



Black Christmas

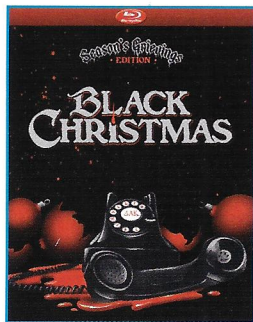
## WELCOME BACK, BILLY

### BLACK CHRISTMAS: SEASON'S GRIEVINGS EDITION (1974) Blu-ray

Starring Olivia Hussey, Keir Dullea and Margot Kidder  
Directed by Bob Clark  
Written by Roy Moore  
Anchor Bay

*Black Christmas* is not only the eminently re-watchable gift that keeps on giving, it's also the gift that horror fans keep giving and getting, thanks to a long string of DVD and Blu-ray releases. That said, it's unlikely that any distributor will top Anchor Bay's "Season's Grievings" Blu-ray. Not only does it include previously released *Black Christmas* featurettes and commentaries, it also provides some new goodies that come courtesy of *Rue Morgue*.

For those unfamiliar with it, the movie is not only the best holiday-themed horror movie but the best Canadian horror film (albeit one directed by an American). A prototype slasher, it takes place during the Christmas holidays in and around a sorority house where the young women are being harassed by obscene telephone calls. The threat escalates when the caller secretly enters the sorority house to stalk and kill his victims.



The reasons *Black Christmas* is amazing are exhaustively explicated in this set's bonus materials. Among the new stuff is "The *Black Christmas* Legacy," a slick 40-minute doc featuring new interviews with the likes of *RM* edi-

tor-in-chief Dave Alexander, long-time contributor (and Canadian genre expert) Paul Corupe and former art director Gary Pullin, who also provides the set's creepy cover art. They, and others, dissect the film's eternal appeal (its atonal score and sound, masterful camerawork, and Canadian-ness, despite the occasional American flag to bolster its international appeal) and pay tribute to its late director, Bob Clark, who died in a car crash back in 2007. Clark is present, however, in interview material from a previous release (along with other reported over extras) and in a *Rue Morgue* liner note booklet that has an archival interview with him, as well as old and new quotes from other crew and cast members.

Other new goodies include a Paul Corupe-helmed *BC* panel from FanExpo 2014 that features cast members Art Hindle, John Saxon, Lynn Griffin and Nick Mancuso sharing fond memories, and a new commentary track featuring Mancuso — as Billy the killer! The latter is a better idea than reality, as Mancuso fills the 97-minute running time with stream-of-consciousness non-sequiturs mostly spoken in a British accent. His occasional dives into the psychotic Billy voice are disturbing but the track is only vaguely amusing, and, to be honest, we would rather just watch the film.

Speaking of which, it is February as I write this and I am still dreaming of a *Black Christmas*. How about you?

SEAN PLUMMER

## TOP OF THE HEAP

### WHAT HAVE YOU DONE TO SOLANGE? (1972)

Starring Fabio Testi, Karin Baal and Camille Keaton  
Directed by Massimo Dellamano  
Written by Bruno di Geronimo and Massimo Dellamano  
Arrow Films

It was not directed by Bava, Argento or Fulci, but Massimo Dellamano's *What Have You Done to Solange?* simultaneously out-classes and out-sleazes most of the *gialli* output by those masters of the genre. So it's about time that fans of black-gloved killers can enjoy a highly polished digital presentation of this exquisite cinematic filth, like the one now on offer from Britain's Arrow Films.

Former stuntman Fabio Testi makes his leading man debut as Enrico Rosseni, a married gym teacher at a Catholic girls school in London embroiled in an affair with one of his students. The girl, Elizabeth (Cristina Galbó: *Let Sleeping Corpses Lie*), witnesses a brutal murder during one of their trysts and is found dead herself soon after. With their affair revealed and himself a prime suspect, Enrico turns from teacher into amateur detective, uncovering a sex ring among

his students, who are themselves being picked off one by one by a killer with an especially distasteful method of dispatching his victims.

Within a genre that tired pretty soon after its release, *Solange* distinguishes itself on many fronts. For one, its plot makes sense; the killer has a legitimate motive for his crimes. It's also beautifully shot, with serious production value (it was an

Italian-German co-production partly filmed in London) and a captivating performance by future *I Spit on Your Grave* star Camille Keaton as Solange. The only real gripe is the wooden Testi, and more sensitive souls may find the sexualized violence distasteful.

As expected, Arrow's presentation is impeccable, starting with a handsome 2K restoration that showcases the compositions of cinematographer (and future director) Aristide Massaccesi, a.k.a. Joe D'Amato (*Anthropophagus*), and the beautiful score by legend Ennio Morricone. New extras include a breezy and informative commentary track from genre experts Kim Newman and Alan Jones; *Innocence Lost*, a half-hour "visual essay" on *Solange* and its place within the *giallo* genre by Mark Mackenzie; and a candid interview with co-star Karin Baal who takes issue with the film's morality.

Vastly underrated, *What Have You Done to Solange?* is the classiest-looking sleaze we've seen.

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