

DVD Review: Criterion Captures Horror Classic in ‘Rosemary’s Baby’

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on November 12, 2012 - 9:44pm

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CHICAGO – Any film fan that hasn’t seen Roman Polanski’s “Rosemary’s Baby” has not yet completed Movies 101. The fact is that this work is a reference point for so many others that anyone who loves cinema simply must see it to understand the form. Roman Polanski’s 1968 adaptation of Ira Levin’s hit book is a near-perfect example of urban horror, the scary story built around the idea that any door in any apartment building could be hiding pure Hell. It’s the latest addition to The Criterion Collection and a fantastic choice by the brain trust at the company that chose to include it.

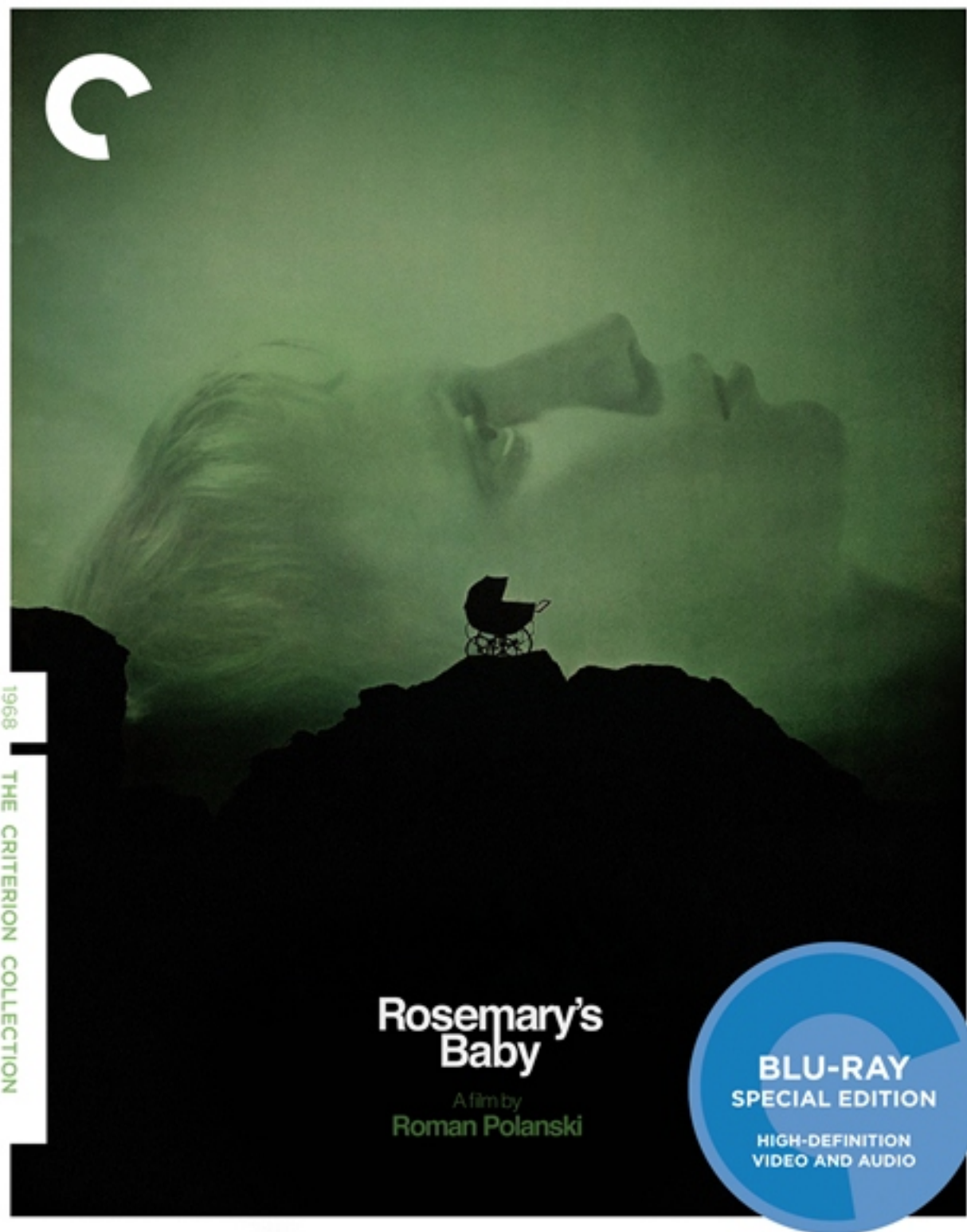


Rating: **4.5/5.0**

“Rosemary’s Baby” was a hit book in 1967 but the film version could have gone in any number of directions. Polanski was not yet the legend he is now. He hadn’t made “Chinatown” and was reportedly brought to the United States by legendary producer Robert Evans to make “Rosemary’s Baby.” Evans knew that Polanski would offer a unique angle and it is certainly true that “Baby” shares themes with Polanski’s early work like the brilliant “Repulsion” (also available in a great Criterion Blu-ray release). “Rosemary’s Baby” made Roman Polanski because Polanski made “Rosemary’s Baby.” He brought such a palpable sense of horror to the film and it was one of the smartest director decisions made by any producer in the ’60s.

The tagline was simple “Pray For Rosemary’s Baby.” Mia Farrow & John Cassavetes star as a young couple moving to the big city and being confronted by pure evil. The number of films that have used tools created by Polanski in telling stories of bit city horror is immense. The way he constructs his script and how he uses different camera techniques to build tension are taught in film school.

And Criterion gets the great Polanski, Farrow, and Evans to discuss the making of the film in a brand-new series of interviews for this release. It’s, sadly, one of only three special features (the others being a piece on the film’s composer and an interview with Levin), which is pretty slight for Criterion but it’s a great documentary. Evans, Farrow, and Polanski are three of the most important names from the most important period in film history. If you don’t know them, you don’t know movies.



Rosemary's Baby was released on Criterion Blu-ray and DVD on October 30, 2012

Photo credit: Courtesy of The Criterion Collection

Synopsis:

Horrific and darkly comic, Rosemary's Baby was Roman Polanski's Hollywood debut. This wildly entertaining nightmare, faithfully adapted from Ira Levin's best seller, stars a revelatory Mia Farrow as a young mother-to-be who grows increasingly suspicious that her overfriendly elderly neighbors (played by Sidney Blackmer and an Oscar-winning Ruth Gordon) and self-involved husband (John Cassavetes) are hatching a satanic plot against her and her baby. In the decades of occult cinema that Polanski's ungodly masterpiece has spawned, it has never been outdone for sheer psychological terror.



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Special Features:

- o Documentary Featuring Interviews With Polanski, Actress Mia Farrow, And Producer Robert Evans
- o Interview With Author Ira Levin From a 1997 Broadcast of Leonard Lopate's Public Radio Program New York And Company, About his 1967 Novel, It's Sequel, And The Film
- o Komeda, Komeda, A Feature Length Documentary On The Life And Work Of Jazz Musician And Composer Krzysztof Komeda, Who Wrote The Score For Rosemary's Baby
- o Booklet Featuring An Essay By Critic Ed Park

"Rosemary's Baby" stars Mia Farrow, John Cassavetes, Ruth Gordon, Sidney Blackmer, Maurice Evans, and Ralph Bellamy. It was written and directed by Roman Polanski. It was released on DVD and Blu-ray by Criterion on October 30, 2012.

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