

Legendary actor Nicolas Cage receives honorable month of praise

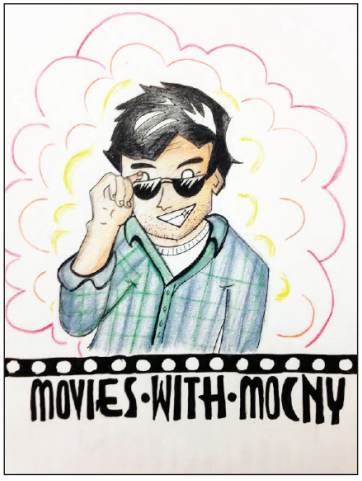


Illustration by Kendall Cassela

Johnny Moczny

Entertainment Editor

In this wonderful month of April, when the snow has melted and the birds have begun to chirp, I realize I know very little about flying animals of any kind because I'm pretty sure April has no correlation with the functionality of a bird's vocal chords. Instead, my knowledge stays abundant in the most useless thing you can imagine: movies. Hence me having a column about it. Anyway, I thought there would be no better time than now to devote a month's column to one of the great performers of contemporary cinema, the Laurence Olivier of the 21st century, the one and only Nicolas Cage. To honor the legend that is Nic Cage, I have taken it upon myself to count down this beardless Jesus' top five finest films.

5 GHOST RIDER: SPIRIT OF VENGEANCE

The age-old rule of Hollywood remains as true as it was when Alfred Hitchcock coined it: no ordinary actor can bring true humanity to a man with a fiery skull who rides a motorcycle and screams a lot. That is precisely why Nicolas Cage is no ordinary actor. This man proved, in this tour-de-force of a sequel to the 2007 comic-book adaptation, that no boundaries exist in a man when he is unleashed from his cage. The subtle poise in the scene where he urinates fire will get to the core of anyone with a soul. Please see this masterpiece if you care one bit about cinema as an art form.

4 THE WICKER MAN

The best films are the ones that make you ask questions. In the case of this chilling psychological thriller, those questions are: "How'd it get burned?" three times. Nic Cage portrays a cop who visits a female-dominated island to find a missing girl. Upon arrival, he encounters some people who may or may not have a shark in their bag, only to stumble upon deception, death and most terrifyingly, bees. Nicolas Cage's blistering intensity when he hijacks a young woman's bicycle at gunpoint remains to be topped. No film has reached the amount of horror that this film did when Nic Cage's selfhelp tapes are stolen from his hotel room. He also runs around in a bear costume and punches women. Need I say more? Not the bees, indeed, dear Nicolas. Not the bees, indeed.

3 DRIVE ANGRY

In another balls-to-the-wall film of hellish proportions, Cage gave his most Oscar-worthy performance (besides that one where he actually did win an Oscar) as a slightly unhinged father who will go to extreme limits to avenge his daughter. He engages in multiple fights and car chases, at one point, nearly murdering a man with an air-conditioner. Oh yes, he also drives a car out of hell and wreaks havoc across the country while being pursued by a suit-wearing demon. No film since *Finding Nemo* has taught the world about fatherly love more than this work of art.

2 FACE/OFF

I want you to picture Nicolas Cage. Now I want you to picture John Travolta. Now I want you to picture them in a movie together. Not enough? Now picture them PLAYING EACH OTHER. The two men switch faces, one seeks revenge against the other and hijinks ensue. No actor has had their limits stretched quite as much as Cage and Travolta did in this genre-bending John Woo-helmed vehicle. In the immortal words of Nic himself, "I wanna take his face...off." Drama, intrigue, heart-attacks, child-murder, accidental adultery, subtle incest—what you want, this movie has in spades. No other film has taught me just how important it is to cherish one's face. If anything, see it for Cage's most powerful moment: When he sings "Hallelujah" with a chorus while violently groping the behind of the woman in front of him. Watch it with the family!

