

Blu-ray Review: 'The Three Musketeers' Remake Fails to Justify Its Existence

Submitted by [mattmovieman](#) [1] on March 27, 2012 - 8:43am

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CHICAGO – In a subpar, mediocre and entirely disposable sort of way, Paul W.S. Anderson's "The Three Musketeers" could prove diverting for undiscerning viewers, particularly those in the lower double digits. Everyone else has already steered clear of this unnecessary remake helmed by the king of junk entertainment, who mistakenly believed this dreck would lead to a franchise.

Every shot in this overlong, aggressively shallow enterprise looks like it cost millions, but the script penned by Alex Litvak ("Predators") and Andrew Davies ("Bridget Jones's Diary") isn't worth five bucks. Expected cliché after expected cliché is stitched together with the precision of a factory assembly line, leaving absolutely no room for any modicum of suspense or surprise. As in his interminable "Resident Evil" series, Anderson merely takes generic set-pieces and amps them up with loud effects, flashy visuals and mind-numbing spectacle.



Blu-ray Rating: **2.0/5.0**

"Musketeers" isn't even the best of Alexandre Dumas's novels (that honor belongs to "The Count of Monte Cristo"), and yet it continues to be rehashed to an exhaustive degree on the film screen. The trio of musketeers are all egotistical hotheads more interested in their image and bravado than they are in the causes for which they fight. As the official fighting company of King Louis XIII, they set out to destroy any foes aiming to conquer the French throne. Anderson introduces each musketeer with a title card stating their name, which is necessary to tell them apart since they are afforded so little personality or screen time. The real star is D'Artagnan, a fresh-faced wannabe swashbuckler played by the ever-lackluster Logan Lerman, whose photogenic features nearly make up for his complete lack of nuance. His performance is all cocky posturing, but then again, so is the entire movie. It's frankly impossible to care about the smug little twerp as he starts fights with everyone onscreen while falling for an equally bland love interest, Constance (Gabriella Wilde). In one amusing shot, Constance is tied to the villains' ship with rope that acts as the perfect corset with which to heave her ample cleavage (it's the sort of moment that would make Michael Bay proud). Orlando Bloom and Milla Jovovich are also on hand because...well, the studio needed some big names to draw in audiences, didn't they?



Logan Lerman, Luke Evans and Matthew Macfadyen star in Paul W.S. Anderson's *The Three Musketeers*.

Photo credit: Rolf Konow

One of the main problems with Dumas's clunky source material is that none of the major characters are the least bit likable. Since the heroes are every bit as arrogant as the alleged baddies, who cares who wins in the end? And who cares about the bad guys if they aren't any fun to watch? As the evil Rochefort, Mads Mikkelsen broods and sulks while Christoph Waltz isn't given a single good line as the corrupt Cardinal Richelieu. Despite the mildly tongue-in-cheek tone maintained by Anderson, Waltz is once again reduced to a humorless bore. Will someone in Hollywood please acknowledge the fact that Waltz unforgettably oozed satirical maliciousness in "Inglourious Basterds" and bank on that fact? Only Freddie Fox has charm to spare as the neurotic Louis XIII, who bumbles about trying to please his wife (the lovely Juno Temple) while straining to keep his wardrobe fashionable. Fox's deft comic timing is reminiscent of Russell Brand and his scenes with Temple during the film's sagging midsection are among the brightest in the picture. And then there's the sad case of Planchett (James Corden) the poor fat servant of the musketeers, who cheerfully berate him as if he were a sub-human slave, while he waddles about in misery like a plus-sized Mel Cooley. My ideal ending for this film would've had Planchett pulverizing his masters with a hand grenade after their umpteenth utterance of, "Shut up!" At least that would've been a surprise.



The *Three Musketeers* was released on Blu-ray and DVD on March 13, 2012.

Photo credit: Summit Entertainment

"The Three Musketeers" is presented in gleaming 1080p High Definition (with a 2.35:1 aspect ratio) that accentuates the elegance of the real-life locations, accompanied by English and Spanish audio tracks, and is also available on Blu-ray 3D. A glib series of featurettes (clocking in under 10 minutes) offers a sample of the behind-the-scenes footage hidden within the "Access" visual commentary track, providing bored viewers with optional things to glance at during the film, such as a "musketeer fight meter." Anderson says that he grew up with Richard Lester's 1973 adaptation of Dumas's novel, and was inspired to make his own version where the 18-year-old D'Artagnan is played by an actor of the same age rather than a 30-year-old. The director also boasts that his film marks the first time authentic French architecture has been witnessed in a mainstream American picture, as well as the first time Bloom has been cast in a "manly role"—both claims are more than a trifle suspect.

The mixture of French and Italian influences in the film's required sets made Bavaria an ideal choice of location. On the audio commentary track, Anderson and producers Jeremy Bolt and Robert Kulzer (dubbed "the budgeteers") praise Constantin Film Produktion for granting the crew permission to shoot in places such as the Antiquarium in Munich. Viewers hoping for extended action sequences in the disc's 14 minutes of deleted footage will be disappointed by the assemblage of axed perfunctory dialogue. Highlights include a funny ad-lib by a disgruntled Corden, who grumbles about the prospect of starting a union, and a ridiculous elongated version of the D'Artagnan/Rochefort fight scene, where Mikkelsen's endless wordy threats cause Lerman to exclaim, "You're going to talk me to death!" Too bad his best line was left on the cutting room floor.

'The Three Musketeers' is released by Summit Entertainment and stars Logan Lerman, Matthew Macfadyen, Luke Evans, Ray Stevenson, Mads Mikkelsen, Orlando Bloom, Milla Jovovich, Freddie Fox, Juno Temple, Gabriella Wilde, James Corden and Christoph Waltz. It was written by Alex Litvak and Andrew Davies and directed by Paul W.S. Anderson. It was released on March 13, 2012. It is rated PG-13.



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