

yam

yetanothermagazine filmtvmusic

dec2009

cary fukunaga:

the director speaks in
stockholm about
sin nombre

award season 2009

it's on! check out the films that
will headline this season.

in this yam we review //

**mary and max, no puedo vivir sin
ti, the cove, air doll, precious,
up in the air, crowd lu, rihanna,
family outing, sasameki koto
and more //**



STOCKHOLM TEST

a bit about the
stockholm film
festival 2009 and
possible award
season contenders//

Second of all, where is everyone? I know many of you suggested ideas these past few days, but we were already working on stuff, so couldn't fit you in. I would like to hear more from what you listen to, what you watch, and what you're reading... or shallow-buying like me.

This is also our first full cycle of issues! **yam** is officially a year, and with that this is also our second year covering award season. We have reviewed some of the films on this issue, and will comment on the rest for the next one.

If you are planning to watch any of those important films and would like to review it, we would love to include your review.

Just send me any of your reviews and other ideas to:
amy@amy-wong.com

[amywong //](#)

p.s.: are you keeping up with all these awards?

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Teehee, **julz** saves the day again. First and foremost, congratulations on winning that writing contest. **yam** is proud!

[from the editor //](#)

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mary and max

Mary and Max is a little Australian animated film released earlier in the year with the voices of Toni Collette, Philip Seymour Hoffman and Eric Bana. However, you hardly pay attention to their voices as soon as the story takes you inside the lives of the characters they're voicing.

The film tells the story of a little 8-year-old Australian girl named Mary who strikes up a very unusual friendship with a 44-year-old Jewish American man living in New York named Max. Despite being physically different and being in different continents, both feel a certain disconnect – willingly or

unwillingly – with the world around them and find a degree of comfort in being pen-pals.

The story of their lives and relationship spans 20 years of their time, and in a sense feels epic. It isn't a single moment that shapes these characters, but a combination of several of them. We get to see Mary as a little girl growing up, going to college, and even getting married. It is a story that could be pretty much be told in a live action drama, and this is why its story should be even more poignant. Few animated films deal with the stuff that this film deals with, so I wonder why so little people are paying attention to this. Oh, yeah. This isn't a bubbly piece of animation, maybe that's why.

This is probably one of the best animated films of 2009, yet it will probably be ignored due to the lack of promotion by its own studio. I wouldn't even know this was out if I hadn't heard about it online. - amy

★★★★☆



no puedo vivir sin ti

No Puedo Vivir Sin Ti is a Taiwanese film about a man and the strong bond between him and his small daughter. Because he's unemployed, he takes on dangerous diving activities to make ends meet, but all in all, both seem happy to be together. When he decides to enroll his daughter in the local school system, the government decides that she'd be better off with another family.

Why is the film titled in Spanish? I really have no idea. The film, which was selected by Taiwan to be the official entry for the upcoming Academy Awards and has just won Best Film at the Golden Horse Awards, might not be everyone's cup of tea. It's shot on black and white and even looks very grainy in some scenes with a hand-held camera, but if you're

willing to see passed these things you will be moved by the scenes with him and his daughter.

On a logical point of view, you would think he's really not suitable to take care of his own daughter, having her not attending school and living in precarious conditions. However, you never really see him leaving the kid unattended since he takes her on the boat while he is diving. One of the scenes there was very touching, in which he is in the water and the kid just looks into it pretending to watch over him.

Yes, the film is technically faulty, but it also shows the great relationship that a man and his daughter can have, and

that's more than many other films out there can accomplish with millions of dollars. Plus, there's nothing wrong with introducing some family values in a world that seems obsessed with sex and violence. - amy

★★★¼☆



the cove

Winner of many Best Documentary awards – including the first Critics Awards – The Cove shows how 23,000 dolphins are slaughtered on the Japanese city of Taijii. Sounds shocking? Yes, the number sounds impressive, but it doesn't really work that way.

My problem with this documentary is its focus. We are to believe that the film should be about the killing of these dolphins, and paints the fishermen in Taijii – who probably come from fishermen families – as insensitive savages. However, the first 20 minutes of the film tells us that a dolphin that is alive could be worth over \$150K, and that

the industry of dolphin shows on Aquariums are willing to pay for them. Then, all of a sudden we forget about the big Sea World-like Aquariums who are supposed to protect sea creatures yet capture them to make money, and they begin picking on the fishermen who make less money by selling dolphin meat. Which is the biggest problem?

It then goes on to manipulate its audience with fallacies such as presenting their point of view as fact – the dolphin committed suicide. Oh, really? – and asking people from Tokyo, Osaka and Kyoto about the tradition of eating dolphin meat in a city like Taijii, as if Japan were one homogenized culture. I wonder how much a New Yorker knows about traditions in Alaska?

It later switches its focus – again – towards mercury poison levels on dolphin meat, which is an issue that has little to do with the killing of dolphins, and more with toxic wastes on our oceans. It also mentions how they are selling dolphin meat as if it were whale meat... but then again, the issue there is not dolphin meat, the problem with that is that they're ripping people off. In the end, the film appeals to our hearts telling us that we shouldn't eat dolphins because they are intelligent creatures, but so are pigs. - amy

★★½☆☆

thirst

Vampires f*ck the world! Woohoo!

Yes, Thirst is a film about vampires, but not your typical film. For starters, it isn't about a helpless girl that falls deeply in love with the broody but charming vampire. This is not for the young Twihards, and the girl in question is hardly helpless. In fact, she's kind of scary.

Thirst is the film by Park Chan-wook, starring famous Korean actor Song Kang-ho as a catholic priest who becomes a vampire and must fight the urge to give in his animalistic instinct. However, don't be mistaken. This film isn't a scary one. Yes, you've got horror, and you've got dark comedy and drama with loads of sex. I told you it wasn't for the kiddies.

Because the film has so much mixing together, you don't really know where the film will lead. You certainly have an idea, but you can't know for sure until it's about to happen.

