooke's appreciation/spoken history of his career, revealing how he transitioned from animation (with films anticipating Terry Gilliam and Jan Svankmajer) to artistically carnal features unfairly lumped in with less ambitious, more salacious pornography. For hardcore (no pun intended) fans, a highlight is an audio commentary consisting of recorded interviews with the director, Véry and others discussing all sides of *Strange Case*, moderated by Daniel Bird, who put the whole impressive package together. A collection of interviews is highlighted by Kier and female lead Marina Pierro thoughtfully discoursing on their collaborations with Borowczyk, with Kier recalling a painful-sounding mishap with his red *Jekyll* contact lenses. Further featurettes and video essays explore Borowczyk's aesthetics and his collaboration with composer Bernard Parmegiani, whose electronic *Strange Case* score is at once anachronistic and oddly fitting, and there's even more to be gleaned from an illustrated booklet containing old and new articles. Once you get started with this exhaustive package (which also sports two short films), it'll be a long time before the *Case* is closed.

CYCLOPS RATING:

—Michael Gingold

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