

Wretches and Kings

jarrow

Achievement in Use of Music - Shortlist 2011

Achievement in Vidding - Shortlist 2011

The review below may contain spoilers for new *Battlestar Galactica*.

HWG: Every once in a while there comes a source and song that are soul mates. The fruit of their union is a vid that works so well, it's hard to imagine the song wasn't written intentionally with the source in mind. *Wretches and Kings* is that vid.

The first shot is an empty hallway. A tunnel in the vast ant-hill that is the *Galactica* seems to be missing its worker ants. Where is everyone? Ah, they're all listening to Mario Savio deliver his famous "bodies upon the gears" speech over the wireless. And RUR-ROH, they seem to be getting ideas... I love the simplicity of the open, and if I'm allowed a moment to indulge, what I really adore about the first shot is the geometry. If you trace the shape of the lights and the floor, a triangle emerges. To me that triangle signifies the three narratives that shape this vid: Tom Zarek, Galen Tyrol, and Felix Gaeta.

Nicky: I like that. The balanced three-way narratorship very much forms the backbone of the vid, so that's very nicely observed. Indulge away!

HWG: Once the speech ends the music kicks in. We immediately see the machine in action. Hands upon the gears and the wheels and the levers, the conveyer belt spins and with it the vid jerks into motion. I find the section from 0:33 - 0:47 even *sounds* metallic, like cogs crunching against each other in an assembly line.

Nicky: That intentional dissonance sets up the whole tone of the vid. The cutting, too, feels very sharp and... "mechanical" doesn't quite carry the right meaning, but there's a definitely a hard-edged forthrightness in the way that clips are put together. This is probably best exemplified by the rapid cutting on beat during the instrumental bridges such as 1:27 - 1:29, or 1:48 - 1:50.

HWG: Yes! In this vid the cutting actually cuts!

Pleading for the cause of the dirty hands and faces is Chief Tyrol. I love how the Chief's section transitions so organically into Zarek's narrative once he's locked up. And how powerful it is when Gaeta finally enters the fold at 1:40 - 1:42 to the lines "keep pace, how slow can you go."

Nicky: While each character has his own distinct character journey, from another angle, it can almost be read as one single character journey embodied in its different stages by three different people. Which I guess is pretty much the point of any group of people coming together and forming a collective with a united goal.

HWG: For me Gaeta has one of the most compelling arcs in the show. He started as Adama's right hand man, practically the most loyal soldier in the Colonial Fleet and ended up leading a rebellion. The vidder makes certain to present us with every piece of evidence as to how such a man could be

pushed to the brink. When he makes the proverbial deal with the devil at 2:01, we know there is no turning back.

From Tyrol's strike to shut down the assembly lines, to Zarek's grab for hostages, and finally Gaeta's full blown mutiny, these three men have their own unique ways of fighting the "people up top." The narrative is clear to showcase just how quickly violence escalates amidst such desperate conditions. When the vid climaxes at 2:12, the full blown chaos is palatable and here is where Jarrow's command of the picture really shines. The added back and forth motion to the clips gives off a playful vibe, but as the bodies start dropping and the drum machine becomes indistinguishable from the gunfire, the reality of the situation is undeniable.

Nicky: My favourite section is actually the one immediately preceding that, from about 1:50 onward. The cutting becomes more geared to the vocals, with jump cuts sometimes on each word, and the pick-up in the pacing forms a wonderful bridge between the quieter verse and the final confrontation. For me, this is also important in terms of showing how the Gaeta character has progressed from passivity to full-on aggressor mode.

HWG: Mario Savio's speech is practically quoted verbatim in the source, delivered passionately by our friend, Chief Tyrol at a turning point in the story. When the speech is called back at the end of the song, the vidder syncs it with the footage from the show and creates such an incredibly terrifying reality, I feel like I'm still stunned. It's so believable! Not only is it my favorite part of the vid as it brilliantly rehashes and showcases within the context of the canon every problem Mr. Savio brings up, but it's one of the most memorable and inspiring pieces of vidding that I've ever seen.

Nicky: I always admire those who can pull off lip syncing well - especially in live action vidding - and this is a great example of that.

HWG: As Adama stands before the firing squad at 3:17, he appears a tiny figure amidst the crushing weight of the three men condemning him. Represented once again by the geometry of the surrounding walls, this shot parallels the opening significantly.

In the time of the 99% and the Occupy movement a vid such as this is incredibly topical. Even more so since the Mario Savio speech has been used publicly by some of the protesters, making the final moments of the vid even more powerful as the trigger is literally pulled on the 1%.

Nicky: As an artistic choice, I found it quite telling that the vidder created this alternative ending to what actually happened in canon. Of course, in canon the Adamas and Roslins of the world are still our primary protagonists so they can't exactly be done away with. But as we comment upon parallels to the real world, that to me opens the door for a whole new set of questions as seen through the microcosm - *what if* the revolution had succeeded and Tyrol/Zarek/Gaeta had managed to successfully lead the revolt and do away with the ruling hierarchy? What then? The vid cuts to black at the very moment of overthrow, and the rest is left to the imagination.

HWG: All of this has happened before, and all of it will happen again...