And that ending! It was funny and melancholic at the same time. Few films create this effect, but it actually works here. - amy

★★★¾☆☆





stockholm film fest

I was a bit unsure when I saw a contest in my university newspaper about writing movie reviews to win a year-long membership to the Stockholm film festival.

I have attended the festival before, and loved it very much. Seeing as I am now a poor student, I cannot spend that much cash on movies so I said to myself "if I win this, then I shall go to see the movies even though it means I am going to have to eat noodles for the rest of the month."

To make a long story short, I won and that is very much thanks to YAM and Amy because she forces me to review things.

This year was the festival's 20th anniversary, so it was supposed to be a good one. Looking at the movie list, I must say that they didn't disappoint. There was a great mix of movies from all over the world, although Africa was underrepresented and Asia got a bigger representation.

Susan Sarandon – whom I saw at the cinema after a movie. She was so classy and beautiful. I managed to gather my courage and say hello to her. We shared a moment *laughs* – was chosen for the Life Achievement award, while Luc Besson was chosen for the Visionary Award. Besides that, the films competing for the top prize were an impressive batch – among them An Education and Precious.

This year was awesome, I am almost inclined to say the best in a long while. It was great fun and the 12 days of the festival were jam-packed with movies. I was going nuts trying to make a decent list over the movies I wanted/ needed to see. From 16, I was able to cut it down to 11 and then 8. I wish, though, that I had been able to see more films, specially the Latin ones, but my Asian bias was way too strong.

As far as I am aware of, all of the films screened this year were sold out, proving that the festival is a popular one. I had trouble getting tickets to some of the movies I wanted to see so I had to choose difficult time slots to be able to get a seat. I really wish that the movies could be shown more times than just three or four times under the entire festival. I am aware that it could be difficult seeing as there are +300 movies to be screened during a 12 day interval. I am just being a bit grouchy.

I am already planning to get my next year membership early, so that I can book tickets earlier and be able to see even more movies! I am also writing to the festival to ask them to invite over more Japanese actors and actresses *cough*Yu Aoi, Juri Ueno and Eita, thank you very much! *cough*.

PS I have now, thanks to the festival a huge list of actors and directors I need to keep my eyes on! Always great with new loves! D.S - julyssa diaz



cary fukunaga: a Q&A about "sin nombre"

After the Saturday screening of "Sin Nombre" the audience was given the opportunity to "meet and greet" the director to ask him questions. I was amazed of how many people stayed behind, really not that amazed seeing as the movie did get a standing ovation.

The floor was open for the audience to ask freely. Cary Fukunaga came in and he was very much in good spirits, mellow and "cool". He started cracking some jokes and then the first question came. A man wondered if the feeling interpreted in the movie was an authentic one.

Cary talked about how he had done his homework before the shooting of the film. A long process of interviewing immigrants, visiting train yards and shelters. He himself took trips to understand and see the reality that is people trying to get to the border. When it came to the gang members, he visited a prison in Chiapas. There he got help from high level officials, and a list was given to him with the names of gang members that could be ready to share their experiences.

Cary explained how he had been in contact with three guys but then two since one was killed. He humorously added how they had been great copy editors to his script, helping

him correct the Spanish so that it sounded more authentic and "street-like".

A lady then asked about the background or inspiration for the film, to which Fukunaga mentioned his short film created during his second year of school called "Victoria para Chino," based on a tragic true story that he had read in the NY Times. For that short, he had done the needed "academic background check". It was when he started to do more research about the phenomena that is people trying hard to get to the border that the idea to for "Sin Nombre" was born.

Furthermore, when talking more about the production of the film, he joked a lot about seeing as this movie contains "no stars, is in Spanish and it's by a no-name director" the budget was very modest and "there were no director chairs on scene, it was a done in a very lean and mean fashion".

The casting for the movie had been done in both Mexico and Honduras. He had gone out of his way to find a Honduran girl to cast as Sayra via television, radio and newspapers. He instead found Casper, and seeing as he is a newcomer he wanted to pair him up with an actress that

was more "grafted in her craft" so that he could concentrate more on Casper. Seeing as the movie was shot in 6 weeks, he felt like he could not be able to guide along two actors, so he hoped that the girl that played Sayra could manage with minimum direction.

He managed to find his Sayra in Mexico – ironic considering Sayra is supposed to be Honduran, and Casper is a Mexican. The name "Sin Nombre" came from an article he read about how people put up unmarked crosses along the road for those immigrants that try to take themselves to the border; as a respect to those that have died trying to get there.

There are no plans for him to keep working with this issues but he commented that during the production of the film, he was greatly affected and that he gained experiences that "surely will always be with him".

Fukunaga is currently working on a remake of "Jane Eyre". The casting is done and there are just about to start shooting the film in England with Mia Wasikowska (Tim Burton's Alice in Wonderland) and Michael Fassbender (Fish Tank). - julyssa diaz

air doll

Another movie putting the spotlight one of Japan's seeming growing issues, the amount of loneliness and isolation among the population.

This time we are forced to witness the issues through the eyes of a sex-air doll (Doona Bae). One day "Nozomi" wakes up from being just a mere plastic sexual-toy to become a human-like doll that seems to have found a heart.

We get to follow her in her explorations of the world but mostly about what makes us human, if there is something that does.

This movie is beautiful in the most painstaking way. It hurt to watch because of all the sadness even though there were some funny moments. It is a beautifully done observation about human kind and its more darkest notions.

I don't know what more I can say about this movie to make it justice in just words. I was very much affected and I look forward to see more movies from this director. - julili

★★★★½

pg10



map of the sounds of tokyo

I have this dream, I dream that one day I am going to be able to write a script that is good enough to be made into a movie. I know that I am far from that dream when it comes to skill. I need to continue to write and grow as a writer. Had I written a script today, Map of the Sounds of Tokyo would had been my end result.

