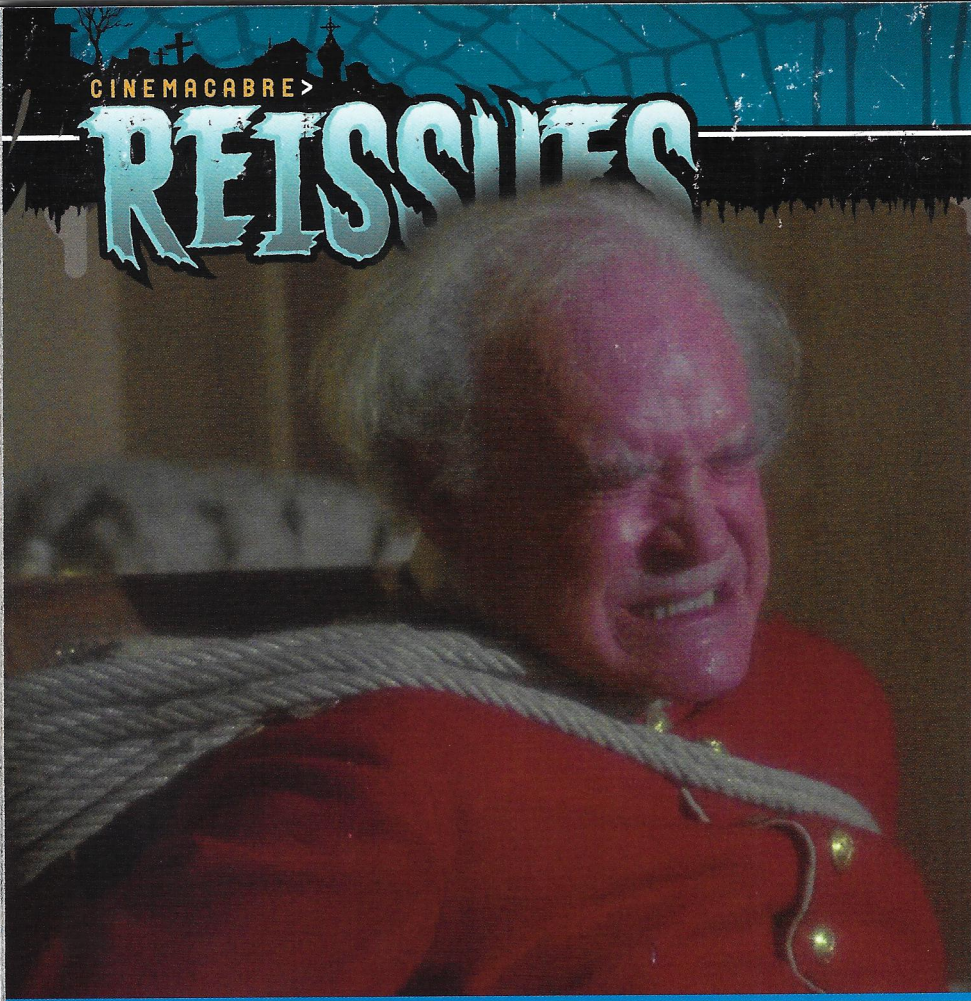


REISSUES



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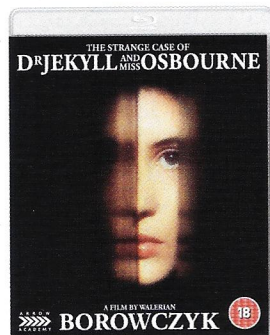
THE STRANGE CASE OF DR. JEKYLL AND MISS OSBOURNE (1981) Blu-ray

Starring Udo Kier, Marina Pierro and Gérard Zalcberg
Written and directed by Walerian Borowczyk
Arrow Films

Udo Kier is best known to classic monster fans for his roles in the Andy Warhol-produced gems *Flesh for Frankenstein* (1973) and *Blood for Dracula* (1974), but he also played Dr. Jekyll. In 1981 he followed in the footsteps of John Barrymore, Fredric March and Spencer Tracy when he took on Robert Louis Stevenson's doomed scientist in Walerian Borowczyk's comic-surrealist slasher, *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Miss Osbourne*.

