

Blu-Ray Review: Glorious 'Nine' With Penelope Cruz, Marion Cotillard

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on May 3, 2010 - 1:36pm

- [Blu-ray Review](#) [2]
- [Brian Tallerico](#) [3]
- [Daniel Day-Lewis](#) [4]
- [Fergie](#) [5]
- [HollywoodChicago.com Content](#) [6]
- [Judi Dench](#) [7]
- [Kate Hudson](#) [8]
- [Marion Cotillard](#) [9]
- [Nicole Kidman](#) [10]
- [Nine](#) [11]
- [Penelope Cruz](#) [12]
- [Rob Marshall](#) [13]
- [Sophia Loren](#) [14]
- [Theater, TV, DVD & Blu-Ray](#) [15]

CHICAGO – History will be kind to “Nine”. Due to wildly extreme expectations caused by the pedigree of the film’s cast, many critics and audiences dismissed Rob Marshall’s musical on its release in late 2009. “Nine” falls short of perfection but the Blu-ray release proves that it gets a lot closer than most people thought the first time they saw it.



Blu-Ray Rating: **4.0/5.0**

It may be my affinity for musicals, Italian cinema, and most of the cast members of “Nine,” but this film is immensely rewatchable, which will always be one of the first questions one should ask when considering buying a Blu-ray: Will I watch it more than once? I know I will watch “Nine” more than once, if just for the spectacular supporting performances by Marion Cotillard and Penelope Cruz, the latter of which was nominated for an Oscar and the former of which should have been.



Nine will be released on Blu-Ray and DVD on May 4th, 2010.

Photo credit: Sony Pictures Home Video

Inspired by Federico Fellini’s “8 1/2,” “Nine” tells the story of a creative crisis by filmmaker Guido Contini (Daniel Day-Lewis), a man who is

expected to star working on his next masterpiece but has been crippled by a mental block. Guido begins a musical journey through the female muses of his life including most of the primary representations of the women who make up a powerful man - the wife (Marion Cotillard), the mistress (Penelope Cruz), the muse (Nicole Kidman), the mother (Sophia Loren), the friend (Judi Dench), the lover (Kate Hudson), and the women who taught him about sexuality (Fergie).



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Photo credit: Sony Pictures Home Video

Guido is more of a self-aware neurotic than a confident lothario and Day-Lewis perfectly plays him as a man who is almost too aware that he's nothing without the muses that have inspired him over the years. He retreats to both the beauty of the seaside and the beauty of the women who have made him a superstar to find himself.

First, he contacts the uber-sexy Maria (Cruz), introduced in the sexiest musical number in years to "A Call From the Vatican". From here, Marshall juggles two films – the story of a director trying to find creative spark and a series of musical numbers with rotating female stars, most of which seem to take place in his head.

Dench steps forward for "Folies Bergeres," a bit about the blend of sex and creativity. Fergie rocks "Be Italian," a flashback piece to the woman who first taught Guido about sexuality. A journalist (Kate Hudson) who wants to sleep with Guido takes on "Cinema Italiano". Sophia Loren takes on the maternal "Guarda la luna" and Nicole Kidman tackles "Unusual Way". Finally, Marion Cotillard steals the film with two emotionally resonant numbers – "My Husband Makes Movies" and "Take It All," both of which make clear what being a disposable muse has done to the women in Guido's life.

The most controversial element of "Nine" was Marshall's decision to shoot most of the musical numbers on the stage set at Cinecitta. It seemed to break the film for many critics. Not this one. It works for a film about a director looking for inspiration to fantasize musical numbers within the studio where he hopes to find it.

The only significant problem I have with "Nine" is the lack of impact by two of the supporting actresses - Nicole Kidman and Kate Hudson. Nicole doesn't work in the role of a muse, failing to put a real stamp on the role like Cotillard or Cruz, and Hudson's "Cinema Italiano" is the least effective number in the piece.



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Photo credit: Sony Pictures Home Video

"Nine" may not be the most complete musical of the last decade, but this is a genre where missed notes are easily forgiven. We walk out of musicals humming a tune, not lamenting a dance step that was a bit off. Audiences will be humming to "Nine" for years.

It's easier to admire the film's technical brilliance with Sony's excellent 1080p HD picture. Whatever complaints one may have about the film itself, it looks amazing and it's the kind of film that truly benefits from the next-gen format. The audio mix in English 5.1 DTS Master Audio is also above average.

The special features on "Nine" are good but, once again, annoyingly organized. There needs to be a law passed against featurettes that run less than five minutes long and don't have a "Play All" option. Mini-featurettes don't encourage viewers to learn more about a movie. They encourage them not to put down the remote. Having said that, the features are good. I just wish they had been organized into one longer documentary about the making of the film.

Special features:

- o Commentary With Director Rob Marshall And Producer John DeLuca
- o 8 Featurettes
- o 3 Music Videos
- o Sophia Loren Remembers Cinecitta Studios Featurette
- o Screen Actors Guild Q&A Session With The Cast
- o MovieIQ

'Nine' is released by Sony Pictures Home Video and stars Daniel Day-Lewis, Marion Cotillard, Penelope Cruz, Nicole Kidman, Fergie, Sophia Loren, Kate Hudson, and Judi Dench. It was written by Michael Tolkin & Anthony Minghella and directed by Rob Marshall. The Blu-Ray and DVD will be released on May 4th, 2010. It is rated PG-13.



[16]

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