

## Blu-Ray Review: '2012' Turns Global Destruction Into Crowd-Pleasing Cheese

Submitted by [mattmovieman](#) [1] on March 3, 2010 - 11:23am

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CHICAGO – Roland Emmerich is a filmmaker in the classic tradition of B-movie auteurs who shamelessly exploited modern paranoia for the sake of getting butts in the seats. His global warming thriller, "The Day After Tomorrow," had a sequence where characters were literally being chased by the cold. In "2012," the protagonists are being chased by armageddon, and they're always one step ahead.

It's easy to forget just how frightening "2012"'s early marketing campaign was. The first teaser trailer was a clever homage to Kubrick's trailer for "The Shining," with its eerie juxtapositions and use of towering liquid as a symbol for approaching doom. It ended by urging audiences to "Find Out The Truth" by Google searching 2012, thus inspiring gullible viewers to freak out over ancient Mayan doomsday prophecies. Yet while the trailer utilized Wendy Carlos and Rachel Elkind's hypnotically malevolent music, the actual film concludes with an Adam Lambert song. It's a tongue-in-cheek punch-line to a tastelessly alarming set-up.



Blu-Ray Rating: **3.0/5.0**

If Emmerich had chosen to make this picture instead of "Independence Day" back in the late 90s, the title would've been "Y2K." "2012" is easily Emmerich's most entertaining effort since his "man versus alien" adventure, and that's largely because they follow the same basic structure. Both films run about two-and-a-half hours, the first of which is devoted to a Spielbergian building of dread and an eventual race from destruction. The second hour is mostly tearful goodbyes and reunions, leading to a final act of feel-good fist-pumping. Yet while "ID4" coasted on the charisma of its two vibrant leads, Will Smith and Jeff Goldblum, "2012" aims for a bigger dramatic punch, eliciting subtler work from stars John Cusack (whose dry detachment fits the thin material like a charm) and Chiwetel Ejiofor (exuding Sidney Poitier-like honor). Yet the inherent silliness of the subject matter diffuses any possible dramatic momentum. Emmerich still thinks the life of a dog is worth more than countless human extras.

