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## DVD Reviews: The *Classic Danish Erotica* Series



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The dare-to-defy-the-norm DVD label known as Smirk has proudly unveiled six classic Danish erotica classics from the Swingin' Seventies starring the late Ole Søltoft. No stranger to appearing in erotica films, Søltoft either stars or co-stars in these six features, sometimes referred to as the “Zodiac Films” and most of which were written and directed by Werner Hedman. While the movies aren't award-winning material on any end of the spectrum, they do make it on my list as some of the most appealing hardcore sex comedy flicks ever made. Yes, I said “hardcore sex.”

I suppose a half-assed explanation is probably due for those of you who are scratching their heads in confusion and who are probably on the verge of crying: okay, so during the '70s, as the world became increasingly more liberated sexually, it wasn't entirely uncommon to see a hardcore act onscreen in a European cinema. Many movies featuring an abundance of softcore lovin' were often fitted with some explicit sex scenes -- it all depended on the region and the audience, I guess. Denmark had the distinction of being a little more liberated than certain other countries, and the “Zodiac Films” are proof.



Yes, these movies *do* show a bit of penetration here and there, although it is *not* as frequent as you would expect to see in a modern adult XXX film. Plus, the scenes are rather “tastefully” done when compared to what we see now. And, oh, just so we're all clear here: technically, these are *not* “XXX” films (much in the same way *In The Realm Of The Senses*, *I Am Curious (Yellow)*, or *Thriller: A Cruel Picture* are not “XXX” films), but rather *Classic Danish Erotica* that happen to feature a little of the real thing. For the most part, these films are just silly softcore fun.



But let's move on, shall we? The first entry in the series, *In The Sign Of The Virgin* (1973), is also the only film not written/directed by Hedman and

is instead helmed by Finn Karlsson. The story here will have every lad and lassie with a schoolgirl fetish going nuts. A private boarding school full of young nubile women (including Anne Bie Warburg) is on the brink of disaster. The school's Board of Directors have just discovered that the planet Venus is aligned to the point that all of the girls will be randy to the nth degree. In order to keep the ladies in line, they send Professor Armand (Ole Søltoft) to give them all a good dose of medicine that will suppress any and all erotic urges. Too bad for Armand that he accidentally switches briefcases with Professor Bomwitz (Bent Warburg), who has just developed the world's most powerful aphrodisiac. Doh!

Next up is Hedman's *In The Sign Of The Taurus* (1974). Set in the Roaring 20s, *Taurus* tells the tale of a small community where all of the younger men and women are virgins and completely oblivious to even the thought of sex. The lives of the locals have been very prosperous over the years thanks to the contributions of a wealthy old (if eccentric) Count. When the Count suddenly passes away from a heart attack (while watching the naked ladies at the beach through his binoculars), the town elders are gratified to learn that the whole community will inherit everything. They are mortified, however, to learn that the Count's will specifies that first, a baby must be born in the community out of wedlock exactly 9 months and 14 days from his passing. Unable to break their own set of Christian morals, the city council decides to ask the town's resident Madame (Lone Helmer) to carry the child -- but when word leaks out to the younger generation, they figure it is time to find out what this whole "sex" thing is all about.



The sensuous fun continues in *In The Sign Of The Gemini* (1975), wherein a young attractive playboy record producer (Ole again) competes with his older and more refined rival (Preben Mahrt) to win over a singing sensation; and *In The Sign Of The Lion* (1976), the story of two aging sisters who relate how they used their own saucy family history to write an erotic novel.

While *Gemini* is played purely for laughs (one "sex" scene is shown sped up à la an old nickelodeon machine), *Lion* takes its story (and its sex) a bit more seriously.

The collection concludes with two spy spoofs: *Agent 69 Jensen: In The Sign Of The Scorpio* (1977) and *Agent 69 Jensen: In The Sign Of The Sagittarius* (1978). The first one sets the stage for some tongue-in-cheek slapstick humor and delivers. The second title practically repeats the formula, but not quite as successfully. In both films, the titular hero is played by Ole Søltoft. Fans of *The Sinful Dwarf* (I shutter at the very thought of there actually being fans of that film, incidentally) will be delighted to know that the diminutive lead from that film, Torben Bille, is featured in both of the *Jensen* films as a henchman (he even gets to do kung-fu and drives his own mini-car!). As a side note, the two *Jensen* films are also available together in a double-disc pack.

All in all, these classic Danish pastries are quite fun. The films are meant for adult audiences who are in the mood for a few light laughs and don't mind seeing some flesh.

A few of the movies' more explicit sex scenes are actually done by the actors themselves, but it is pretty obvious at times that some of the dirty deeds are being performed by stand-ins. Either way, these moments are weaved into the "regular" film quite admirably, and never take away any of the "magic."

I was pleasantly surprised at the presentations here and Smirk has done a wonderful job in presenting these features. Each movie looks positively stunning and is presented in an anamorphic widescreen ratio of 1.78:1. Accompanying the films are the original Danish Stereo soundtracks (which also come through surprisingly well) and optional English subtitles just in case you're wondering what the hell those darn Danes are saying.



The only special features found on these releases consist of an image gallery on each DVD. Most of the time, it seems that the images were taken directly from the disc's respective feature presentation and the galleries are set to music from the film in question.



With their whimsical premises, detailed costumes and sets, and a flair for just having fun in general, these movies are a blast from the naughty nostalgic past. And, whether our onscreen characters are having an underwater orgy set to Burt Bacharach's "What The World Needs Now Is Love" or chasing each other around in a very Benny Hill style way, Smirk's collection of *Classic Danish Erotica* Series delivers. And remember: it's not porn, but rather freelovin' fun.