

STUDIOCANAL

FLASH GORDON (1980)

SPECIAL 40TH ANNIVERSARY 4K RESTORATION
IN SELECT CINEMAS FROM JULY 31ST
ON BLU-RAY, DVD, STEELBOOK, UHD COLLECTOR'S EDITION & DIGITAL
FROM AUGUST 10TH

DIRECTED BY MIKE HODGES

STARRING SAM J. JONES, BRIAN BLESSED, MAX VON SYDOW, TIMOTHY DALTON, MELODY ANDERSON, ORNELLA MUTI, PETER WYNGARDE & TOPOL

SOUNDTRACK BY QUEEN WITH HOWARD BLAKE



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"Like a fairy tale set in a discotheque in the clouds"
Pauline Kael, *The New Yorker*

STUDIOCANAL is excited to announce the new **4k, Ultra High Definition** restoration of Mike Hodge's cult classic **FLASH GORDON** (1980), in honour of the film's 40th anniversary. The film is now confirmed to play at Picturehouse Central and in select cinemas from **July 31st**, it will then be released on 4K UHD Collector's edition, Blu-ray, Steelbook, DVD and digital on **August 10th**. In addition, the film will screen as part of The Luna Drive In Cinema from August, with screening details available on their website as they are announced.

FLASH GORDON will also be distributed by STUDIOCANAL in France, Germany, Australia and New Zealand this Summer.

FLASH GORDON is the 1980 space opera film adaptation directed by Mike Hodges (*Get Carter*, *Black Rainbow*) based on the comic strip of the same name created by Alex Raymond and adapted for the screen by Michael Allin (*Enter The Dragon*) and Lorenzo Semple Jr (*King Kong*). Produced by Dino De Laurentiis (*Serpico*, *King Kong*), with cinematography by Gilbert Taylor (*Star Wars IV: A New Hope*, *Dr. Strangelove*), the film is also notable for the soundtrack, which was composed, performed and produced by Queen with orchestral sections by Howard Blake.

The *Flash Gordon* comic strip ran as a daily from 1934 to 1992, followed by a Sunday strip which ran until 2003. The comic was an influence on early superhero comic characters, from the costume and inverted narrative of a heroic alien on earth in Superman to Batman's first appearance in the Detective Comics, with its DNA still evident in characters today. Raymond's comic was also an influence on the wider sci fi genre, from James Tiberius Kirk to Star Wars. George Lucas loved Flash Gordon so much, he tried to get the rights from King Features to make the film. However, King Features had Federico Fellini and then Nicolas Roeg in mind before turning to Hodges, but Lucas still cites the comic as an inspiration for his famed space saga.

For the new 40th Anniversary 4k restoration, *Flash Gordon* was scanned from the original 35mm negative to produce 4K files. Over 500 hours of manual restoration repaired serious damage that included image instability, scratches and intermittent flicker. The sound was scanned from the original track negative and underwent restoration to improve issues ranging from audio drop-outs throughout the feature and during reel changes, digital clicks and optical distortion. The film was colour graded for theatrical, home entertainment and 4K HDR release, using previous digital releases and 35mm prints as a reference. In line with the Director's vision and the original 35mm cinema release, VFX work was applied to remove the strings in all scenes where visible. This restoration was approved by Director Mike Hodges in May 2020, and will include the first 4K HDR Dolby Vision master of *Flash Gordon*.

"I'm very grateful to STUDIOCANAL for this brilliant 4k restoration. The restoration captures perfectly the vivid colours of the sets, skies and costumes. It also corrects some of the problems encountered with the special effects system we used. With Chroma key compositing we could insert skies, rocket ships, hawk-men, pretty well whatever we wanted, into the blue backing built into the studio sets. The problems came later when we had to eliminate, for example, the wires used on the hawk-men. We were eventually successful but even then some 35mm prints were variable and the wires would be back again. With this new restoration that problem is thankfully laid to rest. Of course Chroma key is primitive by the side of the current process, CGI (Computer Generated Imaging). That said I'm pleased we stuck with the old fashioned system. CGI would have been too slick. After all Flash Gordon was a cartoon strip from the 1930s brought back to life on celluloid some five decades later." Mike Hodges, April 2020

Approached by legendary producer Dino De Laurentis to provide the score for his 1980 screen adaptation of iconic comic strip character Flash Gordon, Queen set aside all the norms of film music soundtracks. Their vision of the commission was to incorporate on screen dialogue and effects with their own musical compositions. Written, performed and arranged by the band with orchestral arrangements by Howard Blake, audio from the film is featured prominently including the now unmistakable voice of Brian Blessed and other cast members including Max Von Sydow, Melody Anderson, Timothy Dalton and Topol. Seamlessly incorporating these alongside Queen rock guitars and progressive electronica the final Flash Gordon soundtrack consisted of 18 tracks written by all the band members. Brian May's 'Flash's Theme' released under the title 'Flash' as the only single from the soundtrack and unusually featuring Freddie Mercury and Brian May sharing vocals has become one of the most instantly recognised tracks of all time. Queen's boldly-executed score reaped rewards such as gold discs, BAFTA recognition and Ivor Novello nominations on release in December 1980. But perhaps its crowning glory is that it still sounds futuristic 40 years later.

"Flash, I love you! But we only have fourteen hours to save the Earth!"

