

## Blu-Ray Review: Stellar Release For Best Summer Superhero Movie ‘X-Men: First Class’

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on September 17, 2011 - 1:33pm

- [Blu-ray Review](#) [2]
- [Brian Tallerico](#) [3]
- [HollywoodChicago.com Content](#) [4]
- [James McAvoy](#) [5]
- [January Jones](#) [6]
- [Jason Flemyng](#) [7]
- [Jennifer Lawrence](#) [8]
- [Kevin Bacon](#) [9]
- [Matthew Vaughn](#) [10]
- [Michael Fassbender](#) [11]
- [Nicholas Hoult](#) [12]
- [Oliver Platt](#) [13]
- [Rose Byrne](#) [14]
- [X-Men: First Class](#) [15]
- [Zoe Kravitz](#) [16]
- [Theater, TV, DVD & Blu-Ray](#) [17]

CHICAGO – In many ways, “X-Men: First Class” is the most loyal film yet to the Marvel aesthetic in the way director Matthew Vaughn and the film’s multiple screenwriters capture the tone, spirit, and themes of one of the most legendary comic books of all time. It is a spectacular mix of great performances, well-choreographed action, and cleverly-revised history. It is crowd-pleasing to action fans and yet intellectually complex at the same time. It is what more producers of superhero movies should strive to accomplish and it deserves mention with the best of the genre (“Spider-Man 2,” “X-Men,” and even “The Dark Knight”).



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

What Vaughn has done with “X-Men: First Class” is not unlike what Christopher Nolan did with “Batman Begins” in that the director of the Christian Bale film was tasked with righting the ship after two awful films — debate the worse double feature in “Batman Forever” & “Batman & Robin” or “X-Men: The Last Stand” & “X-Men Origins: Wolverine”. And just as Nolan did with his two Batman films, Vaughn refuses to talk down to his viewers, playing to both hardcore Marvel fans and newbies with the same level of thematic intelligence while never forgetting that providing solid, escapist entertainment is his primary objective.

In many ways, the first act of “X-Men: First Class” is its greatest accomplishment as few films have more expertly detailed the creation of a hero (Professor X) and a villain (Magneto). It will be many years before these two iconic characters fully take on those roles, but Vaughn and his team plant the seeds in the first hour of “First Class” as Charles Xavier (James McAvoy) develops tolerance and Eril Lehnsherr (Michael Fassbender) is forever damaged by the opposite of it. Charles uses his own mutation, mental telepathy, as a parlor trick to meet girls but strives to keep the fact that he’s a mutant secret while also protecting his friend Raven/Mystique (Jennifer Lawrence). Erik is tortured in a concentration camp after revealing his ability in a brilliant parallel to the opening scene of Singer’s first film and battles the demons created by it as he is asked to take pity on those who have shown him none.



X-Men: First Class

*Photo credit: Fox*

The man who tortures Erik becomes the villain of the piece, Sebastian Shaw (Kevin Bacon), who we meet again years later as he has developed powers of his own and is trying to start World War III by using the U.S. and Russia against each other in a manipulation of the Cuban Missile Crisis. Shaw and his team (including January Jones as Emma Frost and Jason Flemyng as Azazel) can only be stopped after Charles, Raven, Erik, and Dr. Hank McCoy (Nicholas Hoult) find others like them, including a girl named Angel (Zoe Kravitz), and the young men who would later be known as Banshee (Caleb Landry Jones), Darwin (Edi Gathegi), and Havok (Lucas Till).

I really liked "X-Men: First Class" in theaters and think it plays even better on second viewing in HD. Matthew Vaughn has created what should be a template for prequels — taking characters we know and love and offering new insight into their past while also working as a standalone film. It's not just true to the spirit, tone, and message of the comic book source material, it expands it and builds on it. At its core, this is a story about two men developing different ideologies about their role within the human race. Do you hide your differences? Do you use them to your advantage? Do you try to change them? Do you embrace them? These are themes played with throughout the history of the comic book given new life in Vaughn's film/



X-Men: First Class was released on Blu-ray and DVD on September 9th,

2011

Photo credit: Fox

It helps to have one of the most talented ensembles in the history of the superhero genre. Fassbender gives the best performance in the history of Marvel movies, perfectly capturing a man tortured by his past, seeking revenge, and finding his path to pure evil. Fassbender is simply great here. To be fair, McAvoy is good, as is Lawrence, but they don't get the arc that Michael does. As for the young cast, they're quite good without being showy. The cast for "X-Men: First Class" is huge, with dozens of speaking roles (we didn't even mention Rose Byrne, Michael Ironside, or Oliver Platt) but they all feel right. Credit should go to Matthew Vaughn and his producers for assembling such a strong team.