It's easy to see why both the cult actor and the iconic novella appealed to the Polish director, who also made *The Beast* and *Immoral Tales*, for there's a delightful and ironic perversity in an upper-class Victorian gentlemen giving free reign to his darkest sexual urges.

The film takes place around a party celebrating Jekyll's engagement to Fanny Osbourne (Marina Pierro). When one of his well-



heeled guests informs the Doctor that a child was murdered in the streets outside, it leads to him taking a chemical bath and transforming into Hyde (Gérard Zalcberg). An orgy of rape, torture and savage killing ensues – with Fanny eventually following his lead; soon both are revelling in freedom from civilized society.

While there is tremendous visual poetry in the deliberately flat-looking sets and murky blue-hued cinematography, the silly performances, even sillier sex scenes and Old Dark House plotting edge the movie into camp territory. So, while *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Miss Osbourne* is by no means a great variation on the slasher movie, it is a fascinating one ruled by rabid desire, deranged passion and monstrous bloodlust.

Boasting a stupendous 2K digital restoration scanned from the original camera negative (a project overseen by cinematographer Noël Véry), the region 1 & 2 Arrow disc is crammed with an abundance of excellent bonus material: a commentary track, interview featurettes, short films and accompanying booklet featuring new

writing by Borowczyk expert Daniel Bird.

Another triumph is the electronic score by Bernard Parmegiani. The dissonant soundscapes complement the erotic-horror imagery in a way that should, in theory, be quite jarring. But thanks to Borowczyk's mastery of the medium, it works rather well towards what was always a smutty remit: recreating the atmosphere of a wet dream.

MARTYN CONTERIO

MOVE OVER, HADDONFIELD...

FROM A WHISPER TO A SCREAM (1987) Blu-ray

Starring Vincent Price, Clu Gulager and Terry Kiser
Directed by Jeff Burr
Written by C. Courtney Joyner, Darin Scott and Jeff Burr
Scream Factory

The horror anthology film, which flourished in the 1960s and '70s, was on its deathbed by the late 1980s. One of only a few such flicks to come out during this period was 1987's *From a Whisper to a Scream* (a.k.a. *The Offspring*), now available on Blu-ray from Scream Factory.

In the town of Oldfield, Tennessee, local historian Julian White (Vincent Price) is visited by reporter Beth Chandler (Susan Tyrell), who has witnessed the execution of White's murderous niece, Katherine (Hammer starlet Martine Beswick) in prison earlier that day. White explains that his niece was compelled to kill because of an evil force corrupting Oldfield and its citizens. To prove his theory, White provides

four accounts from Oldfield's history in which the townsfolk become embroiled in murder, torture, necrophilia and more.

In the first tale, bespectacled, mild-mannered Stanley Burnside (Clu Gulager: *Return of the Living Dead*) takes care of his adult sister and dreams of dating his attractive supervisor from work. She reluctantly agrees to go out with him, but his affections turn to murder... and more.

In the next entry, criminal Jesse Hardwick (Terry Kiser) is shot by gangsters and left for dead but is saved by an old recluse. When Hardwick learns the man may be much older than he seems, he sets out to discover the hermit's secret, with horrific results.

The third story has a young woman in love with the handsome glass-and-metal-eating performer from a Depression-era travelling circus. But the young couple's attempt at courtship is halted by the actions of the jealous circus owner, Snakewoman (Rosalind Cash: *The Omega Man*).

In the final tale, a trio of Union soldiers in the American Civil War, led by the ruthless Sgt. Gallen (Cameron Mitchell: *Blood and Black*

