



DVD press release

# Bigger Than Life

A film by Nicholas Ray

James Mason, Barbara Rush, Walter Matthau, Christopher Olsen

*Bigger Than Life* is one of the greatest American films of the 1950s, a high point in the careers of lead actor James Mason and director Nicholas Ray. The BFI, in conjunction with Twentieth Century Fox Home Entertainment, gives it its first UK release on any format.

James Mason gives a towering performance as Ed Avery, a happily married schoolteacher who agrees to take a new 'miracle drug' when diagnosed with a potentially fatal disease. It is not long before the drug begins producing malevolent and murderous side-effects that bring to the fore all of Ed's long-repressed frustrations with his life.

Mason's support is exceptional: Barbara Rush as Ed's devoted wife, Christopher Olsen as his cruelly punished son and Walter Matthau as his faithful colleague.

One of the cinema's most persuasive portraits of psychological turmoil, the film also succeeds magnificently as searing melodrama and subversive social critique, with Ray, his scriptwriters and cinematographer achieving a perfect balance between emotional realism and expressionist allegory.

## Extras

- Feature commentary by Edward Buscombe
- New filmed conversation about the film and Nicholas Ray between Jim Jarmusch (fan, friend and assistant on the last film Ray made) and Jonathan Rosenbaum
- Extracts from a 1969 interview with Nicholas Ray
- Original theatrical trailer

The DVD contains a fully illustrated 22-page colour booklet with essays by Geoff Andrew, author of *The Films of Nicholas Ray* (BFI, 2004); Jeanine Basinger and Susan Ray, and biographies

**Release date: 30 July 2007**

RRP £19.99 / cat. no. BFIVD672 / cert 12

USA / 1956 / colour / 91 mins / ratio 2.35:1 (16x9) anamorphic

This disc contains optional subtitles for the hearing-impaired on all items

BFI DVDs are available from the Filmstore at BFI Southbank, all good retailers, by mail order from 0845 458 9910 or online at [www.bfi.org.uk/video](http://www.bfi.org.uk/video)

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