

Blu-ray Review: 2013 Hollywood Disaster '47 Ronin' Rescued by Mediocrity

Submitted by [NickHC](#) [1] on April 9, 2014 - 1:28pm

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CHICAGO – If you've ever wondered what the difference is between a director and a producer, let "47 Ronin" explain how the hierarchy of creativity hinders the evolution of even the most straightforward-sounding pitches. "47 Ronin" is the type of samurai movie set in Japan that features native actors speaking only English, while Keanu Reeves stars as an outsider clearly plunked into the picture for stateside star power. Co-written by Chris Morgan (the writer behind the "Fast & Furious" renaissance) and Hossein Amini (who wrote "Drive"), the film is directed by first-time helmer Carl Rinsch, whose popular science-fiction short "The Gift" is available for a look on Youtube. And even with the hands of Amini, Morgan, and Rinsch, the film's vision is lost in a desperate appeal to fit different pieces that do not work together.



Rating: **1.5/5.0**

Better taken in the vacant mindset of a late night viewing, if at all, "47 Ronin" is a movie with its own midnight madness. Indeed, these many decisions (or demands) have left the movie scarred with some strange moments, where the story about a group of samurai trying to reclaim their honor features dragons, magic swords, violent peaceful monks, and fancy costumes. Even taken on its smaller standards, "47 Ronin" has little life as an action movie, more recognizable as a story that feels like the adaptation of non-existent video game, complete with progressive boss fights, different levels, etc. Even then, some characters do not have their mindless potential taken advantage of. That guy carrying a pistol on the cover, who really loves his tattoos? He's in the movie for less than five minutes.

For what life this film may have with the viewers that do appreciate it, it has a decent amount of special features to indulge the viewer on their curiosities for the assembly of this project, as taken in pieces. And however unlikely it would be, one can only dream what a director's commentary from Carl Rinsch would sound like. However he must feel about this project, I'd be curious just to hear the amount of times he sighs.

I should take this moment to give a brief shout-out to Keanu Reeves' directorial debut, "Man of Tai Chi", which was released earlier in the year and features much better usage of Reeves within the world of martial arts. It is a great little surprise and deserves more attention than this bloated studio project. The idea of Reeves in Asian culture doesn't have to be a one-way joke (pointed at Reeves), but in comparison, "47 Ronin" is a rough push back to when Tobey Maguire joked when impersonating Reeves, "I know kung fu!"

Aligned with Marvel's locker room sign ideology that legends are not born but made, "47 Ronin" is indeed a legend made carefully by box office numbers for appeal, but one that identifies as strange failure when all elements are packed together. In this case, the hero that saves this film's legacy is not Reeves or Rinsch, but mediocrity, which should prevent this movie from having a second life as a kitschy flop, allowing it to move on to the past.



47 Ronin was released on Blu-ray on April 1, 2014

Photo credit: Courtesy of the Universal Pictures

Synopsis:

A group of disgraced samurai, featuring "halfbreed" Kai (Keanu Reeves) and the valiant Oishi (Hiroyuki Sanada), attempt to reclaim their honor by avenging their fallen master (Min Tanaka). Kai also tries to save his love Mika (Ko Shibasaki) before she is forcefully wed to the evil shogun Lord Kira (Tadanobu Asano).

Special Features:

- Blu-ray 3D Version of "47 Ronin"
- Deleted Scenes
- Re-Forging the Legend
- Keanu & Kai
- Steel Fury: The Fights of "47 Ronin"
- Myths, Magic & Monsters: The FX of "47 Ronin"
- DVD Version of "47 Ronin"
- Digital Version of "47 Ronin"

"47 Ronin" was released on Universal Blu-ray and DVD on April 1, 2014.

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Source URL (retrieved on Sep 19 2024 - 2:26am):

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