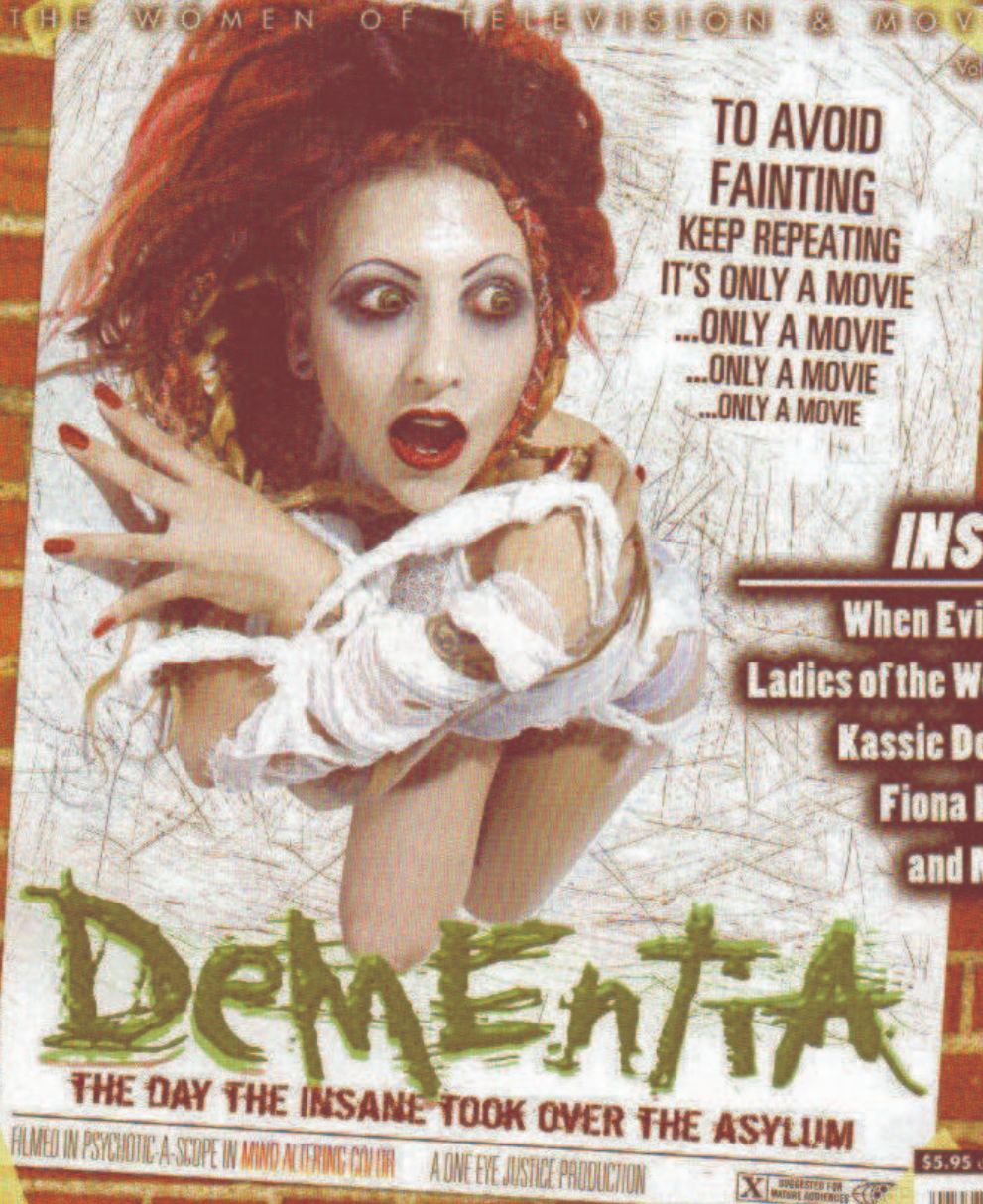


Sirens of Cinema

THE WOMEN OF TELEVISION & MOVIES

Vol. 2 No. 6



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FIONA HORSEY: BEAUTIFULLY LOVESICK & TWISTED

BY JASON PANKOKE

In simpler times, the best horror filmmakers got under our skin through a deft balance of credible situations, strong performances, well-crafted technique, tense pacing, and the most sinister twists just waiting to manhandle an audience's nerves once released from behind masks, walls, and elaborate *façade*.

Amidst the current flood of flashy production value, grueling gore effects, sledgehammer plot points, and improbable CGI beasts, there exists a breed of modern genre director still interested in that leaner, more tactile approach, especially when postulating the extremes to which a dangerous mind can go and reasonably dramatizing its cause and effect.