The kind of script that is amateurish, trying too hard to build this intriguing atmosphere with a mysterious character that is complex and abnormal. Adding to that, some very complicated human relationships, a lot of angst and a funky little uncle that is supposed to be wise and deep.

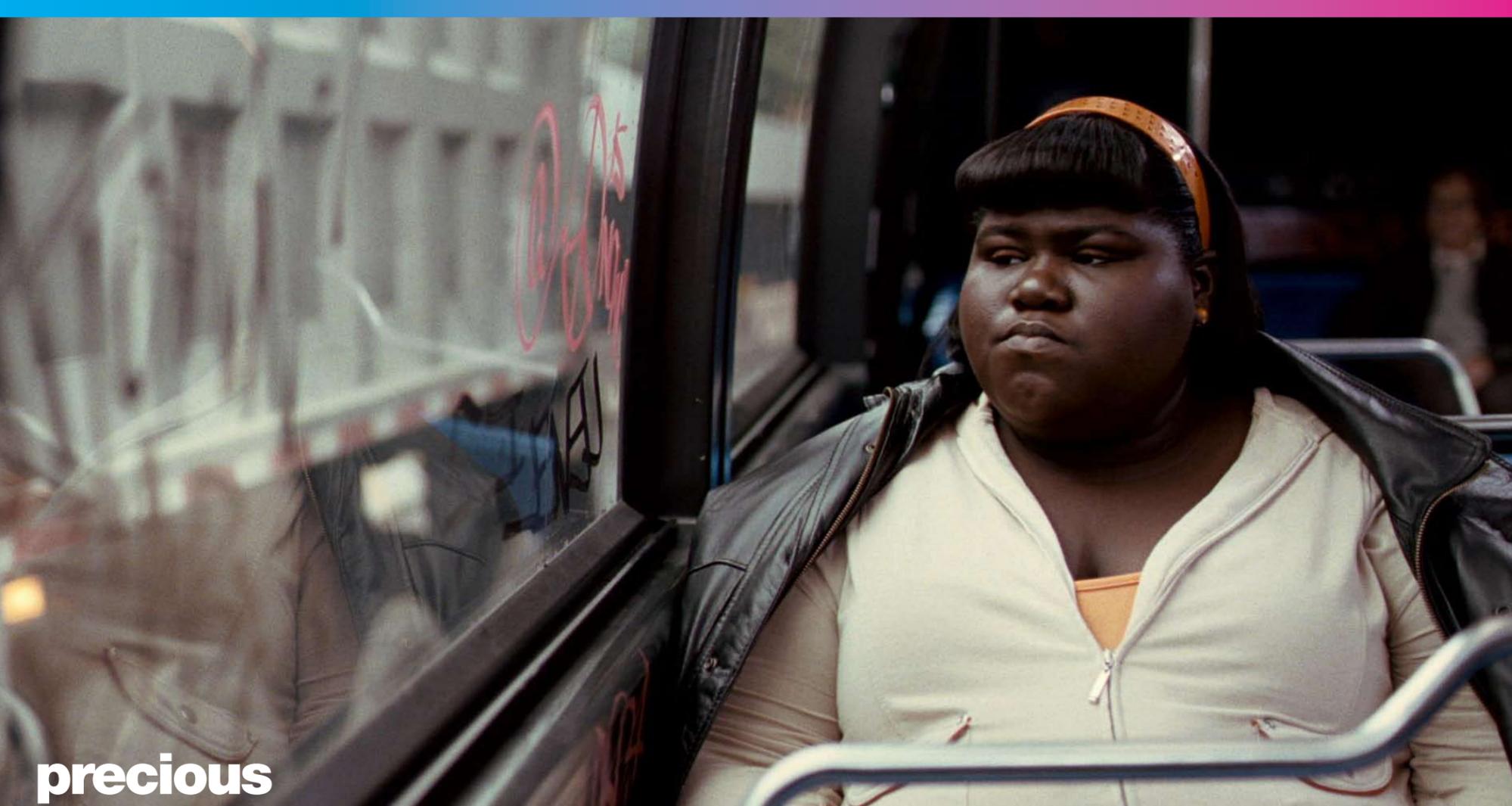
Excuse me as I barf.

This movie is just a proof that non-Asians shouldn't do Asian-themed movies. I wonder why this project was given the amount of funding and support it was given by Spanish culture organizations and governments(!).

And now I am just raving about the bad direction and writing. I shall not get into the acting seeing as I am out of words. - julili

½☆☆☆☆





precious

Precious seems to be one of the indie darlings for this upcoming award season, snatching many audience awards in several film festivals, and getting Mo'Nique loads of praise for her role as the title character's abusive mother.

Precious tells the story of a 16-year-old girl who happens to be obese, illiterate and pregnant for the second time. She seems to be good at math, but this doesn't seem to stop the principal of her school from kicking her out, and letting her enroll for alternative schooling where she meets other problem girls that are trying to get their diploma to move on with their lives. She also meets Ms. Rain who goes to

the moon and back to help Precious out of her current life situation, because that's some crappy life she has.

The film isn't perfect – most films aren't – but at least it's a film that will let its audience leave with something other than humming in their ears because of the explosions.

Precious is a film about its characters, and its acting. Gabby Sidibe who plays Precious does so wonderfully, you actually want to hug her to ease her pain. And hey! Mariah Carey can actually act! Who knew?

Moreover, it would be a pity if Mo'Nique decides not to promote the film and campaign for her win, though, because

that's half the fun for us! On her scenes, I felt bad whenever she yelled at Precious, and couldn't keep my eyes away while she told her side of the story.

A good book adaptation is that which makes you want to grab the book as soon as you finish watching the film, even if the ending leaves you with a bittersweet aftertaste. - amy

★★★¾☆



up in the air

I was practically hanging out of my seat while I was enjoying this movie. Witty, subtly funny and yet with a warmth that can sometimes be found in dramatical releases.

