

Land's End

Cherry Ice

Achievement in Vidding - Shortlist 2011

The review below may contain spoilers for new Doctor Who through the end of series 6.

HWG: The more I watch Land's End the more I'm convinced it's not just a great Doctor Who vid but a piece of surrealism worthy of Salvador Dalí, melting clocks and all.

Nicky: Personally, I think you'd need a few more penis metaphors to be Dalí! But I'll meet you somewhere in the middle, maybe at Freud. There's something deliciously subconscious-driven about this vid, to be sure. I almost feel like I'm being fed subliminal messages throughout, like something is lurking just beside the edge of my conscious mind.

HWG: This vid is a chronicle of River Song. "Epic" is typically the word used to describe her, but here I think "honest" is more fitting. Because how do you tell the story of River Song without bringing in the Doctor? How do you show an origin story without actually witnessing the origin? Cherry presents this tale without frills or agendas, she just simply shows us how it is. And while I had reservations about it in the show, in the context of this vid I absolutely love it.

Nicky: I'm glad I read your write-up before I wrote mine, because honestly, I wouldn't know where to begin with the character narrative - both in how it's presented here and in the source. Like you, I have reservations about the show, but I love how it's put together in the vid. It's dense and complicated and so very non-linear, but that's just the nature of the story the vidder is trying to tell. I'm glad she chose to tell it in all its complex glory, rather than try and boil it down into a more digestible format - admittedly something that I myself would probably lean toward doing - but that method would have lost so much in the telling of it.

HWG: I totally agree. The fact that it's so disjointed punctuates who not only River is but also the Doctor.

River is the child of the TARDIS, the child of the Ponds, so it's fitting to begin this vid with Amelia Pond's house, a place so significantly intertwined with the Eleventh Doctor, the door is even painted TARDIS blue. I also love the many purposeful overlays to the time vortex like at 0:05, 0:13, 1:19 - 1:20.

All this makes the vid feel circular, cyclical, with plenty spherical shapes planted throughout as if to emphasize that everyone is connected.

Nicky: The concept of circularity also comes across to me in the motion of the clip choices - the iconic circular swing of the TARDIS at 0:04, the turning at 0:39, the pull of the camera at 0:56... it's just circles upon circles upon circles.

HWG: The section from 0:33 - 0:58 is bookended by two shots of Earth and in between lies a collection of tragic obstacles for our heroes, all leading to some sort of dramatic "end". Remembering the show I can't help but hear River's final words echo over this section: "I'm sorry,

my love. I'm sorry, my love..." Because at its heart this is a story about love. A love so strong it's literally timeless. Moments like 1:19 - 1:20 underline this.

Nicky: Against the lyric of "crawl space", I primarily got a sense of *sanctuary* from 1:19 - 1:20, a moment of respite from the craziness that surrounds them.

HWG: That's really beautiful. I love that.

Cherry's editing is so precise, each clip seems calculated. I particularly love the mother/daughter connection between Amy and River. Like at 0:18 - 0:19 when River is falling, Amy jerks awake. Same thing at 0:30 - 0:31. If I remember correctly, at that point in the narrative Amy is going into labor, so it's even more fitting for the maternal bond. (Interestingly enough, there's a fun juxtaposition of shots because what immediately follows Amy is Eleven in his post-regenerative state, which is a kind of birth in itself. She gasps, he exhales.) And of course at 3:30 - 3:31, when River pulls the metaphoric trigger on herself and we see Amy feel the loss.

Nicky: You know what comes to mind with the way you described those moments? Quantum entanglement. Everything seems at first glance to be unconnected, but it's only later that you start feeling out the invisible strings between them.

HWG: And the musicality! I just want to roll around in it. Favorite moments include:

0:14 - the crash of the drums matches the rocking of the Cybermen so precisely, it's an exciting way to blast into the vid.

0:16 - that ghostly hum in the background of the song is now officially produced by the Silence! (Actually this moment reminds me of a particular Julie Taymor signature move that I adore. In films like *Frida* and *Titus* there are a couple scenes where a character opens her mouth to scream, but instead of any human noise what comes out is the hollow shriek of flutes.)