1 CON AIR

I dare anyone, anyone in the world, to find me a more perfect movie. Our beloved Nicolas, sporting long hair and a southern accent, kills a man in cold blood to save a stuffed bunny. It's a story about a man who just wants to make it home to see his family: a daughter he's never met and a wife that he inexplicably calls his "hummingbird." You want offensive gay stereotypes? You get it 100 percent in this Bruckheimer-produced late '90s masterpiece. You like scenes of a cannibalistic Steve Buscemi having a creepy dinner party with a little girl? You get that, too. As Trisha Yearwood perfectly puts it in the original song made for the film, "How do I live without you?" I ask the same about the immortal Nicolas Cage.

Well, ladies and gentlemen, there you have what are easily the five greatest films anyone could have on a resume, tied together by the one wickedly handsome, ever-so-talented thread known as Nicolas Cage. What say you, dear reader? Did I include every one of the star's best hits? Of course not. Every movie he has made is perfect.

The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Nighttime meets staffer's approval

Natalya Swartz
Staff Reporter

The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Nighttime by Mark Haddon is read by freshman throughout Okemos High School.

The plot follows 15-year-old Christopher Boone on his quest to find out who killed his neighbor's dog.

The book was made into a play in 2012 and came to the Wharton Center in April.

Christopher is portrayed to be suffering from a disorder of some sort. Though it is never directly stated, it appears to be Autism.

The play is presented as Christopher's teacher reading a book he wrote about the events of his life. It switches between first person and third person throughout.

The first thing that struck me was the set. The stage is encased in a partial cube made up of five panels (including the floor) for projecting and writing on. Throughout the show they are used to represent everything from blackboards to subway maps to Christopher's crippling episodes of

sensory overload.

It was minimalist and utilised glowing colored cubes to represent most things in the play, including an oven and a train compartment.

The set effectively translates to the analytical landscape that I imagine Christopher operates in and helps the audience connect with Christopher on a higher level.

The ensemble of the show is very small and the actors often play multiple parts: one major role and another supporting one and are all used as part of scenes needing crowds.

All of the acting was very well

done. The small ensemble forced the actors to be versatile and attentive within the show. It lended nicely to keeping to show compact and fast paced.

The events of the show were very intimate, as it portrayed a broken family struggling to handle their own troubles and their son's disorder.

This sort of show requires actors to commit wholeheartedly to their characters to create a convincing chemistry on stage. The impact of the show would be completely lost if you didn't feel like the real Mr. Boone was right there in front of you holding his sick child. It is a candid window into the Boone family life; none of their struggles are glossed over.

Another thing that struck me about the show is its use of lights and sound.

There are multiple times in the show when Christopher is experiencing stress, fear or confusion. During these parts, the five walls of the set transform into riots of color and words, accompanied by loud noises and blasts of strobe lights and lasers.

This tactic transports the audience into Christopher's shoes. Rather than simply observing an actor going through the motions of a panic attack, the audience is thrown into a highly stressful environment with the actor.

I can't say that I enjoyed these parts, but I am aware that that is exactly what

the director was looking to do and did well.

The show isn't all heartbreak and blinding light, though. There are many times when you will laugh. Christopher is a lovable and humorous character, mainly because of his highly subjective view of the world. You may also laugh at various supporting characters like Mr. Sheers and an ATM.

The show is incredibly well done and interesting. If you see it make sure you stay until after curtain call for a special surprise, I highly recommend it!

Thriving TV show lets down with controversy and imperfect plot

Holden Santi
Web Editor

"Hey, it's Hannah. Hannah Baker..."

Played through an outdated cassette, those words catapult Netflix's new teen drama into action. Based on the 2007 Jay Asher novel, *13 Reasons Why* centers on Clay, the boy in possession of 13 tape recordings recorded by a former classmate who had committed suicide. Within the tapes are her "13 reasons why" she did it.

Spoiler alert: all of the reasons are people.