I want to say that it was a typical Reitman movie. Not many will understand what I am saying but I cannot find another way to describe it. All from the plot to the way the story is portrayed to its extremely realistic characters. It was perfection from beginning to end.

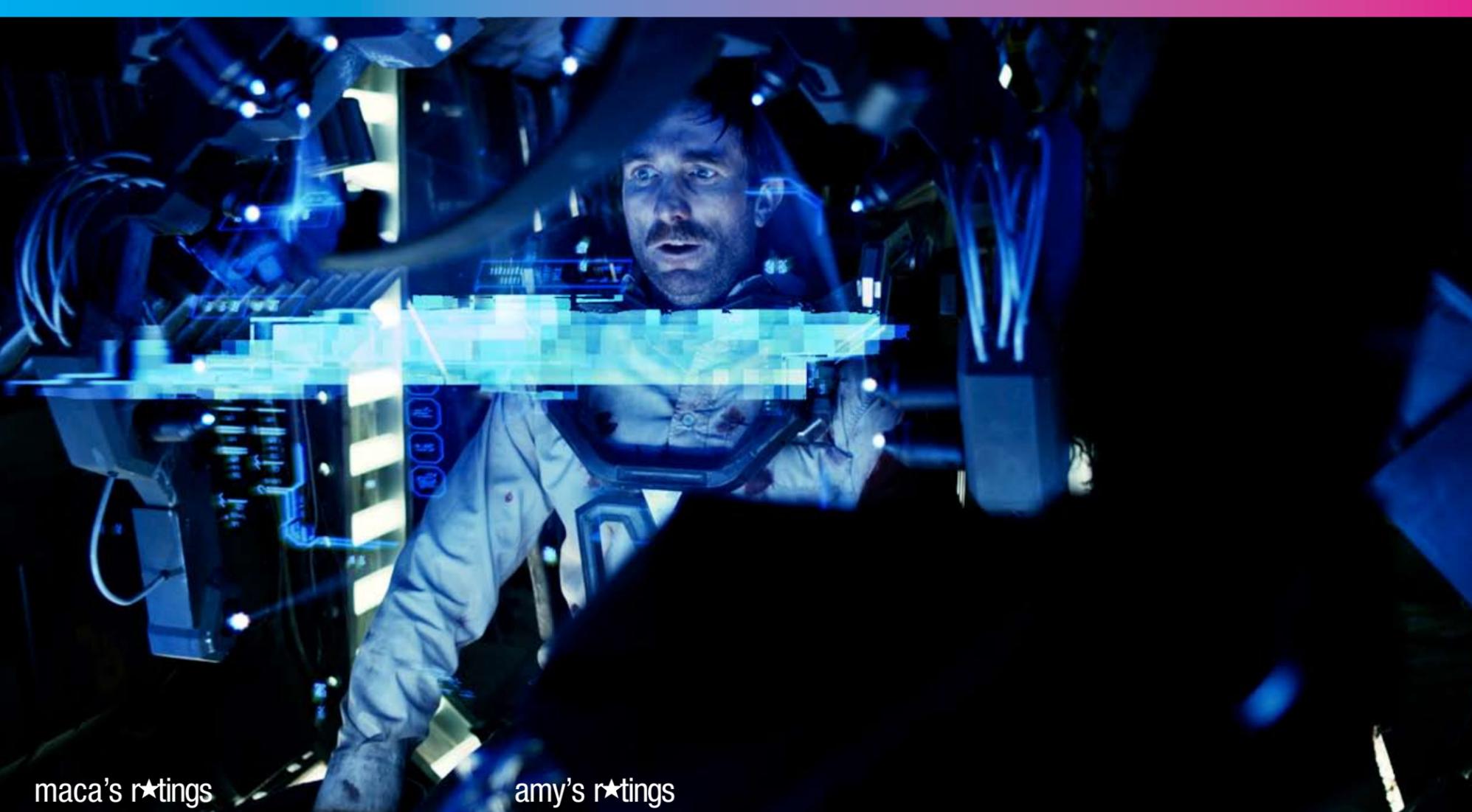
Clooney plays "Ryan Bigham", a man that is very much his own, from his somewhat abnormal career – hired by corporations to fire people – quite frank and in your face life views, to the way he sees airplanes as his real "home".

Bigham has all the qualities to be an extremely morbid and depressing character but add the well-known Clooney charm and you have a perfect anti-hero that is lovable.

Add to that an amazing ensemble cast, the movie ends up having more heart albeit the depressing issue it tackles. It is really one of those "light-in-the dark" movies, one that leaves you hopeful and happy.

A big shout out to Jason Bateman! Who managed to steal every single scene he had by just talking. - julili

★★★★★



coming soon

maca's ratings

amy's ratings

- Fame ★★½☆☆
- The Time Traveler's Wife ★★★★★
- Ghosts of Girlfriends Past ★★★★★
- The Invention of Lying ★½☆☆☆

- The Time Traveler's Wife ★★½☆☆
- The Private Lives of Pippa Lee ★★½☆☆
- Fish Tank ★★½☆☆
- Coco Avant Chanel (Coco Before Chanel) ★★★★★
- Food, Inc. ★★½☆☆
- Taxidermia ★★¾☆☆
- McDull, Kung Fu Kindergarten ★★½☆☆
- Where the Wild Things Are ★★½☆☆
- Michael Jackson's This Is It ★★★★★
- District 9 ★★½☆☆
- Juryoku PIERO (A Pierrot) ★★★★★
- Yang Yang ★★½☆☆