And it turns out, as revealed by the deleted scenes on the excellent Blu-ray release, that one member of the supporting team once had more of a major role as the lovely Byrne is featured in a few scenes that I wish had been kept in the movie. In fact, most of the deleted scenes are of value, and one hopes that the rumors of a longer director's cut eventually being released are true. "X-Men: First Class" was a long movie but it feels like it could have been even richer and deeper. I thought the film sagged a bit on first viewing. Now I'd be fine with it being an hour longer. That's the sign of a work that improves on repeat viewing.

The deleted scenes are only one of the stellar special features on one of the most comprehensive Blu-rays of the year (it should be noted that the HD picture could have been better...some of the darker scenes feature more muted colors than they should...but that's expected from Fox, a company who just doesn't transfer as smoothly as WB or Universal). With behind-the-scenes featurettes that can be watched scene-specific as you experience the film and a multi-part documentary that runs over an hour, it's hard to believe that there's any element of the production that requires more explanation for fans.

"X-Men: First Class" didn't do as well at the box office as one might have hoped. \$353 million worldwide plus critical raves could allow someone to call it a hit...but it deserved more. Domestically, it did less than any of the other "X-Men" movies (and finished third out of four in the great 2011 superhero contest) which could scare producers away from daring reboots/prequels like this one. Please, we need more movies like "X-Men: First Class."

**Special Features:**

- o Cerebro: Mutant Tracker
- o X Marks The Spot Viewing Mode
- o Children Of The Atom Multi-Part Documentary
- o Deleted and Extended Scenes
- o Composer's Isolated Score
- o BD Live Enabled: Live Extras & Live Lookup
- o D-Box Motion Code Enabled
- o Pocket Blu
- o Digital Copy Of Feature Film

*"X-Men: First Class" stars James McAvoy, Michael Fassbender, Jennifer Lawrence, January Jones, Jason Flemyng, Nicholas Hoult, Caleb Landry Jones, Edi Gathegi, Lucas Till, Zoe Kravitz, Rose Byrne, Oliver Platt, and Kevin Bacon. It was written by Ashley Edward Miller & Zack Stentz and Jane Goldman & Matthew Vaughn and directed by Vaughn. It is rated PG-13 and was released on Blu-ray and DVD on September 9th, 2011.*



[18]

By [BRIAN TALLERICO](#) [19]

Content Director

HollywoodChicago.com

[brian@hollywoodchicago.com](mailto:brian@hollywoodchicago.com) [18]**Source URL (retrieved on Apr 24 2024 - 6:06am):**<http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/15643/blu-ray-review-stellar-release-for-summer-s-best-superhero-movie-x-men-first-class>**Links:**

- [1] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/users/briantt>
- [2] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/blu-ray-review>
- [3] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/brian-tallerico>
- [4] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/hollywoodchicagodotcom-content>
- [5] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/james-mcavoy>
- [6] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/january-jones>
- [7] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/jason-flemyng>
- [8] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/jennifer-lawrence>
- [9] [http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/labels/kevin\\_bacon.html](http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/labels/kevin_bacon.html)
- [10] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/matthew-vaughn>
- [11] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/michael-fassbender>
- [12] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/nicholas-hoult>
- [13] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/oliver-platt>
- [14] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/rose-byrne>



- [15] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/x-men-first-class>
- [16] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/zoe-kravitz>
- [17] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/dvd-theater-tv-news>
- [18] <mailto:brian@hollywoodchicago.com>
- [19] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/about#BRIAN>