

awakened a horde of flesh-munchers, who stalk the group through the night.

Burial Ground seems to be Bianchi's answer to Fulci's more successful zombie outings, at one point even matching the eyeball-splintering shot from *Zombie Flesh Eaters*. To his credit, he comes close to outdoing Fulci with his outlandish splatter, but cannot match that director's garish baroque, instead going for vague Hammer aspirations with the mansion's lavish interiors. He also tries something a little different with his zombies, who climb walls and use weapons, even working together to assault the mansion's doors with a battering ram.

Bianchi's work often failed to maintain technical competence, but always gave viewers things they'd likely never seen elsewhere. In *Burial Ground*, the young Michael (supposedly around 10 years-old but clearly an adult man) has the monopoly on this. His incestuous longing for his mother (a common theme in Bianchi's films, but never so foregrounded as here) reaches shockingly vivid heights, culminating in an unforgettable moment of discomfiting grue. The special effects occupy that enjoyable space between shoddy and truly gross, but it is less the rubber limbs or crusty zombie makeup that date the film as the casual misogyny, which sees female characters reduced to limp, whimpering wrecks at the first sign of upset.

An enjoyably directionless piece of Euro-splatter, *Burial Ground* is best summed up with a closing quote which appears onscreen. With a spelling error.

Rating: 🧟🧟🧟🧟🧟

SPECIAL FEATURES:

88 Films have given *Burial Ground* a sharp restoration from a 16mm negative, although it's arguable whether the film is one that benefits from it. It's handy then, that they've also included a 'Grindhouse version', taken from the last known 35mm print and bathed in the organic beauty of discolouration and dust.

Further extras are fairly scant, the best being a 26-minute talk from *La Dolce Morte: Vernacular Cinema* and the Italian Giallo Film author Mikel Koven. He takes us through the films of Bianchi, focusing on the 'WTF moments' that categorise the director's work, and puts forward the possibility that maybe, just maybe, Bianchi was not a hack, but a genius satirist. It's a concise and entertaining lesson on the work of one of Italian exploitation's less-known directors, even if Koven himself is awkwardly lit, with the reflection of a window glaring off his glasses.

The commentary track from Giallo expert John Martin and Calum Waddell consists largely of the pair fawning over each others' achievements, but is nevertheless informative and gives a nice bit of context to the bizarre events unfolding onscreen.

We also get nine minutes of deleted scenes without audio, as well as the customary trailer. The package comes with a booklet written by Calum Waddell, in which the noted genre critic builds a strong case for the low end of Italian trash that *Burial Ground* languishes at.

Rating: 🧟🧟🧟🧟🧟

Burial Ground is out now from 88 Films on both DVD and Blu-ray.

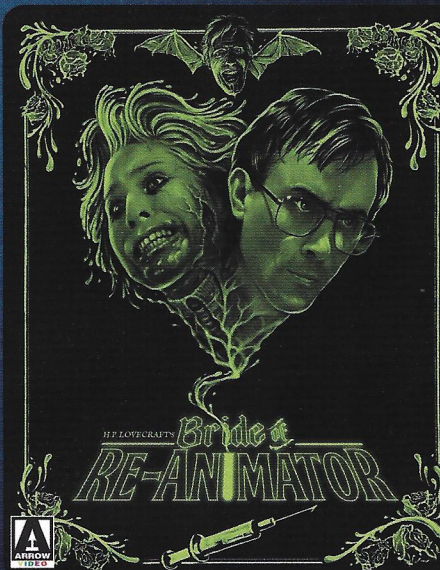
REVIEWED BY KEVAN FARROW



BRIDE OF RE-ANIMATOR

THE FILM:

Bride of Re-Animator - the 1989 sequel to cult horror comedy *Re-Animator* (1985) - is a very messy affair indeed. Not in its storyline or production values which, for this type of schlocky exercise, are surprisingly professional. However, where the film's gory interludes are concerned, director / writer Brian Yuzna and co-writers Rick Fry and Woody Keith seem to have experienced no such aspirational intents.



Following on from the first film, crazed doctors Herbert West and Dan Cain - portrayed again by Jeffrey Combs and Bruce Abbott - try and recreate life by awakening their own home built woman. Along the way they test their reanimation serum on a number of animals and various severed body parts: the results allow for some of the film's most nauseating yet amusing set-pieces - a disturbing spider-like creature composed from several fingers and an eyeball proves particularly arresting.

The similarities between this film and Universal's 1935 classic *Bride of Frankenstein* are obvious, least of which being the rip-off title. However, where other filmmakers may have floundered by attempting to make a reverential homage to James Whale's masterpiece, here Yuzna succeeds by distancing his version from the original through a sheer lack of subtlety and an overload of comic, in-your-face bloodletting. Though by the end it becomes in danger of drowning in a visceral swamp of its own making, the film is saved with the birth scenes of its namesake of which - along with Abbott's Cain in full Byronic attire - Mary Shelley herself would have been proud.

Rating: 🧟🧟🧟🧟🧟

SPECIAL FEATURES:

With their reputation for releasing digitally remastered cult classics on DVD and Blu-ray, it was a virtual given that ARROW VIDEO would resuscitate director Brian Yuzna's *Bride of Re-Animator*, sequel to the seminal splatter-fest *Re-Animator*. As usual with ARROW however, it's the disc's accompanying extras which are just as enticing.

The big attraction - alongside the ubiquitous deleted scenes, original trailer and cast and crew commentaries - are two new featurettes, providing first hand input from filmmakers involved with the production. In 'Brian Yuzna Remembers *Bride of Re-Animator*', the director / producer responsible for dubious schlockers like *Society* (1989), reminisces on how the sequel came about and the challenges faced by the team, not least the film's restricted time schedule. In the other short documentary appropriately entitled 'Splatter Masters: The Special Effects Artists of *Bride of Re-Animator*', a host of FX experts - including FX and make-up maestro Screaming Mad George - describe in gruesome detail the additions to the film for which they were responsible. These short narratives - alongside various other extras, including a limited edition collector's booklet, Unrated and R-rated versions of the film and an archive, making-of featurette entitled 'Getting Ahead in Horror' - make this new release of *Bride of Re-Animator* a classic addition to ARROW's ever growing back catalogue, as well as an essential for the library of any genre fan.

Rating: 🧟🧟🧟🧟🧟

Bride of Re-Animator is out now from Arrow Video in a Dual Format Blu-ray & DVD Limited Edition release.

REVIEWED BY CLEAVER PATTERSON