- 2012 ★★½☆☆
- Medicine for Melancholy ★★★★★
- The Age of Stupid ★★☆☆☆
- Good Hair ★★¾☆☆
- 9 (Nine) ★★☆☆☆
- Das weiße Band (The White Ribbon) ★★¾☆☆
- Ballast ★★½☆☆
- Dare mo Mamotte Kurenai (Nobody to Watch Over me) ★★½☆☆
- Yomei Ikkagetsu no Hanayome (April Bride) ★★½☆☆
- The September Issue ★★★★★
- The Hurt Locker ★★¾☆☆

my85's ratings

- Michael Jackson's This Is It ★★★★★
- The Twilight Saga: New Moon ★★¼☆☆
- District 9 ★★½☆☆
- 2012 ★★¼☆☆
- A Christmas Carol ★★½☆☆

in theaters

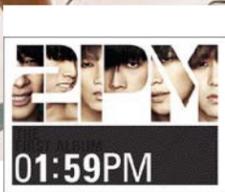
- December
 - Invictus (11th)
 - The Princess and the Frog
 - The Lovely Bones
 - A Single Man
 - Avatar (18th)
 - The Young Victoria
 - Nine (25th)
 - Sherlock Holmes
 - The Imaginarium of Doctor Parnassus
 - White Ribbon (30th)
- January
 - Daybreakers (8th)
 - The Book of Eli (15th)
 - Legion (22nd)
- February
 - Dear John (5th)
 - The Wolfman (12th)
 - A Prophet

on dvd/blu-ray

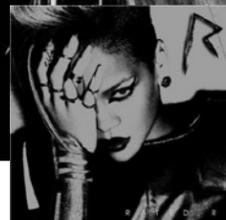
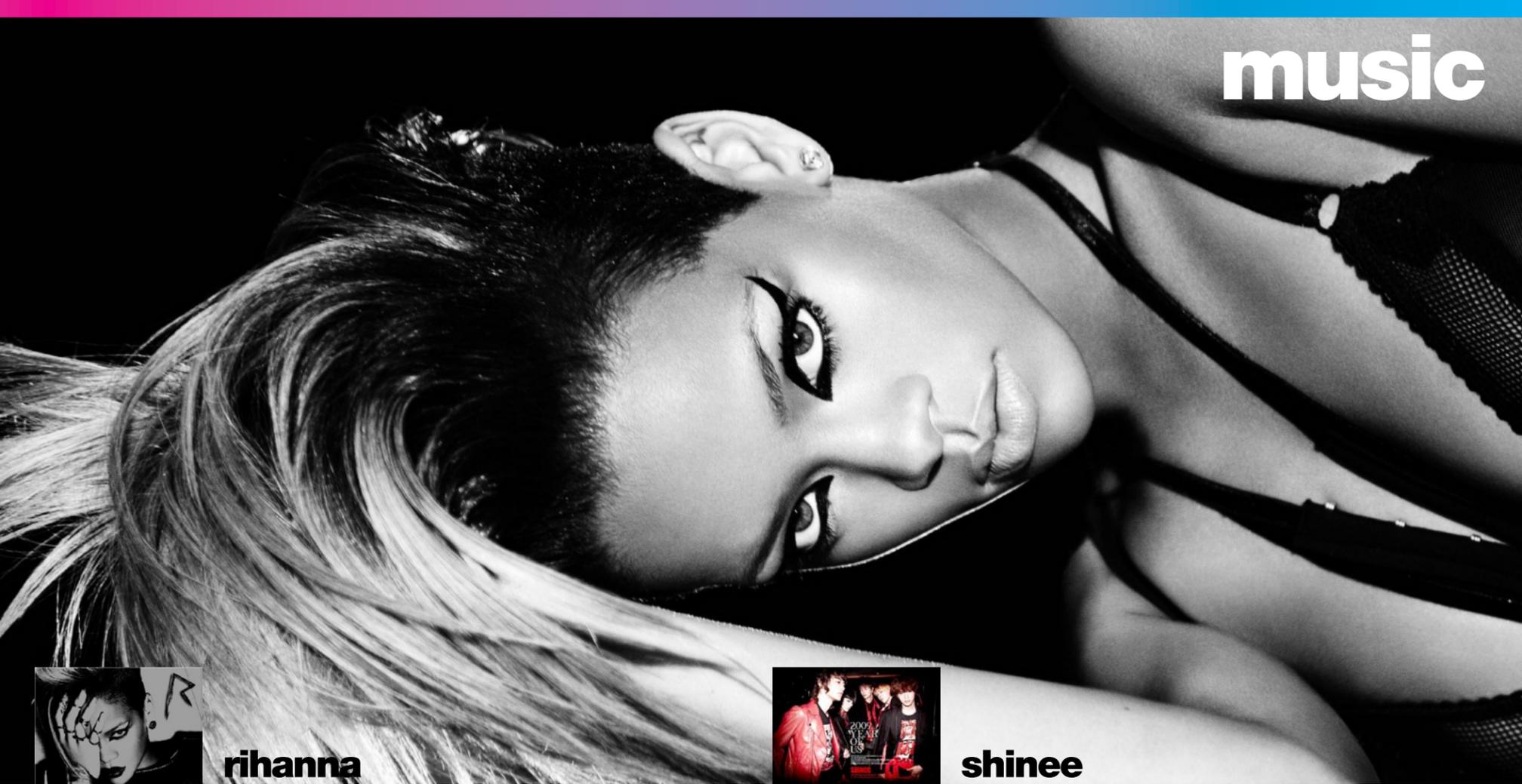
- December
 - Inglourious Basterds (15th) [2-Disc Blu-Ray][DVD]
 - Taking Woodstock [Blu-Ray][DVD]
 - District 9 (22nd) [Blu-Ray][DVD][2-Disc DVD]
 - (500) Days of Summer [Blu-Ray][DVD]
 - 9 (29th) [Blu-Ray][DVD]
- January
 - Lorna's Silence (5th) [Blu-Ray][DVD]
 - 10 Things I Hate about You [2-Disc Blu-Ray][2-Disc DVD]
 - Departures (12th) [DVD]
 - Downloading Nancy [DVD]
 - Mancora [DVD]
- February
 - Amreeka [Blu-Ray][DVD]
 - The Brothers Bloom [Blu-Ray][DVD]
 - In the Loop [Blu-Ray][DVD]
 - Fame (26th) [Blu-Ray]
 - Michael Jackson: This is It [Blu-Ray][DVD]
 - The Hurt Locker [Blu-Ray][DVD]
- February
 - Casablanca (2nd) [Blu-Ray]



crowd lu



2pm



rihanna



shinee

Seven Days (October 30th 2009)

It doesn't matter how bad you might be feeling, just put on this album and listen to Crowd Lu's (Lu Guang Zhong) soothing voice and be happy, because that's the only way to describe what he can do to his audience. It's as if anyone could hate rainbows and puppies.