Nicky: I'm a big Taymor fan but weirdly don't recall this at all, must remember to pay attention to such moments next time. It's interesting that you mention her though - I often get this sense of slow-creeping dread with her films, while at the same time freaking out at how amazingly choreographed the images/sequences are. The vid evokes much of the same feeling.

HWG: 0:32 - the swooshy sound of Eleven exhaling (Time Lord sparkles).

Nicky: I love the attention to detail to various layers of the music. I'm also exceedingly partial to moments where the *feel* of the visual just corresponds so well to the feel of the music, such as the jump-cutting at 0:45, or the aliens' head tilt at 1:02.

HWG: 1:25 - the Weeping Angel just perfectly creepifying this moment.

Nicky: Love how the vidder held onto that moment for just a bit to maximise the creepiness. Ditto the clip of driving into the orphanage at 1:32 - 1:35, both for cutting away and back to prolong the sense of impending doom, and for the cool way the light flickers in time with the strings.

HWG: 2:54 - the internal movement in this shot not only fits the music but it gives Rory some might.

Nicky: One of my favourite clips in the vid! When I'm queen of the world, I'm gonna have epic explosions happen behind me at all times while I stand or walk away slowly all badass.

HWG: 3:15 - end - a climactic conclusion to the vid with a firework display of River's gunplay, ending with Eleven's funeral pyre perfectly matching the crackling record sound in the song.

Nicky: I love how the momentum built throughout that segment. A truly climactic ending.

HWG: As Reinette stated in the episode "The Girl in the Fireplace": "The monsters and the Doctor. It seems you cannot have one without the other." And the monsters are sprinkled all over this vid adding to the surrealism of the whole thing. Let me ask you, what's your opinion on the section from 2:39 - 2:46? What does it mean for you?

Nicky: On an initial reading I want to simply say "bad things happen with the Doctor around, do not want", but it's interesting that these images aren't necessarily the most "human interest" clip choices that the vidder could have made from a vast array of possibilities. Instead, they allude to events happening over an extremely protracted time period, and of course most of these clips also come from - in the show's chronology - an earlier time, a different Doctor, perhaps even a parallel universe. The rather disparate worlds of Russell T Davies' Ten and Steven Moffat's Eleven are suddenly yanked together. I feel like the vid is trying to make some sense of River's narrative as a whole, which by necessity includes Series 4, and for me it provided some continuity across seasons, something that wasn't really teased out in the show itself.

HWG: See I think the Doctor is the Doctor, no matter what his regenerative form may look like. And unlike Moffat, I firmly believe that the canon that Davies set up should not be ignored but honored with a very evident sense of continuity. So I loved that this was included and bridged the gap so to speak. But especially because it's the Doctor who is shown doing the "bad things" and that River has been programmed since birth to be the one to kill him.

Like an ouroboros eating its tail, the beginning is the end and the end is the beginning and *that* is River Song. The parallels in this vid are astounding. I'm particularly taken with the entire 1:59 - 2:18 section which calls back to River's introduction in the canon (and serves as her official end) played off of the Doctor's "death."

Nicky: I especially love how River hits Ten at 1:59 and Eleven falls to his knees at 2:00. The whole astronaut section you mentioned is a revelation in terms of working out how the puzzle pieces fit together. And by "puzzle pieces" I don't mean that things are worked out completely rationally... it's more like an emotional puzzle, where the revelation happens more in the pit of your stomach than in your head... if that makes sense?

HWG: It totally does since most of the time the timey-wimey of the plot is too much for me to follow. I must rely on the emotions to be my guide.

I also loved 3:22 - 3:23 when River whispering the Doctor's name is paralleled with the revelation of her own identity. And of course the one-two punch of the Doctor and River's reaction shots as they mourn each other at 3:34 - 3:36.

Nicky: In hindsight, I almost feel cheated that in the show she got a reprieve after her death. Think of how much more tragic this whole character arc would have been if that had been her true, real, *final* death. Certainly the vid chose to present it as such, and I love that sense of gravity.

HWG: Oh I completely agree! But to be fair, so did the Doctor. Let's all shake our fists at Moffat.

The final shot of Melody Pond regenerating into River as she falls away is extremely evocative and straight up beautiful. It leaves the viewer with the desire to hit the play button again and again. And in my case, I never stopped. In fact, I think I'll give it another go right now!