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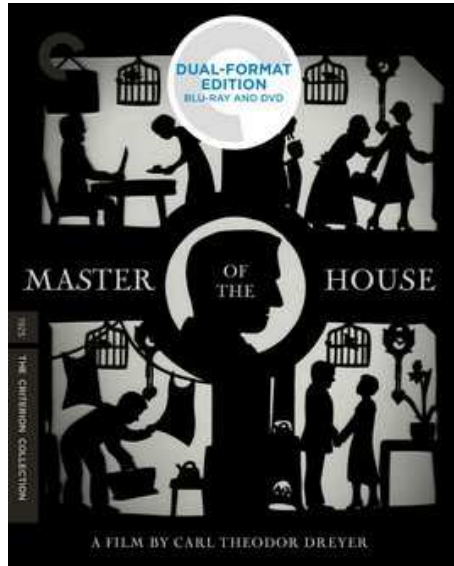
MARKET PLACE

Master Of The House

(1925/Dreyer/Criterion Blu-ray w/DVD)/The Selfish Giant (2013/MPI/Sundance Selects DVD)/Twogether (1992/VSC/MVD Visual DVD)

Picture: B & C+/C/C Sound: B- (DVDs: C+) Extras: B/C/C Films: B-/C/C

Here are some unique dramas arriving to us now...



Carl Theodore Dreyer's **Master Of The House** (1925) is one of the lesser-known dramas from the legendary silent-era filmmaker about a housewife (Astrid Holm) who does her best to keep her home running well, but has an ungrateful husband (Johannes Meyer) who is mean, angry, rude and sarcastic to her all the time. However, this arrangement is not sustainable and is about to hit a fork in the road. They have children who don't need this and if he is this miserable, why?

His mother in law (Clara Schonfeld) will also be a factor in not being able to tolerate the situation, but the film has even more to say visually about the whole situation than its dialogue, script and general plotting, which is why it holds up as well as it does 89 years and counting. Well shot, thought out and made, it exceeds its melodramatic oeuvre and shows another side to the cinematic mastery of Dreyer. This runs 107 minutes, which is impressive for a silent film of its time that is not an epic, but it works well enough.

Extras include another nicely illustrated booklet on the film including informative text as usual with Criterion, while the discs add a really strong visual essay by legendary film scholar David Bordwell and a new interview with Dreyer historian Casper Tybjerg on this film and his amazing career.

Clio Barnard's **The Selfish Giant** (2013) is another down-and-out drama set in a long declining part of England where some local adult scrappers have recruited two very young men to help bring in stolen metal so its origins can be erased so it can be sold untraced for cash. However, the exploitive situation is not going to last with such young people being used and dabs things are about to happen.

Despite some good acting and interesting moments, this one is just a little too predictable and even obvious. Siobhan Finnerman even shows up as an intertextual connection to post and anti-Thatcher cinema (**Rita, Sue & Bob Too**, et al) but there is nothing very political here or nothing much new to show or say. I believe history is repeating itself this badly all the

Season (2013/Warner Blu-ray)  
> The Mechanic (1972/United  
Artists/MGM/Twilight Time  
Limited Edition Blu-ray)

time, but a narrative film should say or add something new to it and this one does not.

Extras include a Behind The Scenes featurette, Original Theatrical Trailer and Cast/Crew Interviews.

Finally we have Andrew Chiaramonte's **Twogether** (1992), his attempt to do a raw narrative film as the antithesis to the likes of **Pretty Woman** and other fluffy mall movies of the time that offered regressive, fake and sexually dishonest narratives about male/female relationships. A man (future melodrama director Nick Cassavetes) meets a woman (Brenda Bakke) at a nighttime event and they are instantly attracted to each other, immediately followed by a whirlwind sexual encounter and much more.

Things happen so fast that they are so drunk that they go to Vegas and get married, even if they cannot remember all of it. From there, we get a mix of conflict scenes that sometime work, some with nudity that has mixed results, some that do not and not enough exposition to finish all that it starts, time that could have existed if it was not wasted on several pseudo-MTV moments with Rock music that I supposed to be harder edged than pop of the time, but not nearly as on the edge as the music should be or the best such music of the time was. At least this was an ambitious drama trying to be about something, but it is ultimately unsuccessful despite being worth a look.



Extras include a Director Intro, feature length audio commentary track with the director and an Original Theatrical Trailer.

The 1080p 1.33 X 1 black & white digital High Definition image transfer on the **House** Blu-ray is easily the best-looking presentation on this list with a 35mm duplicate negative and other elements with impressive results. The 1.33 X 1 DVD version is no match for it and looks soft by comparison, but is still better than the surprisingly soft anamorphically enhanced presentations on **Giant** (1.85 X 1) and **Twogether** (1.78 X 1). However, Blu-ray editions would benefit both.

The PCM 2.0 Stereo on the **House** Blu-ray is also the best sound presentation here, if only by being a fuller presentation of its instrumental score than the lossy Dolby Digital 2.0 Stereo on the DVD version. The lossy Dolby Digital 5.1 on **Giant** and lossy Dolby Digital 2.0 Stereo on **Twogether** (from its original Ultra Stereo analog theatrical mix) are also good, if not great, putting all the audio on the 3 DVDs here on an even plane.

- Nicholas Sheffo

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