

Wood and Nails (Jesus Christ)

Astarte

Achievement in Vidding: Shortlist 2007

The review below may contain spoilers for Supernatural up to early season 3.

Nicky: Astarte's technical talent is undisputed. However, for me the real strength of Wood and Nails lies in what it says. It's by far one of the most complex and telling Dean vids I've ever seen, and considering the sheer number of Dean character studies out there, that's really saying something.

Brad: Even as someone who has never seen Supernatural, I've seen and loved many complex, intelligent, and beautiful Dean studies; but this one really stands out, for many reasons.

Nicky: The beauty of this vid lies in the way it places Dean within the greater Supernatural world context. It looks at his relationship to his family but does not restrict itself to these connections. Astarte states in her summary: "it's not like the other [side] did him any good", and this issue is explored in detail through the notions of religion and faith (or Dean's lack thereof), providing a convincing argument to Dean's utter cynicism that often comes out in the course of the show.

Brad: I think vidding, at its best, can make you feel like you're truly seeing or understanding a character for the first time. Astarte accomplishes that by taking religion in the Supernatural world and showing it through Dean's eyes. It's not pretty - thematically, anyway - but watching it gives you that amazing sense of rediscovering a character.

Nicky: To me, this vid also forms an interesting complement to my 2007 Honorary Award pick, Fabella's "Hemorrhage". Both vids deal with the idea of "Dean's death wish", albeit from different points of view.

The use of colour plays a large part in this vid, contrasting this world (brightened beyond Supernatural's muted palette) with the shadow world of death and sacrifice. Coming back to the notion of religion, death and sacrifice are intrinsically tied up with the repeated references to Jesus Christ within the lyrics, tying in with John and Dean's acts of sacrifice within the show's context.

Brad: That's a great example of what I mean about how Astarte frames the source within the vid's context to show us something that has always been there but that we've never seen.

Nicky: For me, one of the most emotionally impactful segments in the vid is "Jesus Christ I'm not scared to die, I'm a little bit scared of what comes after", showing Dean's worry for Sam being left alone. The "gold chariot" line that comes straight after boasts one of the most beautiful visuals I've seen - the Impala driving away aptly in a halo of gold, which fades into that fateful fire on the ceiling.

Brad: The coloring all through, and the way images meld and dissolve one into the next one make this an amazing vid to watch just on a visual level. It's alternately shadowy and painful, monotone and poetic, bright and brilliant.

Nicky: I love the cutting in this vid. It feels absolutely effortless and always in keeping with the mood and pace of the music. I felt that this was one of the most technically proficient vids in the 2007 round, and a lot of that went down to the fact that you could simply forget about the editing because it merged so well with the music. It was always on-point and perfectly timed, and the momentum followed the music down to the last detail.

My favourite moments include the cross-fade on the guitar note at 0:28, the lovely continued motion at 0:52 that speaks so much to Dean's perception of Sam ("do you believe you're missing out"); the beautiful use of the water splash at 1:05; the recurring religious motifs such as the cross at 1:22 and 1:33 (which in context doubles nicely as a sign of the reaper); the shots at 2:17 in line with the music and the lyrics of "does Thomas ask to see my hands?"; the wonderful bird and tarot clips at 2:55; the amazing crucifix clip and movement at 3:08.

Brad: Something you don't really notice on a first watch - because, as you said, the editing just matches the music and you forget about it - is the excellent use of source motion and how Astarte uses that to flow from clip to clip and keep the eyeline. My favorite example of that is around 3:26. I also love the overlays on the wall next to the crucifix in the sequence you mentioned. For me, that's where the central statement of the vid really beats you over the head.

Nicky: Using a backdrop of death and religion, Wood and Nails builds on all the things that Dean wasn't able to do, all the people he wasn't able to save, culminating in him flipping the inverted cross on the wall as all the reasons flash by in the background. At this point it sounds like a bold challenge to God himself: what have you ever done for me? And there is no good answer. At the end of the vid, Sam bows his head in church but Dean's eyes stay open. And it seems like the most logical thing in the world. This vid presents a thoughtful argument for his worldview, all wrapped up in a beautifully-edited package.

THE FOURTH WALL