Our planet is under attack! An unexplained energy wave has pulled the Moon out of orbit, sending it careening towards Earth. Strange natural disasters bombard our world. Baffled scientists are at a loss as to the cause of the chaos. A lone voice – brilliant, but disgraced, scientist Hans Zarkov (TOPOL) – is convinced that these catastrophes are of extraterrestrial origin and predicts that we only have 10 days before the Moon crashes into Earth, destroying all life. Humanity is doomed!

Realising that he alone cannot stop these sinister attacks he forces football hero Flash Gordon (SAM J. JONES) and New York travel-agent Dale Arden (MELODY ANDERSON) aboard his makeshift rocket ship at gunpoint. Their destination – the mysterious Planet Mongo. On this strange new world all life cowers under the cruel reign of Ming The Merciless (MAX VON SYDOW), an intergalactic tyrant who demands absolute loyalty under pain of death. Aided by his menacing, golden-masked henchthing Klytus (PETER WYNGARDE) he holds the fates of whole peoples in his icy grip, and Earth is but his latest plaything.

After crash-landing on Mongo Flash, Dale and Zarkov are immediately captured, and taken to the spectacular Mingo City city to face the wrath of Emperor Ming. Flash is sentenced to death, Zarkov to have his mind erased and reprogrammed, while Dale faces a fate unimaginably worse: to become Ming's bride!

Enlisting the help of Ming's daughter Aura (ORNELLA MUTI), Flash escapes his execution and flees, but his adventures have just begun. Seeking sanctuary in the forest world of Arboria he meets Prince Barin (TIMOTHY DALTON) and undergoes the terrifying trial of the tree insect. Flash prevails but he and Barin are captured by the mighty Hawkmen, with whom Arboria is at war, and taken to Sky City where Prince Vultan (BRIAN BLESSED) forces them into a fight to the death. But with Dale still imprisoned Flash must make friends of these warring princelings and enlist their help to overthrow Ming, rescue Dale and prevent the annihilation of Earth.

Our only hope is Flash Gordon . . . saviour of the universe!



SPECIAL FEATURES:

The UHD, DVD and Blu-Ray Disc 1 includes:

- The main feature (1 hr 47)
- *New Lost in Space*: Nic Roeg's *Flash Gordon* (also iTunes extra)
- Audio commentary with Mike Hodges
- Audio commentary with Brian Blessed
- Behind the scenes of *Flash Gordon*
- Stills gallery (also iTunes extra)
- Storyboards gallery (also iTunes extra)
- Original theatrical trailer

Blu-Ray Disc 2 includes:

- Interview with Mike Hodges
- Episode 24 of *Flash Gordon* (1979-1982): *The Survival Game / Gremlin's Finest Hour*
- Sam Jones's acting start
- Entertainment Earth on Flash Gordon merchandise
- Bob Lindenmayer discusses deleted scenes and original endings
- 35th Anniversary Greenroom

- 35th Anniversary reunion featurette
- Renato Casaro extended interview
- Brian Blessed anecdotes
- Melody's musings
- On the soundtrack (Brian May & Howard Blake)
- Easter Eggs

The 5 disc Collector's Edition includes:

- The UHD and 2 Blu-ray discs
- Bonus Blu-Ray Disc of LIFE AFTER FLASH, the 2017 feature documentary celebrating the film and it's star, directed by Lisa Downs
- Original soundtrack by Queen & Howard Blake
- 32 page booklet
- 16 page Titan mini book (The Story of Flash Gordon)
- Reproduced booklet of the first strip of original comic books
- Poster of original artwork
- 4 artcards of various incarnations of Flash film posters across the years
- 1 sew on 'Flash patch'

TECH SPECS - 1980 / Feature running time: 1hr47mins / Certificate: DVD: PG - Blu-ray, Steelbook & Collector's Edition: 15

RRPs - DVD £17.99 / Blu-Ray £22.99 / Steelbook £39.99 / Collector's Edition £69.99

Theatrical Release: In Cinemas from July 31st

HE Release: August 10th (4K UHD Collector's edition, Blu-ray, Steelbook, DVD and digital)

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ABOUT STUDIOCANAL

STUDIOCANAL, a 100% affiliate of CANAL+ Group held by Vivendi, is Europe's leader in production, distribution and international sales of feature films and TV series, operating directly in all three major European markets - France, the United Kingdom and Germany - as well as in Australia and New Zealand.

STUDIOCANAL owns one of the most important film libraries in the world, boasting more than 6,000 titles from 60 countries. Spanning 100 years of film history, this vast and unique catalogue includes among others the iconic Terminator 2, Rambo, Breathless, Mulholland Drive, The Pianist and Belle de jour.

STUDIOCANAL has fully financed box office hits Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Spy, Paddington 1 and 2, The Commuter and Shaun The Sheep Movie. Upcoming films backed by STUDIOCANAL include Marjane Satrapi's Radioactive starring Rosamund Pike as Marie Curie and Marc Munden's The Secret Garden produced with Heyday Films (Paddington 1 & 2) starring Colin Firth and Julie Walters.

STUDIOCANAL is actively developing and distributing high-end TV series through its network of award-winning European production companies, including TANDEM in Germany (Shadowplay), the UK's RED Production Company (Years and Years), Spain's BAMBÚ PRODUCCIONES (On Death Row) and France's STUDIOCANAL ORIGINAL (Mouche). STUDIOCANAL is also an associate of Danish-based SAM Productions founded by Søren Sveistrup and Adam Price (Ride Upon The Storm) as well as of UK-based GUILTY PARTY PICTURES; Benedict Cumberbatch's production company SUNNYMARCH TV (Patrick Melrose) and URBAN MYTH FILMS (War of the Worlds).

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