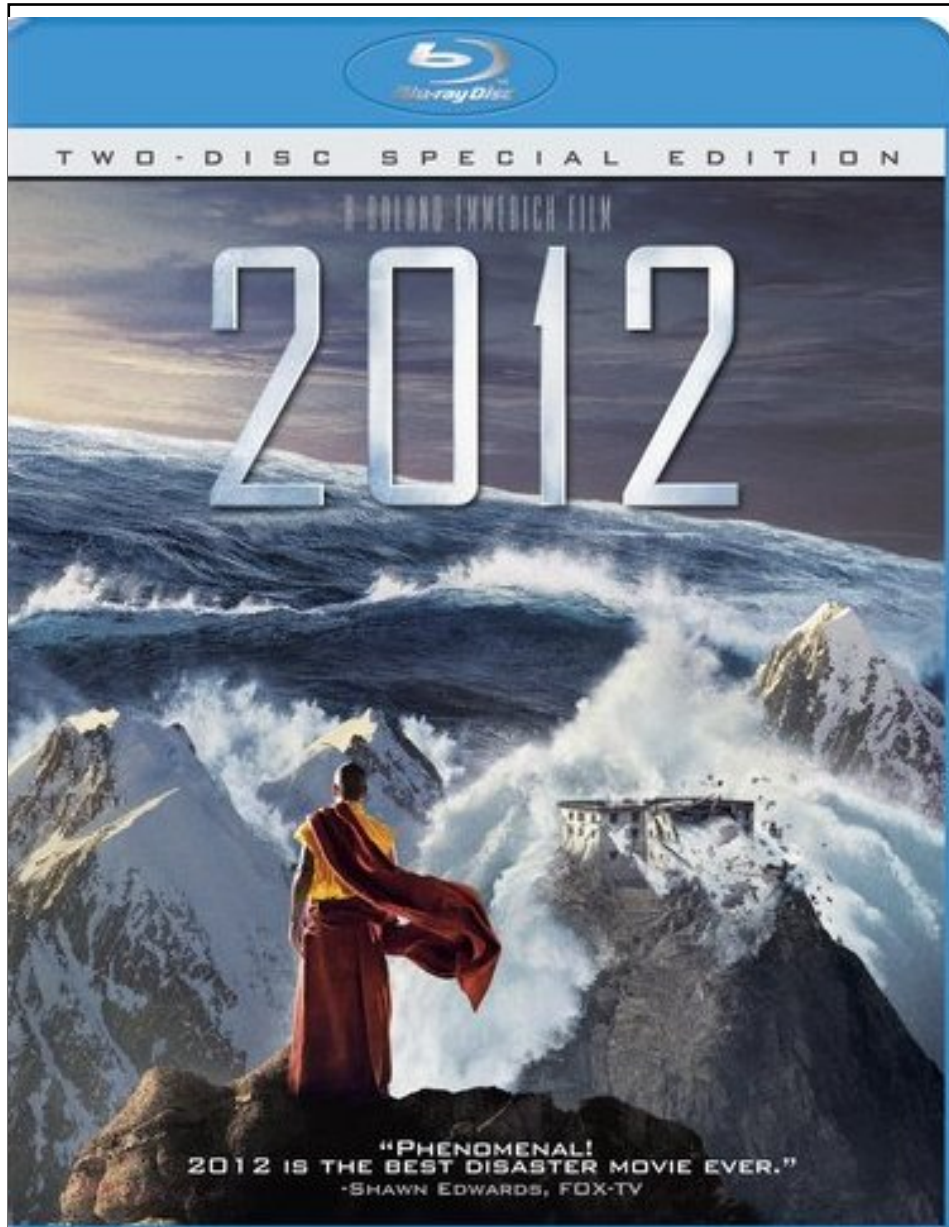


John Cusack stars in Roland Emmerich's 2012.

*Photo credit: Sony Pictures Home Entertainment*

There are times when the film verges on a parody of thrillers like "The Birds," where environmental disasters are meant to mirror the characters' inner lives. An earthquake splits the ground between two lovers immediately after one of them says, "It feels like something is pulling us apart." Following Charles Hapgood's theory of Earth Crust Displacement, the script schedules mankind's destruction on the Mayan's predicted date of December 21st, 2012, and once the sky comes crashing down, the effects are admittedly jaw-dropping. The best

set-piece is the first, with Cusack and other assorted heroes barreling through a crumbling LA. It's truly staggering to witness the depth and detail of the computer-generated carnage on Blu-Ray, though it's a shame that the story is so shallow.



2012 was released on Blu-Ray and DVD on March 2nd, 2010.

Photo credit: Sony Pictures Home Entertainment

"2012" is presented in 1080p High Definition (with a 2.40:1 aspect ratio) and accompanied by English and French audio tracks. Moviegoers looking for full-screen access to behind-the-scenes footage are well-advised to purchase the film's two-disc Blu-Ray edition, since the single-disc edition confines its most interesting stuff to a lame "Picture-in-Picture" commentary. It allows snippets of interviews and effects breakdowns to play alongside the film on a tiny screen that is far from sufficient.

Emmerich reveals that his original idea for the film didn't center on 2012 at all, yet after some online research, he decided that the Mayan prophecy would be a perfect fit. In his audio commentary with co-writer Harald Kloser, he also admits that after the 2008 Iowa caucus, he switched the gender and race of his US president. In light of Obama's win, Emmerich quips, "Let's hope our other prediction isn't as accurate." The filmmakers' liberal-leaning is also apparent in their name for Oliver Platt's villain, "Carl Anheuser," which Emmerich says is meant to evoke Anheuser-Busch, and "a presidential advisor that we don't like." Such self-congratulatory winks at the audience are a staple of Emmerich's films (the inept Mayor Ebert and his assistant Siskel in "Godzilla" come to mind).

The only other extra offered by the BD-Live enabled single-disc edition is a "movieIQ" track and an even more ludicrous alternate ending. The two-disc edition includes making-of featurettes, deleted scenes, an Interactive Mayan Calendar and an Adam Lambert music video. On second thought, stick with the single-disc edition.

*'2012' is released by Sony Pictures Home Entertainment and stars John Cusack, Chiwetel Ejiofor, Oliver Platt, Amanda Peet, Thandie Newton, Tom McCarthy, Liam James, Morgan Lily, Woody Harrelson and Danny Glover. It was written by Roland Emmerich & Harald Kloser and directed by Roland Emmerich. It was released on March 2nd, 2010. It is rated PG-13.*



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