

Khwaab (The Dream)

dragonchic

Achievement in Use of Music: Winner 2009

Achievement in Mood: Shortlist 2009

Achievement in Vidding: Shortlist 2009

The review below may contain spoilers for Slumdog Millionaire.

Brad: The mood, music, the flow of this vid, the way it paints such achingly poignant portraits of the characters and their relationships... it moves me, every single time I watch it.

Nicky: Which is especially impressive given that you've never seen the movie, if I recall correctly!

Brad: That's true! But just the way it expresses the song is amazingly powerful. The musicality alone is almost enough to bring me to tears. The colors, how they link to each emotion, the flickering lights and images on the piano, the sudden bursts of internal motion. The sweeping, poetic lyric ties. My best efforts to describe it feel clumsy and awkward. Need better words.

The feeling that comes through most powerfully for me is one of innocence and love lost and, ultimately, regained; and I think one of the reasons the vid works so well is because that's such a universal feeling. We can all connect to that kind of yearning.

Nicky: I feel like the building of mood is primarily constructed of three key elements: use of motion, use of colour, and use of light and shadow. With these three elements combined, the resultant effect is so much more than the sum of these parts.

Brad: Both thematically and aesthetically, I love the opening, with its establishing of themes and foreshadowing of the central characters' fates. The beautiful light at 0:07 gets me every time, as does the flicker at 0:13 followed by the unforgettable image from the train station and then the money falling into the tub. It's a strikingly effective opening for a circular narrative.

Nicky: It provides the perfect entry point, making you interested in the characters and caring about what has happened to bring them here.

Brad: The images of "searching" in different ways really comes through at 0:30, and you get the sense for how desperate these people are in their parallel subplots. The "search field" is also a clever way of introducing each character, plus you get nice little subtle bits of musicality like the letters going in on the vocals at 0:38.

Nicky: I think it's fabulous how the characters' faces are overlaid on their name searches! Immediately lets even the unfamiliar viewer puts a face to each name, but done in an extremely artful way when it comes to screen composition. Latika at 0:29 - 0:30 for example,

I love that her eyes are always kept in focus by offsetting against the dark blue bar in the background, instead of allowing them to fade into the paler blue bars above or below. Composition is key to overlays, and dragonchic really demonstrates that understanding here. She again displays that same kind of understanding in the 0:34 - 0:36 segment, where the flashback visuals of each child is offset by the rotating shadow on the floor.

Brad: I love the connection of peeking through the bars at 0:46 and how that introduces the segment from the past.

Nicky: That placement of that tiny bit of visual space so succinctly and elegantly conveys a crucial bit of information to the viewer if they didn't know it already - the fact that young Latika and older Latika are the same person. It's great that the vidder took such pains to bring the unfamiliar viewer onto a level playing field where context is concerned.

Brad: The movement and lighting of the chorus just enfold you in this mood of carefree childhood, and that's an incredibly important thing to establish here because of what's to come. Plus the bouncy external motion just works so incredibly well with the percussion.

Nicky: I'm in love with all the gorgeously musical internal motion in this segment, especially the leap at 0:50 and the divine skirt swirl to the vocals at 0:57.

Brad: At 1:13 there's a great sense of coming-back-to-the-present while also moving forward with the narrative. You have more of a sense that you really know these three characters now, and you see what's become of them.

Again at 1:36, you can feel the desperation of feeling "locked out," of not being able to help, so the intro to the second chorus mirrors the intro to the first chorus in that way. Yet everything has progressed.

Nicky: Structurally, I find it very interesting that this is not a strictly circular narrative in the sense that it doesn't start at the back and then just circle right back from the start. It keeps jumping back and forth between the present and childhood, keeping up the parallels the whole way through and holding a balance between the verses and choruses that makes it additionally interesting narrative-wise as well as visually.

Brad: The three different ages and timelines of the characters blend incredibly well in chorus 2, and that helps highlight how Salim is spiraling out of control. Again, the use of lighting and motion looks so incredibly instinctive and musical that it's beyond my ability to express it.

Nicky: The moment that really leaves a lasting imprint for me is the mirror smash at 1:43. As a visual metaphor, it's very straightforward in its mood and implication about the oncoming chaos. As an audio/visual moment it's just plain gorgeous. That aside, the constant forward momentum in this segment, of the children running and of the camera swooping forward, it really leaves you breathless.

Brad: Love the mirrored shots of lost little Latika at 1:55 and 2:00, and then adult Latika at 2:03. The vocalizations that follow over their eyes meeting is one of the most memorable moments of any vid I've ever watched.

Nicky: I love that sense of stillness there, after all that running around in the chorus! Suddenly it is as though time has slowed to a crawl and all that's left is the emotional intensity of this moment.

Brad: The arrival of Salim at 2:14 feels sudden and jarring, yet somehow still manages to build in an almost gentle way. Love the upside-down shot at 2:19 followed by all of the pushing, combining timelines. And what a gorgeous transition at 2:25!

Nicky: dragonchic's uncanny ability to use vocals as another instrument to visualize fills me with envy. 2:25 is a fabulous example of that.

Brad: The next segment manages to feel even more desperate with less motion, relying heavily on overlays and emotion and source lighting. It all spirals, and the visual themes from the opening become more and more a part of the motif - the money, the light from the set, and finally Latika at the train station. Young Salim pointing the gun connects to his death in the tub full of money, and that flows into the painfully perfect connection of the kids at 2:59 and the reunion at 3:01.

Nicky: The overlays really stand out to me in this segment. 2:30 is a perfect juxtaposition of a quiet background against the violent movement of the overlay, and 2:42 is, again, simply so gorgeous in its composition, offsetting Jamal between the mirrored images of Salim.

One of my favourite moments is toward the ending at 2:49, where the drumbeats echo the strobing vision of Latika standing on the railway platform. And I love that final call back to their childhoods, with the three quick shots of Salim from childhood to death, and that gorgeous little shot of young Jamal joining young Latika on the platform, followed by the kiss between the older characters and the beautiful expanding light that finally absorbs everything in a satisfying conclusion.

Brad: Watching this vid is a transcendent and moving experience for me and I don't think that's going to change, no matter how many times I see it.



THE FOURTH WALL
