

DIGITAL DEBUTS

ARROW VIDEO

(\$59.99 3-Disc Blu-ray + DVD) 4/16

BRIDE OF RE-ANIMATOR (1989)

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D: Brian Yuzna. Jeffrey Combs, Bruce Abbott, Fabiani Udenio, Kathleen Kinmont, David Gale, Mary Sheldon. 96 mins.

Deranged Dr. Herbert West (Combs), the protagonist of H.P. Lovecraft's **Herbert West, Re-Animator**, returns in this hysterically crazed, gross and sometimes scary sequel to 1985's equally insane (but fun) **Re-Animator** (VS #43). Miserably co-dependent lab assistant Dr. Dan Cain (Abbott) is back as well—one has to wonder why Cain doesn't simply walk away from his mad doctor buddy! In this outing, the boys are continuing their experiments in re-animating the dead. They've returned to the USA after working as medics in the middle of a Peruvian civil war, where Cain met gorgeous Francesca (Udenio); these potential lovebirds are reunited in Arkham, Massachusetts, where the experiments get absurdly out of hand yet again. **Re-Animator** fans will no doubt love West and Cain's creepy old house, which borders on an even creepier cemetery. Combs and Abbott are superb actors—will someone please explain to me why Combs isn't an A-list horror star in the Price/Cushing/Lee mold? Both actors have a unique ability to wink at their audience: They play **Bride's** campy dialogue with tongues planted firmly in cheek; they could easily have played those same lines, as written, with a "deadly" seriousness. Also back is the brilliant Gale as the still-disembodied head of Dr. Carl Hill. Seriously, Gale should have gotten an Oscar nomination for his deliriously manic performance. "Are we having fun yet?" he screams as he flies around the lab courtesy of a pair of bat wings attached to his ears by Dr. West. Sheldon fills in for Barbara Crampton, who played Cain's love Meg in the first film—Crampton chose not to appear in what is now a diminished role. Meg is among the re-animated dead, but just because she's a walking, decomposing corpse doesn't stop Cain from embracing her. The crazier the film gets, the more fun it is to watch! Extras include the theatrical trailer, a deleted scene (which is presented as behind-the-scenes footage) and an interview with Yuzna, who, among other things, reveals **Bride's** original concept: West in the basement of the White House re-animating JFK! Now that's a film we'd like to see!

—David-Elijah Nahmod

THE PREMONITION (1976)⌘⌘⌘

D: Robert Schnitzer. Sharon Farrell, Edward Bell, Ellen Barber, Richard Lynch, Chitra Neogy, Danielle Brisebois. 94 mins.

Released from a psychiatric institute after five years, Barber is obsessed with finding the daughter she was forced to give up to adoption. She connects with carnival clown Lynch, whom she met while institutionalized. He has found the child (Brisebois), adopted as an infant by Farrell and Bell. Barber and Lynch plan to kidnap the little girl, but she and Farrell are having psychic flashes of danger. Meanwhile, physicist husband Bell has a new colleague (Neogy) whose field of research is parapsychics, and her specialization in all things psychic will have an important part to play. Given the setup, I thought that I had a fairly good idea where the film was heading. I could not have been more wrong. Once the kidnapping attempt begins, the plot veers off in unexpected, very interesting, and often chilling directions. The mere concept of Richard Lynch as a clown is, of course, decidedly sinister and is played for its disturbing potential here, but not in a flat, cartoonish way. Historian Stephen Thrower, in his excellent introduction on the disc, emphasizes the film's compassion for its characters, and he's absolutely correct. These are all human beings, flawed in various ways, and we understand why they do what they do, even as some of them venture into very dark territory. The special effects are minimal, for the most part rarely going beyond what would have been available to Georges Méliès, but handled with such skill that they're joltingly effective. The same goes for the sound design—director/co-writer Schnitzer doesn't have the budget of **The Exorcist** to work with but demonstrates how effective the right kind of howl from the right actor, cut at just the right moment, can be. **The Premonition** is not without its rough edges, but even they work to enhance its raw, honest, gritty power. Arrow's disc includes a commentary track, interviews with Schnitzer and the late Lynch, and more. This is a nifty slice of thoughtful, low-budget '70s horror, well worth rediscovering.

—David Annandale

COHEN MEDIA

(\$39.98 Blu-ray) 5/16

A MARRIED WOMAN (1964)B&W⌘⌘⌘

D: Jean-Luc Godard. Bernard Noël, Macha Meril, Philippe Leroy, Roger Leenhardt, Rita Maiden. 94 mins.

Director/writer Godard exalts the possibilities of black-and-white cinematography, starkly and artistically posing the perpetually uncommitted but very conventionally married and frequently half-naked Charlotte (Meril) composed or entwined with the restless bodies of her passionate actor/lover Robert (Noël) and more practical, suspicious, humdrum pilot husband Pierre (Leroy), who had recently hired a private detec-



tive to uncover a past affair. Should she stay or should she go? Charlotte can't make up her mind and, as she drifts furtively between the two, Godard, aided by his own omniscient, prodding voice-over, seizes upon the situation and the bedroom to simultaneously explore the boundaries of a then-new, emerging sexual identity for women, revel in a particularly French obsession with philosophical and moral precepts, and, with an endless stream of ordinary activities filmed in what we take for granted now as realistic doc-style, highlight, in a very pioneering way, the suspense in everyday life. The philosophizing envelops the film like a cocoon. Be prepared, as fingers crawl over stomachs, for the parsing of the meaning of memory in general and the horrors of World War II in particular (something of a **Hiroshima, Mon Amour** Lite). In this film, Godard is the undisputed master of disparate action, so we have characters wandering all around Pierre's landed plane with compelling competing, often unconnected conversations as Godard's guest star, the estimable Roger Leenhardt—filmmaker and scholar who helped elevate cinema to an art, and Nouvelle Vague mentor and guru—talks about having recently returned from Auschwitz, while perennially shallow Charlotte, personifying the younger generation, doesn't seem to know or care. Charlotte's maid Madame Celine (Maiden) provides a lot of what was intended to startle as earthy sex talk, while Charlotte's gynecologist mouths a lot of nonsense to her idiotic questions about the influence of the emotion of love and the paternity of her unborn child, which goes a long way in explaining why this film, once so avant-garde, is sometimes eternal, sometimes dated. But the magic look and mood is never out of style and, though his film is in search of an ending, Godard made a gem that immortalizes a seminal era.

—Nancy Naglin