

Intergalactic Friends

Dragonchic

Achievement in Use of Music: Shortlist 2008

The review below may contain spoilers for Smallville up to season 7.

Brad: Dragonchic has one of the most consistently dynamic senses of musicality I've ever seen. Here she uses it to tell the story of the evolution of Clark Kent and Lex Luthor's relationship, and presents it in such explosive fashion that the idea of "telling a story" just doesn't seem to do it justice. It's more like an amusement park ride.

Nicky: "Dynamic" is such an appropriate word to use for all of Dragonchic's work, and Intergalactic Friends is a shining example of that. There is just so much interesting musicality in this vid that it's hard to know where to start.

Brad: The vid rockets through the years of Smallville, faster than a speeding bullet, shot-through with meaningful lyric ties and clever presentation devices like comic book panels that burst into motion.

Nicky: I love the comic book panels. They add so much personality to the vid and are a wonderful hail back to Smallville's comic roots.

Brad: Yes, they're so incredibly appropriate to the source and the themes of the vid. It's also visually interesting how Dragonchic uses each of those comic panels to reflect the different layers in the music. Even when there are four panels in motion on screen, each perfectly reflects a voice or instrument in a way that would be strong enough to carry the vid on its own, and still dense with meaning and parallels. That's most clearly illustrated in the section that starts at 2:00. It's two vids for the price of one!

Nicky: What I find particularly effective in the 2:00 - 2:17 dual screen segment is how well the two sections play off each other. It would be so easy to create sensory overload here and completely divide the viewer's attention in an undesirable way. Instead, the segments play off each other by their varying dynamics - which I think is helped by the fact that each panel follows one layer of music, and the layers of music play very well in counterpoint against each other. The same feeling comes across in the visuals. It's packed with information, but is never so busy that you don't know where to look.

Brad: That's a really fine line to tread, and it's admirable how well Dragonchic walks it.

Another thing I admire about the vid is how it uses source effects to reflect the music. A few examples: The eyes at 0:11; superspeed at 0:27; the S at 0:47; the symbol at 0:55; superspeed again at 1:00; beam at 1:14; and so on. But I especially love how the otherworldly clip selections reflect the synth sound of the "intergalactic" vocals beginning at 1:17 and 2:17.

Nicky: You mentioned some of my favourite moments. My others include the camera movement on the synth at 0:37, the great speed change at 0:39, the lovely camera rotation on the vocals at 0:57, the yellow warning light at 1:03... I could just keep naming every single frame in this vid, couldn't I? Oh, one more - the way the vocals of "intergalactic" completely echoes the light patterns at 2:25. That is too genius for words.

Brad: Also, the way Dragonchic assigns the role of Clark to one rapper and Lex to another makes the whole thing so much easier to follow and key narrative moments much more impactful.

Another reason is because the lyric ties are so transparent, particularly when the lyrics turn to old-school "battle" challenges and bravado. The intro to the second verse ("step into the party, disrupt the whole scene") is just so perfect for the visuals that I laugh every time.

Nicky: The editing dazzled me so much that it took a while before I got around to reading the lyrics. Once I finally managed to do it, I really got a whole new level of appreciation for the music use in this vid. The lyric use is just so clever and tongue-in-cheek, and entirely awesome in how appropriate it is throughout.

Brad: Despite everything that's going on with the presentation and source effects and motion and brilliant musicality, the most effective moment in the vid for me is "plot and scheme" at 1:42. That's absolutely chilling and speaks volumes about how far they've come.

Nicky: I love that bit. The other bit I thought had particular impact is the ending from 2:26 onward, which goes a bit AU and uses existing footage to suggest events that will eventually happen in the future. I just love the cape layered over the images of Clark in glasses and Lex as the president who sets off nukes. Expertly carried out, and - as you said - extremely chilling. It really goes a long way toward showing the epic development of this relationship from its innocent roots. This vid is simply a joy to watch.

Brad: Whether you're a die-hard Smallville fan, a Superman fan, or just want to see a cool looking vid, you'll enjoy every moment.

THE FOURTH WALL
