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A Clockwork Orange Anniversary Edition Blu-ray Review

By Peter Suci [★★★★](#)

The Film

Stanley Kubrick's feel-not-so-good film of 1971 probably comes close to holding the record for the most times it has been released for home video. *A Clockwork Orange* was released on VHS and Laserdisc prior to being part of the original *The Stanley Kubrick Collection DVD* (as well as being released separately at the same time). It was subsequently re-mastered and re-released, and then released as a limited-edition collector's set with soundtrack and other bonus materials including poster and booklet. The film was also released again most recently in 2007 on DVD, Blu-ray and HD DVD. Now the film is heading to Blu-ray again as *A Clockwork Orange: Anniversary Edition* in celebration of the film's 40th anniversary, with a few new bonus features.

The story remains a classic, and tells the tale of Alex (Malcolm McDowell), the film's humble narrator, through three unique acts in his life of crime and back again. The beginning focuses on his days as street thug hooligan, who is unable to see right and wrong, to his imprisonment and "cure" for his craving of the old "ultra violence," and finally to karma getting its due! Equal parts black comedy and social commentary, the film remains one of Kubrick's finest.

The Picture

While *A Clockwork Orange* was released previously on Blu-ray in 2007, this version features an anamorphic 1.77:1 widescreen aspect ratio - compared with the 1.66:1 ratio of the previous version. The picture is exceptionally clear and vivid, with some details being far more noticeable than in past editions. In the commentary Malcolm McDowell notes that the film was mostly lit with actual room lights and in some scenes lit from a single source. The Blu-ray makes the most of this, and it is easy to say that this 1080p presentation is probably the best that film has ever looked.

The Sound

The 5.1 channel DTS-HD Master Audio soundtrack also is good, but the film still retains a hollow-sounding quality in parts. This isn't so much a complaint as a fact; Kubrick wasn't one who ever really embraced big sound in his movies, and this film is no exception. However, the soundtrack makes good use of the score including the synthesized versions of Beethoven's 9th Symphony (4th movement), and Henry Purcell's stirring "Music for the Funeral of Queen Mary."

The Extras

Where this Blu-ray is truly worth the upgrade is in the packaging and extras. The two disc set arrives with a nice 40-page booklet of rare photos and production notes. The first disc includes the film, along with two HD bonus features: "Malcolm McDowell Looks Back," and "Turning like *Clockwork*;" along with commentary by Malcolm McDowell and historian Nick Redman. There is also additional featurettes "Still Tickin': The Return of *Clockwork Orange*," and "Great Bolshy Yarblookos!: Making *A Clockwork Orange*," as well as the theatrical trailer. The second disc includes "Stanley Kubrick: A Life in Pictures" and "O Lucky Malcolm!" featurettes about the director and film's star respectively. It took 40 years to bring all this together, making this the ultimate collection - at least until the film's 50th anniversary.



Final Thoughts

There is no denying that this remains one of the most visually stunning films, and certainly is one of Kubrick's finest. This one is also part of the *Stanley Kubrick: Limited Edition Collection on Blu-ray*, which should be the final word on these films, but somehow we think this isn't the last time we'll be seeing Alex. If for some reason this is it for a while, this is the version to have!

Where to Buy (individually or as part of the boxed set):

- [A Clockwork Orange: Anniversary Edition Blu-ray \(Amazon.com\)](#)
- [Stanley Kubrick: Limited Edition Collection on Blu-ray \(Amazon.com\)](#)

Product Details

- Actors: Malcolm McDowell, Patrick Magee, Adrienne Corri, Miriam Karlin
- Director: Stanley Kubrick
- Audio Languages: English 5.1 DTS-HD Master Audio, Spanish, French Dolby 5.1
- Subtitles: English SDH, Spanish, French
- Aspect Ratio: 1.77:1
- Number of Discs: 2
- Rating: R
- Studio: Warner Brothers
- Release Date: May 31, 2011
- Run Time: 137 minutes
- List Price: \$34.99
- Extras:
 - Commentary by Malcolm McDowell and Historian Nick Redman
 - Channel Four Documentary: "Still Tickin': The Return of *Clockwork Orange*"
 - "Great Bolshy Yarblockos!: Making A *Clockwork Orange*"
 - "Malcolm McDowell Looks Back"
 - "Turning Like *Clockwork*" featurette
 - Theatrical Trailer
 - Feature length bonus "Stanley Kubrick: A Life in Pictures"
 - Feature length bonus "O Lucky Malcolm!"

Where to Buy:

- [A Clockwork Orange Anniversary Edition Blu-ray \(Amazon.com\)](#)

OVERALL	★★★★☆
VIDEO	★★★★☆
AUDIO	★★★☆☆
MOVIE	★★★★☆
EXTRAS	★★★★☆

[Back to top](#)

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