

Blu-ray Review: Gorgeous Transfer For Lars Von Trier's Incredible 'Melancholia'

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on March 22, 2012 - 4:29pm

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CHICAGO – Lars Von Trier's incredible "Melancholia" gets better both in memory and on repeat viewing, especially with a pristine, jaw-dropping transfer like the one granted it by Magnolia on their recently-released Blu-ray. It may have been left out of all Academy Award categories but this was easily one of the best movies of last year. And the few before that as well. Most people missed it in theaters. Catch up on Blu-ray.



Blu-ray Rating: **5.0/5.0**

Split evenly into two halves, the first fifty percent of "Melancholia" takes place at the wedding of Justine (Dunst) and Michael (Alexander Skarsgard). What should be one of the happiest days of Justine's life is presented not as a total disaster but as the story of someone increasingly aware that one is looming on the horizon. Through dialogue, we learn that Justine has dealt with the darkness of depression in the past and it seems like, even on this wonderful day, it is creeping back into her life, not unlike the planet Melancholia that some fear is on a collision course with Earth."



Melancholia

Photo credit: Magnolia

At the wedding, we also meet Justine's sister Claire (Charlotte Gainsbourg), brother-in-law John (Kiefer Sutherland), father (John Hurt), and mother (Charlotte Rampling). Her family is supportive (in a Von Trier way) but also seems exhausted by their troubled relative. We also meet Claire's boss Jack (Stellan Skarsgard) and his assistant (Brady Corbet) while great characters actors like Udo Kier and Jesper Christensen enhance the background. These wedding scenes are often comedic (especially with Hurt) and feature Von Trier at his most playful in years. Unlike some of his recent dirges ("Antichrist," "Manderlay"), he actually seems to be having a good time telling the saga of Justine & Michael's mostly-disastrous nuptials.

The second half of the film pares back on the characters and ups the dread as the planet Melancholia seems to be headed straight for our planet. Justine is certain that it will wipe out humanity. John is certain that it will not. Claire is mostly just uncertain. The metaphor for depression grows even stronger as the film approaches science fiction. Depression is not merely a minor setback – it destroys humanity. And for everyone who thinks that it will just miss them, there's someone who knows it will forever change them.

Lars Von Trier has never been this focused. He's always been a filmmaker who swung for the fences artistically but it seemed more and more in recent years like he wasn't going to make contact again. This is a creative home run in every way and one of the film's greatest strengths is the cinematography by Manuel Alberto Claro and Von Trier's visual confidence. The film looks stunning in HD. The blu-ray also includes a few scant special features, most of which are pretty short but, to be fair, include most of the key players, even the reclusive Von Trier himself (and Dunst and Gainsbourg). The five featurettes are "About Melancholia," "The Universe," "The Visual Style," "Visual Effects," and "HDNet: A Look at Melancholia."

"Melancholia" stars Kirsten Dunst, Charlotte Gainsbourg, Kiefer Sutherland, John Hurt, Stellan Skarsgard, Alexander Skarsgard, Charlotte Rampling, Brady Corbet, Jesper Christensen, and Udo Kier. It was written and directed by Lars Von Trier. It was released on Blu-ray and DVD on March 13th, 2012.

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