The album starts really strong with Crowd's first single simply titled Oh Yeah!, which obviously makes you close your eyes, put

your hand up and bob your head up and down. The rest of the album sort of loses that energy, but still delivers with the happy music and gets you to smile.

Favorite tracks: Oh Yeah!, Love Exercise, Happy Restaurant, Wind and Rain, and Goodbye Hooks.

★★★¾☆

1:59 PM (November 14th 2009)

After much controversy where their leader had to flee to the US, 2PM release their first ever album while trying to get passed all the drama.

There is no doubt that the unfortunate "scandal" of their leader is going to follow them no matter which direction they take. Yet 2PM tries to show with this album what they are made of. Coming back with a new style and sound, the album is quite good. It

is a pity that it is not a product with only new songs (I guess JYP got lazy?). Although, a few of the new songs are very much catchy in a 2PM style. Seeing as I am 2PM biased I guess that is enough for me when it shouldn't. A decent album all in all. - jullili

★★★☆☆

Rated R (November 23rd 2009)

The controversy Rihanna faced was a sad one. But now she is back with an album that is angry, soulful and pensive.

This is not a commercial album, this album was made to make you listen to the songs. The sound is a darker one, angrier and rawer. This is definitely a new side to Rihanna; one that has been evolving since her latest release.

There are some songs that stand out, not because they are made to dance to, but because they are meant to make you relax and understand.

A side that is more complex and mature, this album is a great companion when you need music that makes you chill. - jullili

★★★★☆

2009, Year of Us (October 19th 2009)

From being innocent and somewhat naïve "Romeos" in their previous mini-album released just six months ago, the transformation of the group for this album is jaw-dropping.

Not only is the appearance the one to undergo a drastic change, the sound is very different from what has been heard before. Consisting of six tracks, there is a sense of rawness in the way songs are sung and even in the production.

The new sound and style is refreshing, it gives the fans something new to obsess over. It also makes you realize that this boy band is a bit older than what they may appear, and the album shows it off while keeping some of that "boyish" charm.

In contrast with "Romeo", this mini-album strikes out directly. The tracks don't need to be listened to several times as to find something to like. - jullili

★★★½☆



westlife

Where We Are
(November 27th 2009)



That Westlife never made it big in America doesn't really matter. After all, they are the third biggest boy band act behind only the BackStreet Boys and the New Kids on the Block.

I find them comfortable. They're not trying to be anything that they're not. Westlife is a vocal group, and this is why power pop ballads and catchy slow pop tunes are their favorite songs when making an album. Where We Are is just like that. The album and its song titles (Where We Are/ What About Now? Really?) might not be witty, but it has its comfortable melodies. Formulaic? Yes, but they work.

Highlights? Shadows, and Sound of a Broken Heart

★★¾☆☆

coming soon

December 15th	February 9th
Alicia Keys -	Aleks Syntek -
The Element of Freedom	Metodos para Dar Placer
Lady Gaga - The Fame Monster	Belinda - Carpe Diem
Thalia - En Primera Fila	
	February 23rd
December 21st	Michelle Branch -
Mary J. Blige -	Everything Comes and Goes
Stronger with Each Other	
Lil Wayne - Rebirth	
January 12th	
Vampire Weekend - Contra	
Polysics - Absolute Polysics	
February 2nd	
Lifhouse - Smoke & Mirrors	
Jamie Foxx - Body	

this is us worldwide tour backstreet boys live in stockholm sweden 2009

I was never a huge fan of BSB, but there is no doubt that their music inflicted much of my childhood and early teenage years. Although I refused to be recognized as a BSB fan, I was easily up on my feet when they started to sing many of their old well-known songs.

The crowd consisted of many mid-twenties and early thirty women. All there too see these men that were a big part of their younger years. Even though BSB refuses to call themselves men – there was a t-shirt that said “we are not backstreet men, we are backstreet boys!” – they very much are. Yet, they still dance and sing with the same ardor that many of today's younger boy-band members do.

I was left amazed at the singing quality as well as the dancing – Nick literally blew me away – they managed to deliver a show that had many screaming and dancing. It was nice to reminiscence all of those childhood memories, being thrown back to the joy that used to be those innocent days through the power of those cheesy lyrics and addictive beats. Their new songs left me unaffected though, to me BSB is very much that music from the beginning of this new century.

Funny thing is that the crowd wasn't just only fangirls, a lot of fanboys were present. I had a very passionate one just in front of me, he sang with such joy and threw his arms up in the air. It was a pure delight to witness that. - julili

eva ayllón live in stockholm sweden 2009

It was the night when Peruvian music warmed the cold streets of Stockholm. People inside the concert hall were standing up, dancing and clapping their hands raw. Eva Ayllón had arrived to Stockholm and with her, the joy that is Peruvian music. She delivered her most known and beloved hits, a rich repertoire of festejo, landó and criolla music. The crowd went ecstatic as they heard the songs they so often played at home from burned CDs live.

As an entertainer, Ms. Ayllón is a true delight, witty and funny as she engages with her audience; at the same time she is passionate and serious. She gives so much of herself on stage, she clearly has fun as she dances around, shakes her hips and gives out a large smile. You can sense that this person truly lives and breathes the art of music. It is when she starts singing that you are moved; that rich, deep voice manages to soar up in the hall and there is not one that is not left unaffected.

