

This is Matrix Life

Mister Anderson

Achievement in Use of Music: Winner 2008

Achievement in Innovation: Shortlist 2008

Achievement in Vidding: Shortlist 2008

The review below may contain spoilers for Fight Club and The Matrix trilogy.

Brad: I don't know about you, but this is a vid that I didn't fully appreciate on my first view. The first impression for me was a vid full of clever lyric ties and fun musicality, but after a few rewatches - purely for my own enjoyment - I started to appreciate it on a much deeper level. Almost as a life mantra.

Nicky: That's funny because I had pretty much the same experience. The genius of the tech was always going to be apparent from the first view, but it takes a while for the true comic genius to seep through and even longer - for me at least - to appreciate it on a more content-based level. It takes the semi-nihilist, anti-materialistic heart of both Fight Club and The Matrix and creates a truly masterful fan interpretation of the two.

Brad: Yet it comes across as such a simple statement, which is a real credit to how the vidder presents it all.

It's kind of a study in contrasts, built in layers. The vidder's brilliant transitions and added effects, like the background cutouts and digitizing and morphing, are presented in a subtle way that blends perfectly with the source. Even the title sequences at the beginning and the end seem so extravagant. You can tell that Mr. Anderson loved this vid into existence.

Nicky: I love the opening titles. It is just so incredibly polished and professional-looking, and certainly one of the best fits to music I've ever seen in title work. The ending titles also look amazingly, painstakingly done and extremely professional.

Brad: Other favorite examples are the background cutout at 0:48. the repeated impact at 1:02, the ultra-cool freeze-zoom-morph at 2:16, the jump cuts on the manic smile at 2:41, and the lipsync segment starting at 3:12.

Nicky: Was the background cutout at 0:48 vidder input or source? I can't remember and would have to rewatch the film to refresh my memory.

Brad: I don't have the movie on hand, but either way it's used extremely well here.

Nicky: It really speaks to the vidder's technique that I can't tell this point straight off the bat.

The repeated impact and reversed clip at 1:02 is probably one of my favourite moments ever in vidding; it's just so insanely perfect in a number of ways. Ditto the freeze-morph at 2:41 and the lipsyncing.

Another of my favourite moments is the "this is your life" segment at 1:18 - 1:20: the cutting and movement are just out of this world in its gorgeous sense of momentum.

Brad: The construction and movement of it all is just awe-inspiring and perfect all through. Yet it's all used to present over-the-top, literal lyric ties - which themselves look so much deeper on rewatch. It's hard to take "deliver me from Swedish furniture" or "we are all part of the same compost heap" seriously when you first see it, but as a part of the whole it becomes so much more.

Nicky: The use of lyrics is such an integral part of this vid. On the one hand, the overly literal interpretations are very much intended for humour and always timed perfectly for that; on a deeper level of reading I agree that it says exactly what Fight Club tries to say canonically, but the supporting layer of Matrix visuals just makes it that much easier to parse the argument on a more intellectual level.

Leaving aside the "intellectual" comment for now, I feel the need to point out a few of my favourite lyric interpretations on the literal side of things: the utter tongue-in-cheek feeling for "good to the last drop" at 0:44 and "where you are now you can't even imagine what the bottom will be like" at 1:00; the witty "nothing is static" at 1:13 and "deliver me from clever art" at 2:29; the hilarious "you are not a beautiful and unique snowflake" at 1:31, "let me never be complete" at 2:20 and "let the chips fall where they may" at 2:39; and most of all the entire "you are not x" segment from 1:46 - 2:05, though my particular favourite was "you're not your bowel cancer", given the meaning of that clip in context. And that's just a handful out of a great deal many more.

Brad: I wholeheartedly agree about all of those. I mean, the musicality is *astounding*, and I think that's what initially hooks anyone who sees this. The jump cuts and quick reverses and amazing use of source effects just worm their way inside your head and you have to watch again. And again. And before you know it, it's the soundtrack for your life in a way that has nothing to do with the reason you've been rewatching.

Nicky: I can't agree more. It really does become the soundtrack to your life after a while and, as you said, works as a kind of mantra that you abide by. Funny thing is that I never felt this way when I was listening to Tyler Durden spout it off in Fight Club.

Brad: Neither did I! In fact, I was never really sold on either franchise.

Nicky: I can only surmise the difference is that Mister Anderson illustrated it so well in this vid that I became sold to the argument through the way it was delivered.

Brad: I think it condenses and presents the social message of both Fight Club and the Matrix movies in a way that's even more effective. When Neo extends the finger at 2:47 - that's us, and it's all summed up by the final shot of the vid. That aside, it's one of the most technically polished, beautiful, and fun-to-watch vids I've ever had the pleasure of seeing.

Nicky: There are just so *many* amazing moments in this vid that it's hard to pick out anything to talk about because you want to talk about all of it all at once. For example, even if we leave aside the musicality and lyric use, there's still the awesome motion and use of blocking. One of my favourite moments, for example, is the slow-mo dancing in the 1:42 - 1:45 segment, and the transition via very similar blocking from the explosion to the hole-in-wall at 2:06. Everything is just so polished; not a clip out of place, and all the available humour wrung out of every orifice of the song. It really is a remarkable achievement.

Brad: It's one thing to appreciate a vid as an achievement, but it's something else entirely to rewatch it obsessively purely for entertainment. This *Is Matrix Life* spectacularly succeeds in both ways. I can say without hesitation that this is one of best videos I saw in 2008 - or in any other year, for that matter.



THE FOURTH WALL
