

## Blu-Ray Review: 'High School Musical 3: Senior Year' Shines on 3-Disc Deluxe Extended Edition

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on February 18, 2009 - 1:46pm

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Blu-Ray Rating: **4.0/5.0**

CHICAGO – “[High School Musical 3: Senior Year](#) [9]” certainly won’t stand among the best song-n-dance films of all time, but it delivers a jolt of escapist entertainment to its target audience and the expertly remastered, three-disc Disney Blu-Ray release should be a smash hit for everyone eager to buy it.

After shattering records with the Disney Channel broadcasts of “High School Musical” and “High School Musical 2,” the house that Walt built realized the logic of releasing the third film in the franchise in theaters and “High School Musical 3: Senior Year” brought the phenomenon to the big screen to the tune of \$250 million in receipts worldwide. “HSM 3” is one of the top ten grossing musicals of all time, above “[Moulin Rouge!](#) [17],” “[Annie](#) [18],” and “[Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street](#) [19]”.



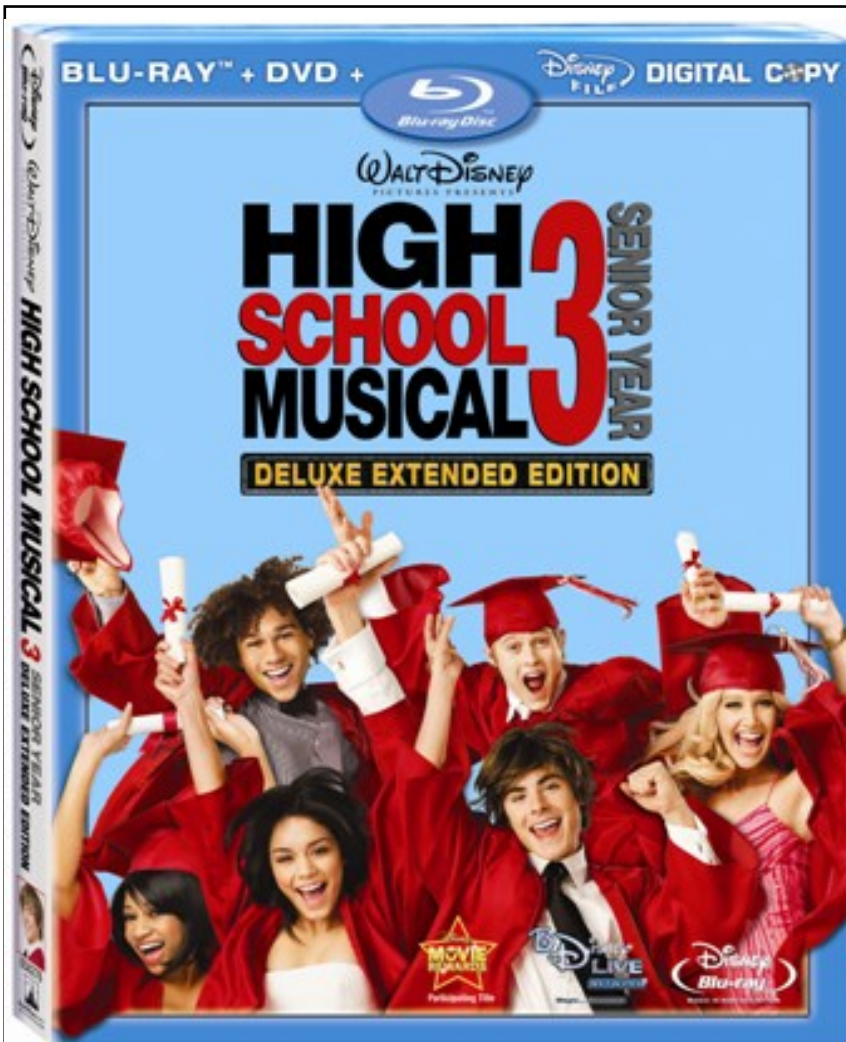
(L to R) Vanessa Hudgens, Zac Efron

Photo credit: Fred Hayes/Disney.

There are two ways to look at the “High School Musical” franchise. At first, the fact that all of the characters in “HSM 3,” from the leads to the chorus players, are the kind of genetically gifted people that would win Homecoming King and Queen at nearly any high school in America got

on my nerves.

In the world of “High School Musical,” no one has acne, bad teeth, weight issues, or the desire to swear and everyone is so clean, well-dressed, perfect-looking people who can sing, dance, and make their eyes twinkle. This is the actual high school experience of absolutely no one on Earth. If you can’t get past that, the perfect people of East High will drive you nuts.



