

# ALLELUIA! THE DEVIL'S CARNIVAL

USA 97 MIN

DARREN LYNN BOUSMAN



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It's safe to say that Darren Bousman's bizarre indie horror musicals *Repo! The Genetic Opera* (2008) and *The Devil's Carnival* (2012) are the epitome of "niche" films. In other words, they're made for a very specific type of movie geek: the ones who spent endless screenings of *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* (and/or similarly campy, vampy musicals) covered in rice, glitter, and/or stage make-up, singing along with the pulpy rock tunes, and poking just a little bit of affectionate fun at the movie's overt weirdness.

It is also safe to assume that Bousman and frequent collaborator Terrance Zdunich were bitten by the Rocky Horror bug at an early age; it's the only logical explanation as to why they've returned to the scrappy, earnest, modest, and undeniably wacky universe of *The Devil's Carnival*.

Whereas the first flick was a three-story anthology with a nifty wrap-around segment, *The Devil's Carnival: Alleluia* is sort of a two-tiered affair. On one end there's a vague ongoing struggle between the agents of Heaven and the minions of Hell that threatens to expand into a full-blown war; on the other we get a flashback story about a cursed she-demon called "The Painted Doll" and how she fell from grace countless eons ago. The latter of the two story threads is considerably more interesting than the former, so it's a good thing the filmmakers opted to dedicate the bulk of their running time in that section,

Heaven is depicted as a 1940s-ish movie production company where God (Paul Sorvino) reigns supreme as CEO, and it makes for a surprisingly amusing setting/metaphor for the flick's central themes of sin, betrayal, and (potential) redemption. The "production company" concept also provides an interesting set of locations for the numerous musical sequences, plus it also works as just a slick little homage of 1940s production design, costumes, and hard-boiled dialogue.

The true treasures of the film lie within the cast (well, and the songs, of course; there are lots of them, and most are really quite catchy), thereby proving that commitment to creepy craftsmanship is more important than flashy special effects or overpriced superstars. Not only does *Alleluia!* provide some fun stuff for the great Paul Sorvino to sink his teeth into, but Adam Pascal (as God's right hand man) and Emilie Autumn (as the inevitably doomed June) belt their way through their bizarre art-deco afterlife with a good deal of energetic chemistry. (Fans of the first *Carnival* will be pleased to note that several players have returned to reprise their roles.) MVPs in the support department this time around include Marc Senter, Barry Bostwick, Lyndon Smith, and Tech Nine — not to mention a big handful of geek culture veterans like Bill Moseley, Brea Grant, David Hasselhoff, Kristina Klebe, and Ted Neeley. Yes, the man who played *Jesus Christ Superstar* now works for *The Devil's Carnival*.

Scott Weinburg, [nerdist.com](http://nerdist.com)

**WRITER:** Terrance Zdunich **CINEMATOGRAPHY:** Joseph White **MUSIC:** Saar Hendelman

**CAST** *Lucifer* Terrance Zdunich | *God* Paul Sorvino | *The Agent* Adam Pascal | *The Scorpion* Marc Senter

VOTING FOR *Theeb* A59 | B30 | C8 | D0 | E0 | Rating 81% | Attendance 104

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