

## DVD Review: Tilda Swinton Mesmerizes in Thrilling 'Julia'

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on August 24, 2009 - 11:17am

- [Aidan Gould](#) [2]
- [Brian Tallerico](#) [3]
- [Bruno Bichir](#) [4]
- [DVD Review](#) [5]
- [Erick Zonca](#) [6]
- [HollywoodChicago.com Content](#) [7]
- [Jude Ciccolella](#) [8]
- [Julia](#) [9]
- [Kate del Castillo](#) [10]
- [Saul Rubinek](#) [11]
- [Tilda Swinton](#) [12]
- [Theater, TV, DVD & Blu-Ray](#) [13]

CHICAGO – Tilda Swinton, Oscar winner for “Michael Clayton,” gives the best female performance of the year to date in the riveting, thrilling, excellent “Julia,” now available on DVD and one of the best films of 2009 that you probably haven’t seen. The lack of special features on the Magnolia-produced DVD (and its lack of existence on Blu-Ray) is a bit of a let-down but the film is an underrated gem that should find a loyal audience on the home market.



DVD Rating: **4.0/5.0**

Swinton plays the title character, a woman who has turned alcoholism, self-pity, and general confusion into an art form. Julia is the kind of raging drinker who regularly blacks out and wakes up half-dressed in a stranger’s car. She’s one of those women who always blames the world for not giving her a lucky break but doesn’t recognize that her own decisions are tearing her life apart. And, with Swinton’s remarkable, chameleon-esque ability, Julia is one of the most fully-realized, believable characters of the year.



Julia was released on DVD on August 18th, 2009.

*Photo credit: Magnolia Home Video*

Julia sees what she thinks is the lucky break that fate owes her when a fellow addict (Kate Del Castillo) asks her to get involved in a kidnapping plan. The addict’s son Tom (Aidan Gould) has been taken from her by the system and given to the care of his wealthy grandfather. She asks Julia to kidnap Tom so mother & son can run off to Mexico together. When Julia hears just how much money could be involved in this situation, she decides to hold Tom for ransom herself and starts to dig herself deeper and deeper into a nightmare that no viewer will be able to accurately predict.



Julia was released on DVD on August 18th, 2009.  
Photo credit: Magnolia Home Video

Watching "Julia" is like watching someone try to dig themselves out of a six-foot hole in the rain. Every time Julia thinks she has a way out of her predicament, she slides back down and deeper into what becomes a deadly nightmare.

Julia is no heroine. She is a damaged, selfish woman and co-writer/director Erick Zonca and Swinton refuse to turn her into the redemption story that so many other filmmakers would have done. You don't "root for" Julia other than to hope that she doesn't kill anyone on her downward slide. And while one could easily argue how despicable this woman is, she undeniably keeps herself and Tom alive in some truly deadly situations.

Tilda Swinton is absolutely fearless in "Julia" and riveting in every single scene. She drives a relentlessly paced film that runs 144 minutes but feels half as long and never wavers in one of the most complete portrayals of 2009. If "Julia" had been released by a bigger studio during Oscar season, she would be a frontrunner for major awards, but the film had such a small spring release that it's unlikely this performance will find the acclaim it deserves. It's a shame. This is the best performance of an already amazing career.

There are people out there who so deeply damaged and addicted that they are barely getting by on a day-to-day basis but Hollywood has a habit of turning those people into redemption stories. We've seen that before. You've not seen something like "Julia" before. Some may see redemption in the arc of "Julia," but the reason the movie works is because Swinton and Zonca leave it up to the audience. You're not asked to "understand" or even like Julia, merely to stay transfixed by her downward spiral.

With total junk being released in HD, it's a shame that a film as good as "Julia" isn't available on the Blu-Ray format. The technical specs on "Julia" are average for DVD, but the special features include merely a few unorganized and commentary-free deleted scenes. "Julia" ends with a remarkable scene and abruptly, leaving viewers looking for more about the making of the film or perhaps a commentary dissecting it. "Julia" deserved better treatment in theaters and on DVD.

Even with the disappointing release, don't miss the film itself. "Julia" is a true find.

*'Julia' is released by Magnolia Home Video and stars Tilda Swinton, Saul Rubinek, Kate Del Castillo, and Aidan Gould. It was written by Aude Py & Erick Zonca and directed by Zonca. It was released on August 18th, 2009. It is rated R.*



[14]

By [BRIAN TALLERICO](#) [15]  
Content Director  
HollywoodChicago.com  
[brian@hollywoodchicago.com](mailto:brian@hollywoodchicago.com) [14]

Source URL (retrieved on Apr 19 2024 - 7:44pm):

<http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/8462/dvd-review-tilda-swinton-mesmerizes-in-thrilling-julia>

Links:

[1] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/users/briantt>



- [2] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/aidan-gould>
- [3] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/brian-tallerico>
- [4] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/bruno-bichir>
- [5] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/dvd-review>
- [6] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/erick-zonca>
- [7] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/hollywoodchicagodotcom-content>
- [8] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/jude-ciccolella>
- [9] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/julia>
- [10] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/kate-del-castillo>
- [11] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/saul-rubinek>
- [12] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/tilda-swinton>
- [13] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/dvd-theater-tv-news>
- [14] <mailto:brian@hollywoodchicago.com>
- [15] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/about#BRIAN>