

Blu-Ray Review: 'Mamma Mia! The Movie' Given Gift Set Treatment

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on November 24, 2009 - 10:30pm

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CHICAGO – It's the most wonderful time of the year for Blu-Ray and DVD collectors. Every holiday season, studios pull out their most beloved films, polish up the picture, maybe add a special feature or two, and usually throw in a few collectibles for a gift set. Recent gift set releases include limited edition boxes for "Gone With the Wind," "The Wizard of Oz," and "Christmas Vacation". The gleefully campy "Mamma Mia! The Movie" seems like a perfect fit and "The Gimme! Gimme! Gimme! More Gift Set" should make fans of the movie happy but is clearly the lowest rung on the ladder when it comes to these season releases.



Blu-Ray Rating: **2.5/5.0**

Before we even get to the movie, what qualifies as a gift set? With recent releases including such unusual items as a watch ("Wizard of Oz") and fake snow ("Christmas Vacation"), don't you think a film as weird as "Mamma Mia!" might think outside the box? A little disco ball? An Abba figurine? Something as silly as movie itself?

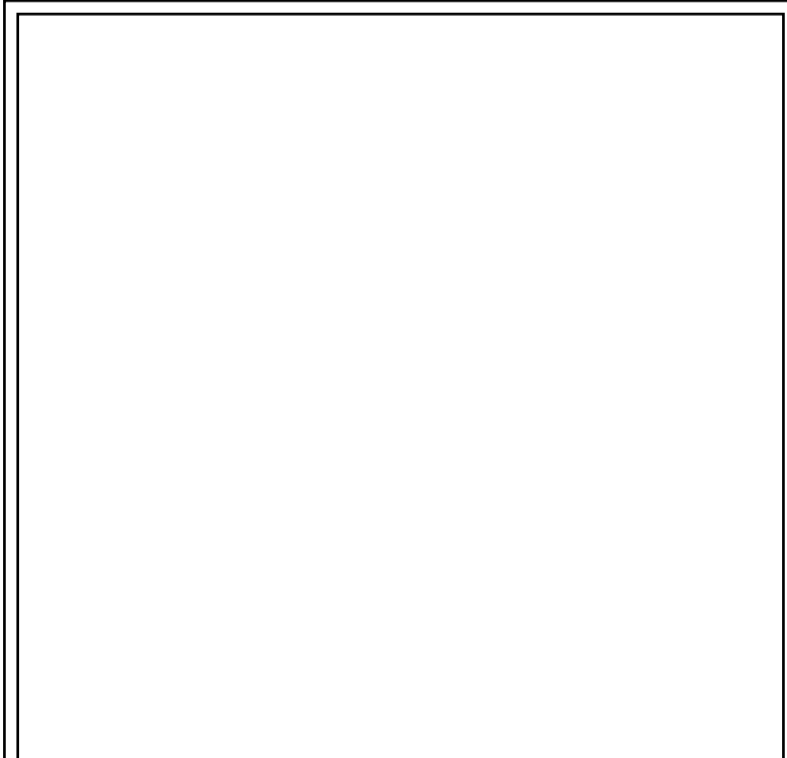


Mamma Mia! The Movie: The Gimme! Gimme! Gimme! More Gift Set" was released on Blu-Ray and DVD on November 10th, 2009.

Photo credit: Universal Home Video

Sadly, the producers of "Mamma Mia! The Movie - The Gimme! Gimme! Gimme! More Gift Set" play it shockingly safe, essentially just packaging the already-released Blu-Ray, without a single new special feature, with the already-released soundtrack and throwing in a goofy book and an extra-large package to make it look more impressive. If you already own "Mamma Mia!," isn't it likely that you already own the soundtrack? And there's absolutely no justification in picking up a set with this price point just for a collectible book.

As for the movie itself, I'll go back to what I said this time last year, especially since it's the exact same Blu-Ray release as was on shelves twelve months ago except for the 18-song soundtrack...





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Photo credit: Universal Home Video

"My own critical reaction to "Mamma Mia!" is somewhat conflicted. Yes, Brosnan sounds vaguely like a wounded water buffalo and the choreography looks like it was staged by someone on an Ouzo-bender, but "Mamma Mia!" eventually wore down my defenses. Having seen the play, I'm not sure a much-better film version could have been produced. Amanda Seyfried will eventually be a star and Meryl Streep nails the numbers she needs to, particularly "Slipping Through My Fingers" and "The Winner Takes It All" in the final act. They carry the movie over the many rough patches.

"Mamma Mia!" is the ugly duckling of musicals. It's not very well-made and features some ridiculous choices and performances but it's hard NOT to fall for it a little bit by the time the group takes its final curtain call in the Greek sun. "Who cares about the stupid plot, the choppy editing, or the weak supporting cast? They're singing "Dancing Queen" again!!"

With the clear knowledge that they have not just a cult classic but a film that fans are going to watch repeatedly, as my generation did "Grease" and "The Rocky Horror Picture Show", Universal pulls out all the stops with the Blu-Ray release of "Mamma Mia!" It's as comprehensive and well-organized a Blu-Ray release as I've seen during this crowded holiday season. Fans could spend days with this title and that's not counting the repeated viewing.

First and foremost, all musicals need to look and sound right. The colors of the Greek isles need to pop off the screen and the vocals need to be mixed perfectly with the music. Check and check. The 1080P High-Definition widescreen picture looks more vibrant on Blu-Ray than it did in theaters and the English DTS-HD Master Audio 5.1 features the perfect mix of dialogue and disco tunes.

What will truly stand out for the musical fans who find Mamma Mia checked off their holiday wish list are the copious, detailed, and interactive special features. To start, there's the aforementioned "Sing-Along" version, which is just a karaoke subtitle track on the flick's musical numbers. Now you too can sing along to "Waterloo". Try not to scare the neighbors.

But that's just the tip of the mirrorball with the Mamma Mia! Blu-Ray release. With "My Movie Commentary", fans can join in the celebration and record their own video and/or text commentary on the film and send it to their friends. "My Chat" allows fans to discuss the movie live while they watch it. Surprisingly, Universal doesn't include BD-Live capabilities on Mamma Mia! but these two special features more than make up for it.

As for traditional DVD features, where do we start? There's a feature commentary with director Phyllida Lloyd, picture-in-picture featurettes accessible through U-Control, a "Behind the Hits" trivia track that provides full details and trivia on the ABBA songs and albums as they play in the film, and featurettes like "Anatomy of a Musical Number: Lay All Your Love on Me", "The Making of Mamma Mia! The Movie", "Becoming a Singer", and "A Look Inside Mamma Mia! The Movie". Deleted scenes include an entire musical number called "The Name of the Game" (with great vocals by Seyfried but clearly cut for pacing near the end of the film) and there's even a music video for "Gimme! Gimme! Gimme!"

'Mamma Mia! The Gimme! Gimme! Gimme! More Gift Set' is released by Universal Home Video on CD/Blu-Ray and stars Meryl Streep, Amanda Seyfried, Pierce Brosnan, Colin Firth, Stellan Skarsgard, Julie Walters, Dominic Cooper, and Christine Baranski. It was written by Catherine Johnson and directed by Phyllida Law. It was released on November 10th, 2009.



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