

DVD Review: 'It's a Disaster' Sadly Lives Up to Its Name

Submitted by [mattmovieman](#) [1] on June 19, 2013 - 9:25am

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CHICAGO – The summer movie season has barely begun, and I'm already sick to death of the apocalypse. It seems to have pervaded every mainstream genre, from action-packed thrillers to raunchy comedies. I'll take a hilarious mess like "This Is the End" over grim sci-fi junk like "Oblivion" and "After Earth" any day, simply because it delivers its cautionary message with tongue-in-cheek exuberance.

What made "This Is the End" such a kick was the sight of watching beloved yet overexposed talents satirize their own media-fed personas. Their characters were all unsympathetic, but there wasn't an instant in which the audience wasn't in on the joke. It was rather endearing to see the men whose work played a big role in humanizing American comedy deflate the bloated vulgarity of modern celebrity culture.



DVD Rating: **1.5/5.0**

The problem with Todd Berger's ensemble face, "It's a Disaster," is that it requires the audience to sympathize with characters who are utterly undeserving of sympathy. These thirtysomething adolescents are so self-involved that they can hardly be bothered by the impending nuclear catastrophe cutting out their electricity and engulfing their street in a toxic haze. They're more interested in who slept with who and how many episodes are left to watch of "The Wire." This deadpan reaction to certain doom would be easier to take if the script were actually funny, but it's not. Each of these people have been granted an irritating sketch of a personality and are forced to run with it for the entirety of the film's tedious 90-minute running time. Glen (David Cross) is painfully nice. Shane (Jeff Grace) overthinks things. Lexi (Rachel Boston) doesn't think at all. Buck (Kevin M. Brennan) only thinks with his genitals. Pete (Blaise Miller) and Emma (Erinn Hayes) are bitter about each other's infidelity. Tracy (Julia Stiles) is perpetually at her wits' end while Hedy (America Ferrera) suffers from emotional paralysis. It's immensely difficult to imagine an alternate reality in which this mismatched group of companions would ever be buddies. And now, with the end times interrupting their couple's brunch, the repellent friends have nothing to do but kill time until time itself is killed off.



It's a Disaster was released on Blu-ray and DVD on June 4th, 2013.

Photo credit: Oscilloscope Laboratories

This is about the last group on earth anyone would ever desire to spend their last remaining moments with, as the endless bickering and moaning prompts the viewer to start rooting for their imminent demise. Only Stiles, carrying the same pained expression she sported at the dinner table in "Silver Linings Playbook," earns a few chuckles with her droll brand of pettiness, especially when she informs a pair of routine latecomers why they can't come inside. It's a letdown to see Cross—so disarmingly sweet in the film's early scenes—gradually transform into the same perverse weirdo we've grown accustomed to watching on "Arrested Development." To call the ending a cop out would be inaccurate, since it implies that there was anything here to cop. Berger appears to have such a slim investment in the plight of his own characters that he doesn't even bother to give his story an ending. So determined are these characters to continue their interminable stream of contrived banter that the movie ultimately has to terminate it for them. Rarely has a cut to black felt more like a mercy killing.

"It's a Disaster" is presented in its 2.35:1 aspect ratio and includes a fine array of extras that thankfully include many genuine laughs. Cross is very funny on the audio commentary track, while Berger (best known to me as the star of the hilarious short, "#1 Fan: A Darkomentary") leads a playful tour of the set in a 10-minute featurette. In an enlightening Q&A held at Comic Con, Berger joins the members of his sketch comedy group, "The Vacationeers" (namely Miller, Brennan and Grace), to discuss their rise to viral success. Three of their online shorts are included on the disc, the funniest of which features Julia Stiles as a celebrity desperate to sign autographs for uninterested bystanders (she'd feel right at home in "This Is the End"). By far the best thing about this release is Oscilloscope's typically sublime packaging, which transforms the fold-out DVD case into a survival guide chockfull of the film's benign running gags (such as the correct pronunciation of duct tape). This may be the most benign ensemble comedy since "Clue: The Movie."

'It's a Disaster' stars Julia Stiles, America Ferrera, Blaise Miller, Erinn Hayes, Kevin M. Brennan, Rachel Boston, Jeff Grace and David Cross. It was written and directed by Todd Berger. It was released on DVD on June 4th, 2013. It is rated R.



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By [MATT FAGERHOLM](#) [14]
Staff Writer
HollywoodChicago.com
matt@hollywoodchicago.com [13]

Source URL (retrieved on Nov 15 2018 - 11:35am):

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