*Photo credit: Disney*

Having said that, I did get past the perfection pretty quickly. This is a fantasy world like any other Disney movie. The fact that even the dorkiest kid at East High would win a beauty contest fits into both the musical and Disney mold perfectly.

The cynical teen in me finds it funny that tweens who idolize “HSM” are going to realize just how fake the movies are when they hit the harsh reality of high school, but the musical lover in me knows that there would be no other successful way to make these flicks. No one wants to see real teenagers singing and dancing. That would be terrifying.

The film follows a relatively archetypal series of teenagers led by the gifted Troy ([Zac Efron](#) [15]) and the gorgeous Gabriella ([Vanessa Hudgens](#) [14]). Troy is the basketball star at East High in Albuquerque, New Mexico, but he can also sing and dance enough that Juilliard is interested in him after graduation. He’s torn by a father and friend Chad ([Corbin Bleu](#) [5]) who want him to play ball at the University of Albuquerque and the fact that his girlfriend Gabriella will be at Stanford, thousands of miles away.

Meanwhile, the egotistical Sharpay Evans ([Ashley Tisdale](#) [2]) is in competition with a few classmates for the Juilliard scholarship, including Ryan ([Lucas Grabeel](#) [12]) and Troy. The gang comes together for one final musical show, detailing their lives at East High and the decisions that face them on their way out into the real world.

The cast of “High School Musical 3” is almost overwhelmingly charming and charismatic. In particular, Efron and Tisdale can carry a tune and hold a screen as well anyone from recent genre offerings. And Kenny Ortega directs the film better than I expected. It feels like a big-screen production instead of just a blown-up TV movie. “High School Musical 3” is energetic, well-choreographed, and confident.

What holds “High School Musical 3” back is the songwriting. Are kids really humming these tunes on the way out of the theater? I doubt it. Almost all of them are the kind of generic pop junk that wouldn’t be a hit on the radio if beautiful people like Efron and Hudgens weren’t singing them in a Disney movie.





Corbin Bleu (center), principal dancers  
Photo credit: Fred Hayes/Disney.

Someone get the kids who think these are great musical tunes a copy of "Grease" or "Singin' in the Rain". Heck, get them "Little Shop of Horrors" for that matter. The final number is impressively toe-tapping, but the rest are surprisingly forgettable. Even after a reprise.

But it's a minor complaint about a musical that if I found satisfying, the target audience is going to be overwhelmingly happy about having on Blu-Ray.

It's not just the kids of East High that look perfect. Disney has done an amazing job with the three-disc Blu-Ray release of "High School Musical 3". The set includes a Blu-Ray copy, DVD copy, and digital copy, making sure the "HSM" fan can enjoy the film anywhere. Why more studios aren't following this lead - providing multiple formats in one set - is beyond me. It's brilliant.

The video and audio on "High School Musical 3," presented in 1080p with a 1.85:1 aspect ratio and a DTS-HD Master Audio 5.1 track are nearly perfect. The picture is vibrant and deep, helping the impression that "Senior Year" is a lot more than just another TV movie. The sound isn't quite as good. I wasn't blown away. But when I did focus on it, I noticed no problems. The music and lyrics are well-mixed, which is the most important part of audio for a musical.

The special features for "High School Musical 3: Senior Year" are a model of what to do with a release like this one - not too much to overwhelm with useless clips but not too little to leave fans wanting more. "HSM 3" comes with 8 minutes of deleted scenes, the ability to sing-along with subtitled lyrics to the songs, bloopers, behind-the-scenes information, and interesting featurettes. The only thing missing is a commentary, but I'm not sure "HSM 3" fans would really want that anyway.

For most people over the age of twenty, "High School Musical 3" would be more accurately placed in the horror genre than the musical one, but there's something undeniable about this release - it completely satisfies its target audience. Put your hatred for musicals and Disney movies aside for one second non-believers and ask yourself how many releases you can say that about in a season?

Note: The first "High School Musical" has also been released on Blu-Ray this week in a "Remix" edition with new picture, sound, and special features. "High School Musical 2" came out on the format last year. Now, you can have the entire holy tween trilogy in HD.



[Check out behind the scenes clips of "High School Musical 3".](#) [20]

*'High School Musical 3' is released by Walt Disney Home Video and stars Zac Efron, Vanessa Hudgens, Ashley Tisdale, Lucas Grabeel, Corbin Bleu, and Monique Coleman. It was written by Peter Barsocchini and directed by Kenny Ortega. It was released on February 17th, 2009. It is rated G.*



[21]

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