With the songs that many in the audience grew up to, a bit of Peru became very much alive inside each and everyone. - julili

the swell season

Strict Joy
(October 23rd 2009)

Glen Hansard and Marketa Irglova are back with The Swell Season's sophomore album – without counting the successful soundtrack to the indie and music lovers favorite Once – Strict Joy. It's really tough to separate the characters of the film from the actual musicians, which would work if they were trying to make the 2nd part of Once... Twice?

Strict Joy captures that sort of melancholic vibe from the film, so it's very familiar already. Wondering who they are is over, because we now relate this sound with them. It's so easy to connect with the themes, soothing melodies, and Hansard's harmony combined with Irglova's and vice versa.

There are some truly great tracks on this album, which you should be looking forward to listen to... if you haven't yet.

The best tracks? The Rain, High Horses, The Verb, Love that Conquers, and Two Tongues.

★★½☆☆



more albums

- Arctic Monkeys - Humbug ★★¾☆☆
- Dead Man's Bones - ★★★★★
- Dead Man's Bones ★★★★★
- Michael Bublé - Crazy Love ★★★★★
- Robbie Williams - ★★★★★
- Reality Killed the Video Star ★★¾☆☆
- Tegan and Sara - Sainthood ★★★★★
- Norah Jones - The Fall ★★★★★
- Alejandro Sanz - Paraíso Express ★★★★★
- Adam Lambert - ★★★★★
- For your Entertainment ★★½☆☆
- Milk@Coffee - ★★★★★
- Accustomed to Loneliness ★★★★★
- Glee: The Music, Volume 1 ★★★★★
- Matt and Kim - Grand ★★★★★

family outing

People often say it; you can choose your friends, but you can't choose your family.

The thing about that saying is that you have the notion that people don't get along with their families, but what if you do? After all, the relationship you've got with family should be closer than the one you've got with friends, unless that friend feels already like "family".

So what do you get when you put a bunch of celebrities together, and make them act as if they were family? You get Family Outing, a Korean variety program primarily hosted by one of South Korea most popular comedians, Yoo Jaesuk, alongside pop singer Lee Hyori, pop singer Kim Jong Kook, singer songwriter Yoon Jong Shin, actor Kim Sooro, and current pop idol Kang Daesung from Big Bang. On the latest episodes joined by "the new family members" actress Park Siyeon, and actor Park Haejin who are replacing actress Park Yejin and actor Lee Chunhee on the show.

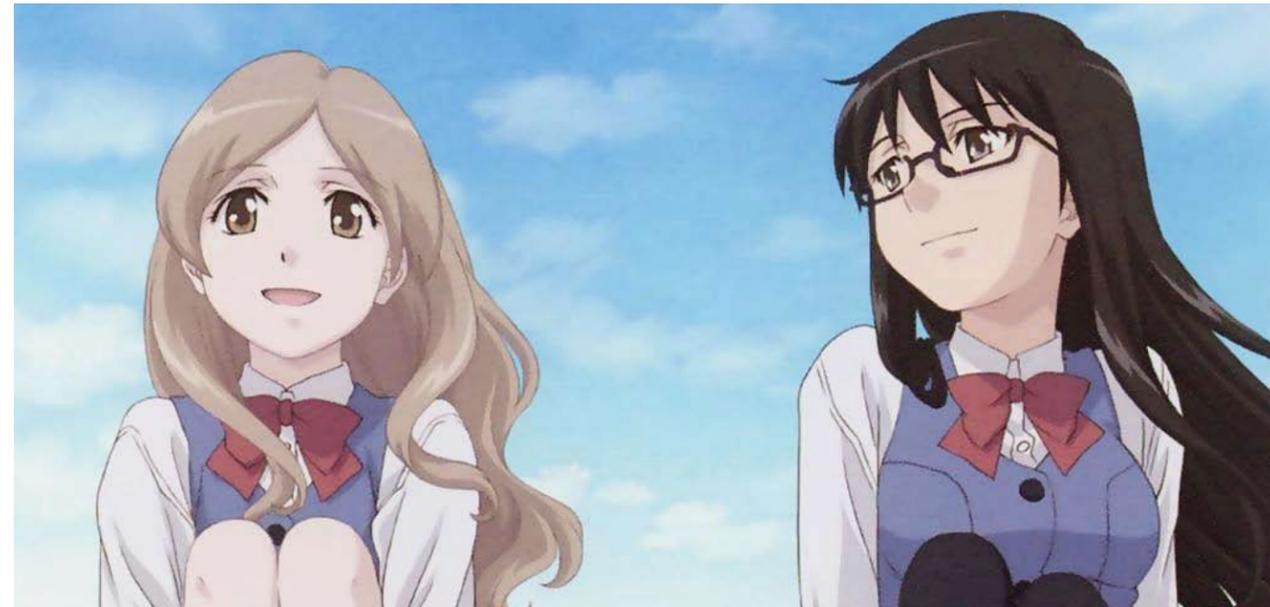
What is it about this program that works? There is this notion that celebrities are cool and glamorous, but then they try to sell themselves like they're just like us. On this show, however, Korea's idols ditch their cool and glamor for home-styled and good-natured entertainment when together, alongside a celebrity guest, they visit a random Korean town and take care of the owner's house while they're off on vacation. The Family sets out to complete a task list while playing games and competing for points to avoid chores that go from feeding cows, fishing, to catching sea creatures, harvest rice, etc. Despite the fun of those crazy games and competitions, the best part of the show is when they finally sit down for a good meal together as Family.

It is so hard to imagine an American celebrity that would allow himself or herself be in this type of show for fear of looking like anything but cool. Member Daesung always points out how his manager would be against him looking like a dork or a bit silly on the show, which proves to be popular with fans. There's also Lee Hyori who on stage often performs provocative numbers on par with any American pop princess, but shows up in slacks, t-shirts and very little make up on for the program.

