

## Blu-ray Review: Interminable ‘Rock of Ages’ Goes On and On and On and On

Submitted by [mattmovieman](#) [1] on October 23, 2012 - 9:10am

- [Adam Shankman](#) [2]
- [Blu-ray Review](#) [3]
- [Diego Boneta](#) [4]
- [HollywoodChicago.com Content](#) [5]
- [Julianne Hough](#) [6]
- [Matt Fagerholm](#) [7]
- [Paul Giamatti](#) [8]
- [Rock of Ages](#) [9]
- [Tom Cruise](#) [10]
- [Warner Home Video](#) [11]
- [Theater, TV, DVD & Blu-Ray](#) [12]

CHICAGO – How can the same man who made one of the most lovable movie musicals of the last decade go on to make one of the most hatable? Adam Shankman’s bouncy, broad approach was a splendid fit for the playful “Hairspray,” but it is all wrong for Chris D’Arienzo’s raunchy, melodramatic ode to ’80s rock. His show, “Rock of Ages,” may have been a hit on Broadway, but it was a complete flop with moviegoers and critics alike.

Hopefully studios will soon learn that the name Tom Cruise can no longer sell a movie all by itself. “Mission Impossible: Ghost Protocol” was a huge hit for many reasons: it was flawlessly directed, it had a killer ensemble and it debuted on IMAX screens while preceded by the first few minutes of “The Dark Knight Rises.” If that isn’t a predetermined, prefabricated studio hit, I don’t know what is. “Rock of Ages” can only coast on the names of its stars and the strength of its material, and that’s its downfall. There’s no reason why any of these big name actors were cast in this picture, aside from the fact that they’re big names. This is celebrity karaoke at its most torturous.



Blu-ray Rating: **1.0/5.0**

The story is set in 1987, a fact that Shankman seems hellbent on driving down viewer’s throats in every frame. D’Arienzo’s show is wall-to-wall music mostly consisting of all-too-familiar tunes that went stale ages ago. “I Love Rock ‘n’ Roll” is such an annoying cliché of the era that it’s a wonder how the film managed to make it sound even worse (yet the tone-deaf Alec Baldwin should never be underestimated). Shankman’s Cringe O’ Meter is already off the charts in the film’s opening minutes, as bright-eyed, bushy tailed Sherrie (played by “Dancing with the Stars” champ Julianne Hough, who also graced the dreadful “Burlesque”) steps off a bus to seek stardom in Hollywood, only to have her suitcase full of beloved records stolen by a random crook. Hunky Drew (Diego Boneta) runs across traffic upon seeing this troubling incident, yet instead of chasing down the robber, he just stands there while empathetically replying, “That sucks.” Apparently that pathetic interaction functions as “love at first sight,” since the two blandly perky would-be stars are soon serenading each other with overblown power ballads. Perhaps Shankman realized that Hough and Boneta have zero chemistry or screen presence since he finds every opportunity to cut to his all-star, all-mugging supporting players until the two alleged leads blissfully fade from memory.



Rock of Ages was released on Blu-ray and DVD on October 9th, 2012.

Photo credit: Warner Home Video

Once Cruise shows up as rock legend Stacee Jaxx, the narrative comes to a screeching halt as Shankman gives his over-hyped star attraction every opportunity to flaunt his actorly indulgences until the film collapses in a morass of tedium. Like every Cruise character these days, Jaxx is a self-involved, self-important schlub who causes women to rip off their shirts on cue. He's sort of like Tom Cruise circa 1987, not to mention an exceedingly pale shadow of the actor's career-best role in Paul Thomas Anderson's "Magnolia." He's a smug character and Cruise makes him absolutely no fun to watch. That leaves Jaxx's pet monkey the task of eliciting laughs with hokey facial expressions. Perhaps the only actor who doesn't completely embarrass himself is the great Paul Giamatti, whose considerable skills haven't been this wasted since "Lady in the Water." As far as singing voices are concerned, Mary J. Blige blows everyone off the screen without batting an eyelash, despite her scant screen time. Yet she's also required to deliver the film's most terrifying lyrics during the final umpteenth reprise of Journey's "Don't Stop Believin'." "The movie's never gonna end!" Blige exclaims. "It goes on and on and on and on..." I can't imagine a worse threat.

"Rock of Ages" is presented in 1080p High Definition (with a 2.4:1 aspect ratio), accompanied by English, French and Spanish audio tracks and includes Blu-ray, DVD and UltraViolet copies of the film. Among the many featurettes are interviews with the artists who wrote many of the fine songs mangled by Shankman's performers. Guests include Pat Benatar, Def Leppard, Twisted Sister, Night Ranger, Poison, REO Speedwagon and (yes) Journey. The Blu-ray also features an R-Rated extended cut that includes more innuendo for audiences turned off by the sanitized PG-13 version released in theaters. Yet an added dosage of sleaze doesn't make Shankman's product any more adult—or sexy, for that matter. Nothing kills an erotic mood quite like the image of Malin Akerman thrusting her tongue down Cruise's ear canal while attempting to carry a tune.

*'Rock of Ages' is released by Warner Home Video and stars Julianne Hough, Diego Boneta, Tom Cruise, Russell Brand, Alec Baldwin, Paul Giamatti, Malin Akerman, Catherine Zeta-Jones, Mary J. Blige and Bryan Cranston. It was written by Justin Theroux, Chris D'Arienzo and Allan Loeb and directed by Adam Shankman. It was released on October 9th, 2012. The theatrical cut is rated PG-13.*

By [MATT FAGERHOLM](#) [14]



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Staff Writer  
HollywoodChicago.com  
[matt@hollywoodchicago.com](mailto:matt@hollywoodchicago.com) [13]

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- [3] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/blu-ray-review>
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