

## Blu-Ray Review: Tyler Perry's 'I Can Do Bad All By Myself' Has Soul

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on January 19, 2010 - 9:16pm

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CHICAGO – Tyler Perry has made a fortune with films that play off easy comedy and obvious moral messages. He weaves common themes into modern entertainment that usually connects with audiences but not critics. Usually. Perry's "I Can Do Bad All By Myself" surprised many of the critics who sought it out, displaying a new confidence in Perry's direction, only held back by minor flaws that viewers will easily overlook on the home market.



Blu-Ray Rating: **3.0/5.0**

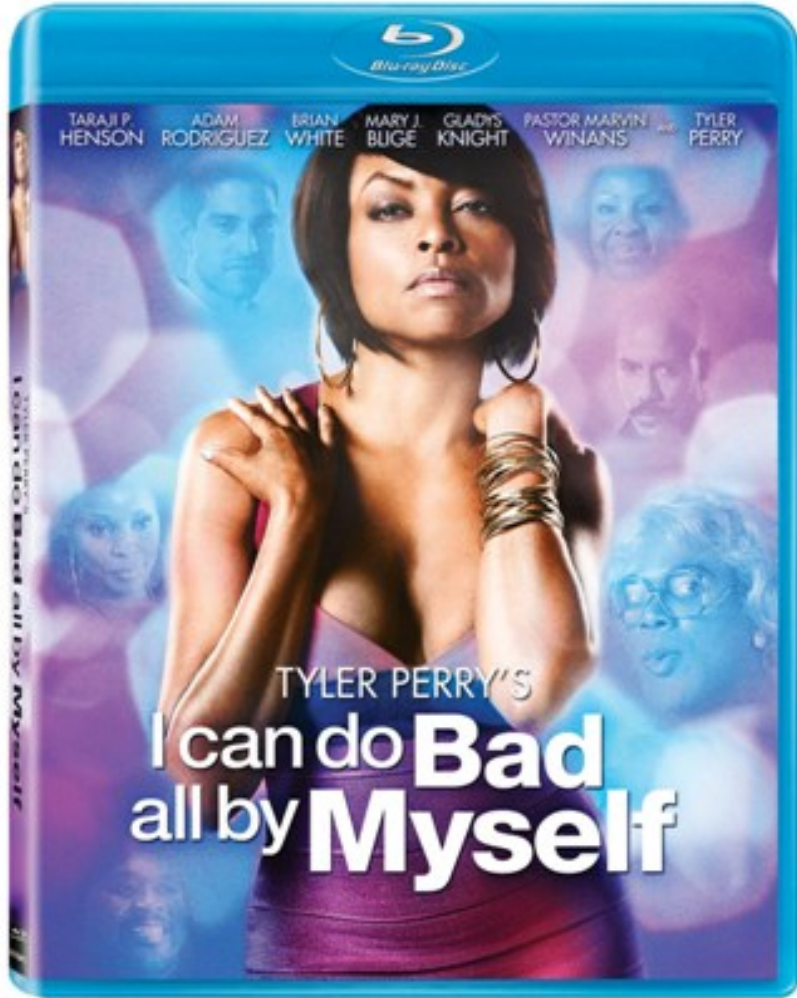
The great Taraji P. Henson adds genuine character (something often missing from Perry's work) to the lead role of selfish, alcoholic nightclub singer April, a woman thrown into a mostly predictable, life-changing situation when her niece and two nephews appear on her doorstep. It turns out that the streetwise urchins were caught breaking into the home of the already-legendary Madea (Perry himself) after their own guardian went missing. So, now they come to their Aunt April, a woman who has actively dodged responsibility, sleeping most of the day away and dating a jerk of a married man named Randy (Brian White).



I Can Do Bad All By Myself was released on Blu-Ray and DVD on January 12th, 2010.

*Photo credit: Lionsgate Home Video*

Meanwhile, the local church, led by Pastor Brian (Marvin L. Winans), sends over a Columbian immigrant named Sandino (Adam Rodriguez) to help around April's house and, of course, provide both a positive male role model for the kids and obvious romantic interest for April. The comparison is clear - the very broadly-drawn Randy, who is pure evil through and through, is the kind of guy that April used to date and Sandino is the kind of guy she deserves.



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Photo credit: Lionsgate Home Video

And that's the theme of "I Can Do Bad All By Myself" - it is easy to lazily fall into traps of self-loathing, drinking the nights and sleeping the days away. It is only when you tell yourself you deserve something better - and, of course, in Perry's milieu, a heady dose of religion must play a role - that you will actually find it. The morals of Perry's dramedy are underlined and obvious but having an Oscar-caliber actress in the lead helps make them significantly more impactful.

With enough full songs from mega-talented performers including Gladys Knight, Mary J. Blige, Marvin Winans, and Henson herself, to practically qualify as a musical, "I Can Do Bad All By Myself" has a toe-tapping, soul-powered, inspirational beat missing from most of Perry's previous work. Like an amazing gospel number, it's hard not to fall prey to the victim's rhythm and infectious melody.

The biggest problem in Perry's most critically reviled work has been a lack of pacing and wild tone changes. The former is still there - the film runs nearly two hours and sags down with a few too many motivational speeches and songs - but the latter has drastically improved. While a bit too much of Madea's wacky comedy is overplayed, "I Can Do Bad All By Myself" feels like Perry's most consistent work, largely due to the emotional gravity given the piece by Henson and Rodriguez, but also due to a filmmaker who seems to have a desire to improve with each work when he has already reached a level of success where he could easily coast to the box office bank.

Considering the financial draw of Perry's film, I expected a bit more from the Blu-ray special features, all of which are shockingly short and pretty much of the self-congratulatory, talking-head variety. No deleted scenes, no history of the play, no commentary track. There's really not much of value in the special features and the audio track is surprisingly mediocre for Blu-ray. The 1080p picture is what one would expect.

*'Tyler Perry's I Can Do Bad All By Myself' is released by Lionsgate Home Video and stars Taraji P. Henson, Adam Rodriguez, Tyler Perry, Mary J. Blige, Gladys Knight, and Marvin L. Winans. It was written and directed by Tyler Perry. It was released on Blu-ray and DVD on January 12th, 2010. It is rated PG-13.*



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