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**Ecstasy Of Order – The Tetris Masters**  
(2011/Reclusion/Music Video Distributors DVD)

Picture: B-    Sound: B-  
Extras: C+    Film: B+

Video games hold a special place in my heart; they very much shaped my childhood and in many ways made me who I am today. To this day I am a gamer and collector of vintage gaming; a hobby that continues to grow, garnering not only extreme nostalgic interest, but also the financial gain (loss) that comes with it.

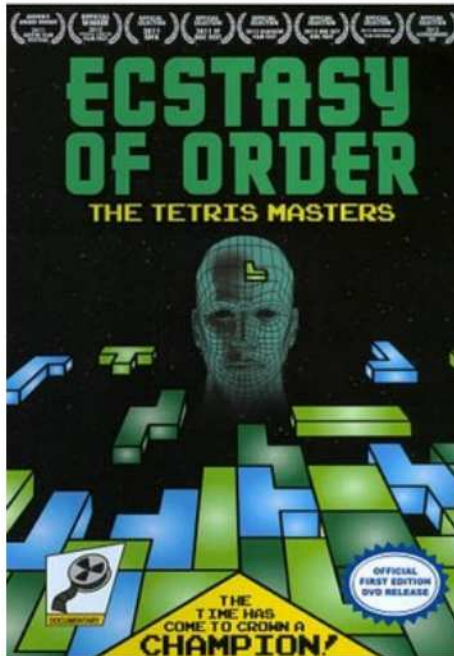
**Ecstasy of Order: The Tetris Masters** is a 2011 documentary that chronicles the road to finding the world's (USA's?) greatest Tetris player. The 2010 Tetris World Championship took place in Los Angeles, CA as it challenged some of the game's best to battle it out for the number one spot. The film directed by Adam Cornelius starts by following Oregon Tetris enthusiast Robin Mihara as he becomes enthralled with finding the greatest Tetris player in the world. His mission starts when he comes upon a website (arcade facility) called Twin Galaxies that has been tracking video game/arcade high scores since the 1980s. He quickly discovers that two individuals Harry Hong and Jonas Neubauer who have maxed out on Tetris, achieving a score of 999,999. While finding the highest scorers, he also found the individual who achieved the most line completions, Ben Mullen with 296 lines.

Even after tracking down these Tetris greats amongst others (Dana Wilcox and Jesse Keklar), there remains a question that weighs heavy on Robin's mind; what happened to Thor Aackerlund? Thor Aackerlund was the winner of the 1990 Nintendo World Championship; a competition that pitted the best Nintendo NES players against each other with the games Super Mario Bros, Rad Racer, and a final ultimate round of Tetris. Thor beat out millions of other children and adults to become the grand champion. His win at that 1990 championship has become something of legend and for the most part he had not been seen or heard from in years. Robin made it his goal to find him and invite him to the 2010 Tetris World Championship; for Robin was not only a fan of Thor and the 1990 Nintendo World Championship, but a former 1990 competitor himself (as were some of the other Tetris masters).

The documentary is extraordinarily good as it not only excitingly archives the path to the Tetris World Championship, but harkens back to the original 1990 World Championship; with about 25% of the film focusing on that 1990 Nintendo World Championship. Many videos that I had never seen before from the 1990 Championship (and I fancy myself an expert) appear in this film and manage to elicit feelings of fond nostalgia and rejuvenated gaming admiration. The film is a fun and fine balance of the previously mentioned early Nintendo nostalgia and modern enthusiasm for vintage games. The documentary is well done from beginning to end.

The technical features are nothing fancy as the DVD does not live up to today's Blu-ray standards, but is nice nevertheless. The 93 minute feature is presented in a 16 X 9 wide screen presentation that is nothing fancy, but doesn't have many light/dark issues, no debris, and has a nice color palette. The film feels blunted at times and not as crisp as a Blu-ray release would be. The sound is a simple Dolby Digital 2.0 Stereo that comes mostly from the front as this is dialogue heavy.

The extras are few but include a nice short documentary on a player



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- > Tim & Eric's Billion Dollar Movie (2012/Magnolia Blu-ray)
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- > Ecstasy Of Order – The Tetris Masters (2011/Reclusion/Music Video Distributors DVD)
- > Lawless (2012/Anchor Bay/Weinstein Blu-ray w/DVD)

The extras are few but include a nice short documentary on a player attempting to achieve the high score on an Asteroids arcade machine (playing for well over 50 hours straight). Other extras include Deleted Scenes, Extended Scenes, Original Trailers, and Full World Record Games.

Go buy this DVD! It will bring many people's childhood, give a hefty dose of gaming history, and exemplify that vintage gaming is quite alive!

- Michael P. Dougherty II

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