All of them perform and make endorsements, which probably means they make good money, yet you see them being thrown into muddy waters as they play games while trying to catch fishes, catching wild chickens for dinner, catching sea creatures like octopuses, squids, and the seldom flounder or angler fish. They harvest rice, and dig for some potatoes, try to find ginseng and dig out radishes. They struggle to get their freshly-caught food on the cooking table, they cut and chop, they simmer and get excited about meat, they taste and continue to make deliciously-looking food.

That's the closest family. The one that jokes around, fights over the last piece of meat, and call themselves names, but leaves everything in the past when it's mealtime.

More Reality TV – if there should be any – should be like this.



sasameki koto

Based on the Yuri (girl on girl) manga, Sasameki Koto (Whispered Words) is the anime version airing on TV Tokyo, and online by CrunchyRoll. It tells the story of Sumika Murasame, and intelligent and athletic girl that is secretly in love with her best friend Ushio Kazama, who also likes girls but never notices Murasame because she's not her type, and she thinks her friend is straight.

Kazama likes tiny cute girls who wear kawaii dresses and colors – the complete opposite of Murasame's tall and cool frame with a strong personality, getting top marks on school and kicking ass on any sport, including basketball, volleyball and Karate. But none of that, Kazama is too self-absorbed to ever notice Murasame watching over her, or is too blinded by the cuteness around her.

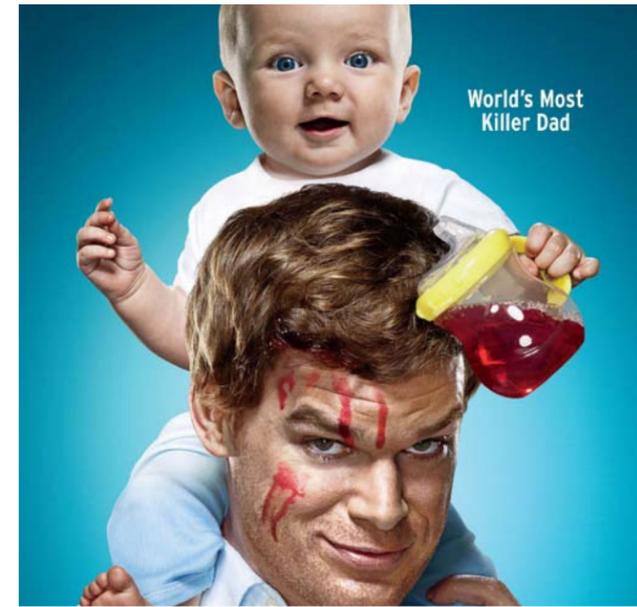
They are joined by Miyako, and innocent-looking and clumsy girl – but don't be fooled – who is in a relationship with Tomoe, an 18-year-old young woman who took 2 years off of school, and acts as a more insightful and mature view to helplessly-in-love-with-the-best-friend Murasame. All of them are joined by some other girls who are conveniently lesbians or Yuri fans, which is basically the same. Really, I've never seen one classrooms with so many lesbians. And then there's this boy who seems to like cross-dressing... funny, but there are times I feel sorry for him.

Overall, this adaptation seems okay. The art seems typical anime on television style, which isn't a problem for me since I've grown accustomed to it.

However, the story has a certain simplicity when dealing with these feelings, and Asia knows how to work with them, especially Japan and all these Yuri and Yaoi worlds. They can always tell these type of stories of friends falling for each other despite their gender. It's either that or there's a lot of wishful thinking from fans.

Sasameki Koto's story is cute, and funny – funny weird and funny ha-ha – and sometimes goes there with some drama or suggestive situations. It's actually hard not to crush on Murasame, who excels at everything she does except telling Kazama she likes her, and cooking.

★★★½☆



dexter - season 4

I don't think I can make justice to what Season 4 of Dexter turned out to be. We were introduced to the Trinity Killer, none other than the average Arthur Miller, freakishly played by John Lithgow who should be getting some award on any category for it.

Why is the Trinity Killer so haunting? Because he could be anyone. Anyone is boring, but it makes it more real. The season began when Dexter thought that he could learn a thing or two from Trinity, only to find out he wasn't as perfect as he seemed to be. However, Dexter did learn something. Life isn't supposed to be perfect, and that you're supposed to live it, a realization that seemed to arrive a little too late.

What is so perfect about this season? It's because it ties with the first season, one that I think is the best on the show, and possibly on any other show. Season 1 was like a gruesome poetical tragedy, and on this last season it continues to weave a pretty intricate line, that could turn into a mess... but it could also be pretty interesting.

The last scene of the season is something that will keep the viewers itching for a whole year, you know? For sure, the second best season until now.

★★★★½

les amants papillons

by Benjamin Lacombe
Story/Illustration
★★★¼☆

Talk about shallow buying! I picked up a Spanish copy of Lacombe's Les Amants Papillons (Los Amantes Mariposa/ The Butterfly Lovers) because the cover was oh-so-pretty. There is no denying that the book contains wonderful illustrated work in the 30 or so pages it has, on 15.5in x 10.75in good quality paper.

The story, if you don't know it by now, is loosely based on the famous Chinese (tragic) legend about two lovers that can't be together. – can they ever? – This time around, however, they give it a Japanese spin to tell you the story of Naoko who is a feisty girl who likes to study like the boys do, but it's promised in matrimony by her father. Of course she doesn't get married, she dresses up as a boy, and meets Kamo, who feels funny with Naoko but he doesn't know “he” is a girl.

The text is easy for kids to read, very little of it, and huge... in case you have trouble seeing. The take on the story is really aimed at kids, but I don't know why you would buy such a pretty book for kids. Maybe you can afford it.

Perfect buy for those who like to collect illustrations. Not so great, if you're looking forward to reading.

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