My feelings on this show are mixed. It was funny when it could afford to be and poignant when it had to be, though it was quite cliched. This show offered an in-depth view on a bullied teen and the various ways it took a toll on her

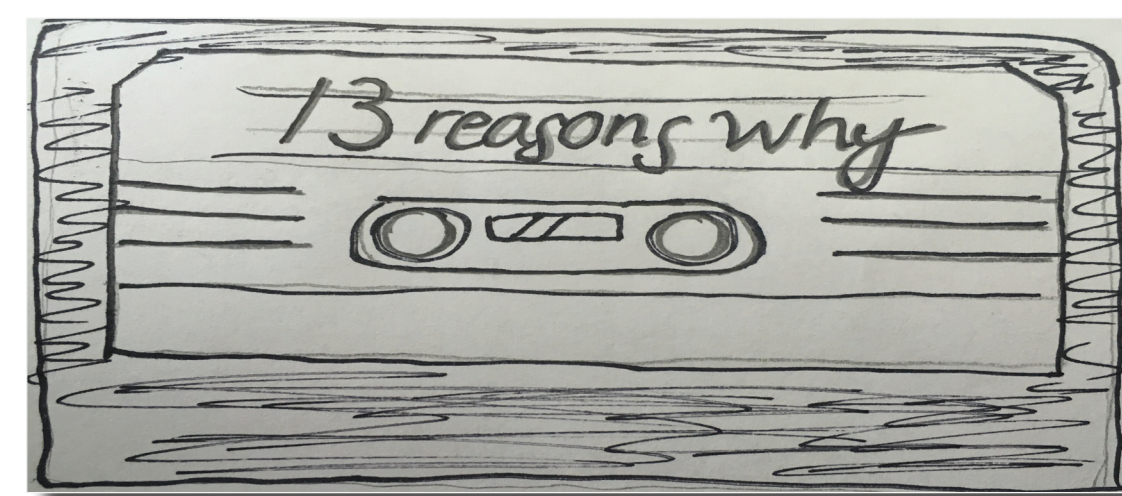


Illustration by Bernice Gajda

life, and eventually caused her death.

However, much of the time *13 Reasons Why* came off as trite.

The major upside of this show comes from its cast. *13 Reasons Why* boasts a strong ensemble made up of many new up-and-comers, such as

Ross Butler who also stars in The CW's *Riverdale*. At times it may be hard to keep up with so many characters at once, but all actors fully embrace their personas, warts and all, and in the end create over 13 amazing personalities.

While I did thoroughly enjoy *13 Reasons Why*, it did not come without its faults. At various points throughout the series I asked myself, "did that person really deserve to be blamed for Hannah's suicide?"

While the show does a good job

showing off the harmful effects of bullying in high school, and their efforts were valiant in nature, some of the "reasons why" seemed trivial, leading some viewers to be confused and maybe a bit angry.

13 Reasons Why has also been criticized for not following closely enough to the plot of the original novel, which many viewers cited as their reason for watching the show.

The final episode of the show's first season leaves many characters' fates and plotlines open-ended. While some fans have expressed excitement for the possibility of a second season, others have questioned the necessity of one, and while I did like the show, can we not leave some things up to the imagination?

Another, and likely the most prominent, criticism of the show comes from the Australian mental health organization, Headspace.

Headspace warned those with mental health problems to stay away

from the show as they could have "distressing reactions" to the content. The organization was most likely referring to the scene in the final episode where there is a visually realistic depiction of Hannah's suicide, which Headspace says can be triggering for people with mental illness or contemplating suicide.

We can laugh all we want about how the word "triggered" is thrown around nowadays, but this is a real problem for concerned parents and teens suffering from mental illness who might be attracted to this show.

13 Reasons Why tried to do a good thing, they really did, but the greatest efforts couldn't have saved them from the fact that, to some, this show may come off as a big budget version of *Cyberbully*. While the casting was a great plus, *13 Reasons Why*'s plot issues and sometimes blatant pandering made it hard to enjoy the actors doing their best to pull it off.