



CURRENT REVIEWS

IN STORES SOON

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- > Clear History (2013/HBO Blu-ray)
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IN STORES NOW

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- > The Little Mermaid – Diamond Edition (Disney Blu-ray 3D + Blu-ray 2D + DVD + Digital Copy + Music)
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Portlandia – Season Three (2013/IFC/MVD/VSC DVD Set)/**Shanghai Calling** (2013/Anchor Bay DVD)/**Sisters & Brothers** (2011/Anchor Bay Blu-ray)/**Unfinished Song** (2012/Weinstein/Anchor Bay DVD)

Picture: C+/C-/C+ Sound: C+/C+/B-/C+ Extras: C/C/D/C Main Programs: C/C/C-/C

Now for another set of comedy releases...

Portlandia – Season Three (2013) makes the show Lorne Michaels' biggest non-**Saturday Night Live** hit since **Kids In the Hall** and if you missed the first few seasons, you can read more at these links:

One

[http://www.fulvuedrive-in.com/review/11376/Absolutely+Fabulous:+Absolutely+Everything+\(199](http://www.fulvuedrive-in.com/review/11376/Absolutely+Fabulous:+Absolutely+Everything+(199)

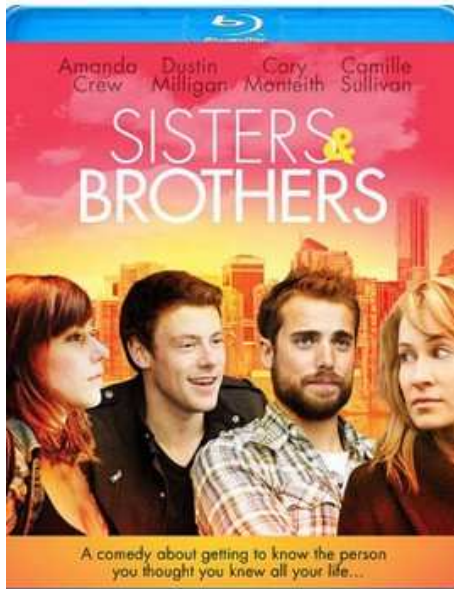
Two

[http://www.fulvuedrive-in.com/review/11848/Paul+Rodriguez:+Just+For+The+Record+\(2012/Im](http://www.fulvuedrive-in.com/review/11848/Paul+Rodriguez:+Just+For+The+Record+(2012/Im)

Carrie Brownstein and Fred Armisen, et al, have grown into their characters well, but the 10 episodes here show a series staying where it has found commercial success for better and worse, meaning the show has now peaked and the humor, plus its approach are not so fresh and amusing

anymore. We get some "surprise" guests, but few (like No Doubt or Chloe Sevigny) are really as interesting as they had been before. The sites are even more common at this point, so the camerawork is also the same. Not a big fan to begin with, the show is at least watchable, but we get no big laughs and it is becoming a for-fans-only affair at this point. See for yourself and compare to earlier seasons.

Extras include the *Winter Special* episode, 2 Deleted Scenes and Tours of Portland with Kumal Nanjiani.



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 > [Anything Is Possible \(2013/Image DVD\)](#)
 > [Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles - Ultimate Showdown \(Nickelodeon DVD Set\)](#)
 > [Dalziel & Pascoe: Season Eight \(2001/BBC DVD Set\)](#)

Daniel Hsia's **Shanghai Calling** (2013) wants to be a funny fish-out-of-water comedy with an ethnic update as a young Chinese-American businessman named Sam (Daniel Henney) expects to be promoted in his New York City job when his company sends him to Shanghai "for 3 months" to help them and he does not even speak Chinese, Mandarin or anything close to them. From there, we get some meet-cutes with a few women, business complications, Bill Paxton as the "mayor" of "American Town" and too many obvious jokes and plot developments throughout the somewhat long 101 minutes. If the actors were not so appealing and locales more familiar, this would be a bad TV movie. However, that is not enough to save it.

There is a technical presentation issue we'll discuss below, but I wanted to like this one and no matter how long I waited for it to improve, it never did. A Behind the Scenes featurette is the only extra.

Carl Bessai's **Sisters & Brothers** (2011) is an even larger disappointment, trying to be funny about relationships, but the script is so mundane and dull that you never believe anything you see and adding faux comic strip panels that simply interrupt anything that might start working does not help. The mostly unknown cast though is suddenly overshadowed by Glee actor Cory Monteith, listed as the third in the main cast and who recently passed on after an ugly, nightmarish bout with addition issues. He does not seem well here and even looks a bit pale, but his lack of energy is less notable since this is some kind of flat mumblecore (read dysfunctional is fun and normal) flick that does not know what to do with itself. A mentally ill brother is also in the narrative, but is not integrated well enough into the plot and this dragged on uncomfortably for 86 longer-than-it-should-have-felt minutes. Now a curio, expect an odd, strange and waste of time.

There are no extras.

Finally we have Paul Andrew Williams' **Unfinished Song** (2012) featuring Terrence Stamp and Vanessa Redgrave leading (playing a married couple) a cast of elderly people in a home for them run by a young woman (the always charming Gemma Arterton) who tries to inspire everyone with song. Unfortunately, some of them are getting sick of the stuck old routine and oppressed emotions and regrets make up some of the story. Stamp and Redgrave have some good scenes, there are some amusing moments, but the use of music becomes silly, overused and nearly makes fun of the elderly here instead of cherishing them.

Worst of all is how we have seen everything here before the screenplay offers, so only the actors make this watchable and at 94 minutes, it runs a little longer than it should and is trying to be some feel-good film on some level. None of this works much, but some viewers might find some things to like here. Unfortunately, I was not impressed and even disappointed since I liked the actors.

Extras include Deleted Scenes (none of which would have helped) and Outtakes.

The 1080p 1.78 X 1 digital High Definition image transfer on **Sisters** is the best picture performer here, but the comic book pieces are obnoxious and even have degraded moments too often that further hold the playback back. The anamorphically enhanced 1.78 X 1 image on **Portlandia** and anamorphically enhanced 2.35 X 1 on **Sona** tie for second place showing

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