

Blu-ray Review: P.T. Anderson's Divisive 'The Master' Continues to Mesmerize

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on March 5, 2013 - 11:08am

- [Amy Adams](#) [2]
- [Blu-ray Review](#) [3]
- [Brian Tallerico](#) [4]
- [HollywoodChicago.com Content](#) [5]
- [Joaquin Phoenix](#) [6]
- [Laura Dern](#) [7]
- [P.T. Anderson](#) [8]
- [Philip Seymour Hoffman](#) [9]
- [The Master](#) [10]
- [Theater, TV, DVD & Blu-Ray](#) [11]

CHICAGO – I'm always stunned when anyone calls P.T. Anderson's very divisive "The Master" boring. There are a number of totally valid criticisms that can be thrown at the film but it's never boring. The performances are too strong, the images too striking, and the thematic play by Anderson too captivating for this viewer to comprehend how anyone could be bored while watching it. Frustrated? Sure. Annoyed by the lack of characters or narrative thrust? I get that. But I think that's what Anderson wants. He wants to challenge the viewer in ways that he only hinted at in "There Will Be Blood." He wants you to be puzzled and annoyed, to take the film home with you and work it over in your mind. And now you can do so over and over again on Blu-ray and DVD.



Rating: **5.0/5.0**

"The Master" contains traditionally strong elements like the best lead and supporting performances of the year from Joaquin Phoenix & Philip Seymour Hoffman but also works best when one stops trying to approach it traditionally. Let its themes of animal vs. wrangler and free will vs. religion play in your mind. Just appreciate the craftsmanship of a masterful filmmaker willing to present you with something unlike any other film from 2012. I chose it as [the best of that year](#) [12] and I stand by that decision even more after seeing it in glorious HD and checking out the fascinating special features that accompany the home release.

Even the Blu-ray release of "The Master" can't be traditional, right? The special features allow a viewer to "Play All" and it starts with twenty minutes of deleted scenes, outtakes, alternate takes, and seemingly improvised bits. Assembled in no order with no chapter breaks, it's almost like a 20-minute short film — "Missing From The Master". Some of it is absolutely fascinating, including a great speech from Amy Adams and even a song from Melora Walters ("Magnolia"). There are shots, including one of Phoenix sleeping on a boat, that would stand among the best in any film in 2012 visually and they're supplemental material for this one. Some of the deleted material isn't as perfectly restored as the film itself, which looks breathtaking in HD. I saw it in 70MM in one of its first presentations and I'm so happy the Blu-ray comes as close as possible to replicating that experience.

The rest of the special features are pretty light but great, especially the teaser-trailers that so energized the film-loving community last summer and the documentary from John Huston about WWII veterans, "Let There Be Light" (1946). There is also some behind the scenes material but it's very raw and uncut. Don't expect it to provide thematic answers. One first wishes for a commentary or further dissection of "The Master" but I like the lack of closure or detail about the making of the film or what it means. "The Master" stands on its own.



The Master was released on Blu-ray and DVD on February 26, 2013

Photo credit: The Weinstein Company

Synopsis:

Haunted by his past, WWII veteran and drifter Freddie Quell crosses paths with a mysterious movement called The Cause, led by Lancaster Dodd aka The Master and his wife Peggy. Their twisted relationship is the core of this film that is “a glorious and haunting symphony of color, emotion and sound with camera movements that elicit an involuntary gasp and feats of acting that defy comprehension” (A.O. Scott, The New York Times). Awarded Best Actor for both Philip Seymour Hoffman and Joaquin Phoenix and Best Director for Paul Thomas Anderson at the 2012 Venice Film Festival, “The Master is a film which casts a spell like a fever dream” (David Ansen, Newsweek). Stunningly photographed in 65mm, The Master stands as an undeniable cinematic experience. Will Freddie be able to outrun his past? Will The Cause help or hurt him? Can this tortured, violent creature be civilized? Or is man, after all, just a dirty animal?

Special Features:

- o Back Beyond — Outtakes, Additional Scenes
- o Unguided Message — 8 Minute Short/Behind the Scenes
- o Teasers/Trailers
- o Let There Be Light (1946)

“The Master” stars Joaquin Phoenix, Philip Seymour Hoffman, Amy Adams, and Laura Dern. It was written and directed by P.T. Anderson. It was released on Blu-ray and DVD on February 26, 2013.



[13]

By [BRIAN TALLERICO](#) [14]

Content Director

HollywoodChicago.com

brian@hollywoodchicago.com [13]

Source URL (retrieved on *Apr 19 2024 - 4:13pm*):

<http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/21476/blu-ray-review-pt-anderson-s-divisive-the-master-continues-to-mesmerize>

Links:

- [1] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/users/briantt>
- [2] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/amy-adams>
- [3] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/blu-ray-review>
- [4] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/brian-tallerico>
- [5] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/hollywoodchicagodotcom-content>
- [6] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/joaquin-phoenix>
- [7] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/laura-dern>
- [8] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/pt-anderson>
- [9] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/philip-seymour-hoffman>
- [10] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/the-master>
- [11] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/dvd-theater-tv-news>
- [12] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/20844/film-feature-the-10-best-films-of-2012>
- [13] <mailto:brian@hollywoodchicago.com>
- [14] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/about#BRIAN>