

Signed, the Doctor

Hollywoodgrrl

Achievement in Innovation: Shortlist 2008
Achievement in Vidding: Shortlist 2008

The review below may contain spoilers for new Doctor Who up to season 4.

Nicky: What I love about vidding is how many different ways with which one could approach the practice. There are so many ways of striking a balance between the visuals, music, concept and narrative, and vids using primarily the same source can look very different depending on the vidders' differing focus. Here, Hollywoodgrrl takes a non-canon projection into future events and presents it in such a compelling, tragic way that it's hard to see how the story could play out otherwise.

Brad: Hollywoodgrrl is a very strong storyteller, first and foremost, and vids just happen to be the medium in which she works. That's beautifully illustrated by this one, which feels hand-crafted in the best possible sense. It's almost like looking into a vidder's brain.

Nicky: This vid reinterprets the canon "happy ending" of the Other Doctor and Rose as something much darker, incapable of sustaining itself no matter how much both these characters (and the viewer) may want it.

Brad: Many viewers who longed for a happy ending between the Doctor and Rose seemed to feel a sense of unease about how things turned out, though many were unable to express exactly why. I think this vid does that for them.

Nicky: This vid identifies the flaw in the plan as the Other Doctor's inability to reconcile his human and Time Lord aspects. Given what happened to Donna on the flip side of the coin, the concept is at once audacious and completely believable. In some regards it's a very AU notion, and I am in awe of Hollywoodgrrl for making the statement so elegantly and effortlessly through this vid.

Brad: And yet at the same time it's the *opposite* of AU in that it's pointing out a great truth about the nature of the character and his universe. That's what I find the most compelling about the vid.

Of course, that's without even getting into the look and feel of the whole piece, which is remarkable on a whole other level.

Nicky: The watercolour effect plays an essential role, making the audience feel as though they are not so much viewing a vid as an animated painting. The visuals are spectacular, and I'm particularly in awe of how well the extensive external footage plays together with source. From the chillingly beautiful starting image to the Vitruvian man, from a gorgeous sunset to

the extended use of a suited figure lost in the waves, every single external image plays its own role to tie in with existing source and support the emotional development of the story.

Brad: I love how the vidder focuses on the sea and the clock. You get a sense of bigness and timelessness through things that the Other Doctor would see every day in his life with Rose. Yet it all looks dreamlike and otherworldly.

Nicky: Being an instrumental vid, the narrative is delivered primarily through the use of text. The text work is done masterfully: in the first few watches I was focusing on the story so much I didn't even register the process by which it is delivered. It was only much later that I became aware of the way the text fades in and out of the screen in gorgeous soft wipes, blurs, playing with font sizes and composition with a particular focus on the light and textures of the underlying visuals. I particularly loved 0:35 to 0:45 where the text weaves in and out above and under water, and the gorgeous image/text composition at 1:04.

Brad: The composition is absolutely wonderful throughout. It's so well thought-out and executed that the composition itself strengthens the narrative and makes statements about the images (literally and figuratively) through positioning alone.

Nicky: All of this is meticulous and beautiful enough to warrant specific attention, yet cohesive enough to blend into the vid when the first priority is to deliver the narrative to the viewer without gratuitous attention to vidder input. A perfect balance is struck.

Brad: Art and composition aside, the musicality itself is meticulous and beautiful. I particularly loved the heartbeat at 0:33 and the subtle little reverse of direction at 0:36. Those types of moments continue all through, giving the vid its distinctive musical personality.

Nicky: The vid flows together so well that it's hard to pick out timestamps, though I do want to make particular note of 1:26 to 1:29, the spectacular parallel of draining floodwaters and a winding clock hand.

Brad: That is a fantastic example of composition making a statement, as the clock positioned between the Other Doctor and Rose fades into the swirling sea, washing everything away.

Nicky: We've all heard the old adage "a picture is worth a thousand words." I really feel it in the case of Signed, The Doctor.