A current entry in this subgenre is *Twisted Sisters* (2005), a British/German co-production released in America over

the summer by MHI Home Video, which plays out in the neon streets of contemporary London and the quaint English countryside. Sweetly engaging Jennifer (Fiona Horsey) is a Greenpeace campaign designer. Her beau, Alan (Andrew Southern), is on the cusp of graduating medical school. Things seem perfect. Until Jennifer finds herself accused of multiple murders enacted by an apparent doppelgänger. Jennifer's parents soon admit that she is adopted, while the authorities confirm that a sexually-abused twin sister, Norah (Horsey again), has recently left asylum care, foreshadowing a vengeance-laced pursuit by the psychotic sibling that can only culminate in bloody tragedy.

"My mom's a twin, and I've always loved seeing the difference between my mom and her sister," says Horsey, who is English by birth and has lived in several

countries such as Mexico and Colombia, where she currently resides and acts in a *telenovela* called *Padres y Hijos*. "I thought [upon accepting the roles], 'My god ... it's going to be difficult. Are people going to see the difference, believe the difference? I liked with Jennifer [playing on] the confusion that someone must feel when their whole life is turned upside down,' while Norah offered her a blank slate upon which to create because 'she was so crazy that there was no limit to what she could do!'"

The freedom to explore the twins' desires and conflict flows from her working relationship with *Twisted Sisters* director/writer Wolfgang Büld, a veteran of German television who has recently moved to England and branched off into edgier endeavors with his company, Dark Black Films. "I think that he's just totally

at ease with everyone and he makes everyone feel free to do what they want. He's a director that lets the actors direct," notes Horsey. In fact, Bild's initial independent foray, the sex and drugs melodrama *Deep Out* (1998), is often credited as being directed by that film's lead actress, Beatrice Marowski, of Jorg Buttgereit's infamous *Nekromantik* twosome.



"I also think he believes in me and we have a very special relationship ... we just get on very well," continues Horsey, who is set to act in, write songs for, and co-produce Bild's upcoming dark thriller *Naked Sin*, which will roll in England and Romania early next year. "The trust has to be complete in the clarity of what we are going to do," she says. "Otherwise, there can be so many misunderstandings and we can miss the humor," which makes its presence known throughout *Twisted Sisters* from a character's unexpected double-take to the lurid "anal firecracker" scene, which is almost too grotesque a visual joke to bother describing with mere words.


"...man-eating vagina, Siamese twins, and it all ends up seaside with a happy ending, somehow. Darkly happy, of course."

—FIONA HORSEY

Yet, *Twisted Sisters* might also rate as a relatively commonplace horror yarn when compared to the prior Horsey/Bild collaborations with which it forms a loose trilogy. *Lovesick Sick Love* (2004) is a fatalistic love-triangle story set in a hotel on the English seaside where the manager, Michael (played by Paul Conway, *Twisted Sisters*' leering Detective Caffrey), gains and loses the attentions of chambermaid Julia (Horsey), whose true love extends to cocaine-addled Istvan (William Rowsey). Before long, Michael manages to lock away Julia in a chamber beneath the hotel, submitting her to S&M-type punishments before the woman scorned gets even. "The plot is based mainly around [Michael's] pathological fears of sex and women," explains Horsey. "It ends up that he kills my boyfriend, he tries to kill me, but I end up burning him — basically sending him to hell."

Even more bizarre-sounding is *Penetration Angst* (2003), which MTF releases as *Aggs!* this month in the United States. "I mean, it's hard to explain. It's sort of parallel stories," admits Horsey of a dichotomy more akin to the underground leanings of New York's former Cinema of Transgression movement. "It's pathological fear of sex again ... basically, when [my character Helen] is forced to have sex, she will swallow up the men by her vagina and she [otherwise] tries to have a normal life. I don't want to give too much away, but ... man-eating vagina, Siamese twins, and it all ends up seaside with a happy ending, somehow. Darkly happy, of course."

The mere discussion of how Helen deals with her lovers and rapists invokes memories of the actress' initial involvement with her director. "It was just this very informal casting [in England] for an independent film. I knew little about it, and as my intuition said, 'Yeah, this guy, he's kind of weird and wacky and could scare people, but I have a good feeling about him. The story sounded pretty mad, but you know, I'm quite into strange stories and the macabre,'" recalls Horsey, who eventually chose with Bild's guidance to play her role "innocently ... because I can't imagine how else it would have been done without the kind of special effects to make it weird and freaky. But, for some reason, it worked."

The same might be said of her career so far, beginning with touring stage companies and television roles in England and a handful of highly intense film shorts. Despite her willful move to Bogotá, Colombia, to live with her mother's extended family, return trips to England and America are not out of the question, especially if it comes down to accepting interesting film work. With her sleek Diana Rigg poise and a budding adventurousness akin to Chloe Sevigny or Jennifer Jason Leigh, one hopes that our lady Fiona Horsey will catch the eyes of creative producers and subsequently build a distinctive body of work in due time. 

For more information on the trilogy, visit www.darkblackfilms.com.