Blu-Ray Review: Ambitious, Remarkable Third Season of ‘Fringe’

Submitted by BrianTT [1] on September 15, 2011 - 8:58pm

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CHICAGO – There are very few programs as ambitious or refined as “Fringe.” Low ratings have proven that it’s not a show for everyone and I’ll admit to dipping in and out of it myself over the first two seasons, but I was struck by the confidence on display in season three, recently released on Blu-ray and DVD. In many ways, this program is redefining what it takes to stay on network television with low ratings but impressive numbers in other arenas. Check it out and see why.



Blu-Ray Rating: **4.5/5.0**

“*Real is just a matter of perception.*” The third season of “Fringe” was a daring experiment in storytelling as the writers crafted two intersecting arcs with their own sets of rules, history, and characters, and alternated them with each episode. One episode in our universe. One episode in an alternate universe. Trying to explain exactly how we ended up with these universes, which characters belonged to each, and how they were related to one another would take a thesis and it still wouldn’t do the story justice. One of the reasons I like “Fringe” is that the writers use the structure of television in unique ways, recognizing its strengths instead of just trying to make mini-movies. The third season of “Fringe” plays with both the episodic nature of a series like “The X-Files” and has an incredibly-complex mythology not unlike “LOST.”



Fringe was released on Blu-ray and DVD on September 6th, 2011
Photo credit: Warner Bros.

Sometimes too complex. While I adore the ambition of “Fringe,” some of the episodes are a bit heavy on the exposition and a bit light on the subtlety. I wish the show was allowed to breathe every once in awhile and not always be so focused on explaining/advancing the mythology. The actors are certainly up to the challenge of deeper characterizations, especially John Noble, who was absolutely deserving of an Emmy nomination. Maybe next year.



Fringe was released on Blu-ray and DVD on September 6th, 2011
Photo credit: Warner Bros.

And that’s perhaps the most amazing thing about “Fringe” — that there is a NEXT year. “Fringe” was renewed by FOX right after it hit series-low ratings, but the show is redefining what can be called a hit. Kudos to FOX for looking at the big picture, including DVR, iTunes, Blu-ray, and other delivery options for television. It’s a brave new world for TV in which traditional ratings don’t mean nearly as much as they used to. “Fringe” could be the example for the future — a Friday night series that hardly anyone watches in its initial airings but can still be called a hit. I hope it’s on for years to come.

One of the reasons for that hope is the very-impressive Blu-ray releases from Warner Bros. Not only is this easily one of the best HD transfers for a TV Blu-ray this year but the release is packed with special features. “Fringe” has loyal, devoted fans — the kind of people who buy Blu-rays. A show like “Two and a Half Men” may have significantly higher traditional ratings but “Fringe” fans are the type more likely to dive deep into their favorite series on Blu-ray. It’s fantastic to see that kind of devotion rewarded with a release like “Fringe: The Complete Third Season,” one of the best TV on Blu-ray releases of 2011.

Synopsis:
Immerse yourself into the dual universes in mind-blowing hi-def! The mystery of the universes deepens in the critically acclaimed 22-episode third season of television’s most exciting sci-fi. The Fringe team escapes from the parallel universe - except for Olivia, trapped in the other world and replaced in ours by her double, who turns Peter and Olivia’s tentative relationship into a love affair. Then Olivia returns, bonds of trust fray, ever more bizarre and terrifying phenomena occur and secrets that stretch back to 1985 threaten to destroy our universe. Or theirs. “Fringe continues its hot streak known as Season 3. It’s been firing on all cylinders all season.” (Andrew Hanson, LATimes.com).

Special Features:
o Glimmer To The Other Side - Experience Os Episode in Maximum Episode Mode with Pop-Up Commentaries and Featurettes
o Duality Of Worlds: Four Featurettes Exploring The Other You, A Machine Of Destiny, The Psychology Of Duality and Visualizing An Alternate World
o Animating the Lysergic Acid Diethylamide Episode
o Constructing An Extra-Sensory Soundscape
o Commentary on 2 Episodes
o Secrets Of Fringe: The First People
o Network Promos

“Fringe: The Complete Third Season” stars Anna Torv, Joshua Jackson, Lance Reddick, Blair Brown, and John Noble. It was released on Blu-ray and DVD on September 6th, 2011.

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