

## ARTS &amp; ENTERTAINMENT

## Benjamin Button draws curious crowd

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*The Curious Case of Benjamin Button*, directed by David Fincher, is a movie that presents a truly magical experience.

It combines strong elements of history beautifully tied in with the wonder of fantasy found in a Disney movie. As I watched the film its basic feeling reminded me of an over-fantasized Forrest Gump, both in Brad Pitt's lovable character and in the film's ability to make a commentary on society and the issues that face us as we age.

"I was born under unusual circumstances," Brad Pitt's first line of the movie sets up the beautiful yet loosely adapted F. Scott Fitzgerald story of a boy who was born old and progresses through life backwards. The screenplay, written by Erik Roth, is set in New Orleans, beginning with the end of World War I and continues up into the 21st century. The story begins as Benjamin Button is orphaned and raised by a surrogate mother played by Taraji P. Henson. As Benjamin regresses through life the viewer is given a look into the happiness of life, the fantasy of true love, and the immense sadness and inevitability of death.

Brad Pitt's Oscar nominated performance is greatly enhanced

by the flawless special effects that brilliantly show his life long journey from 80 to an infant. I felt Pitt's most resonating parts of the film were in the beginning of the movie when Benjamin was at his oldest. His ability to convey the enormous sense of curiosity and enthusiasm trapped within this seemingly mangled body of a senior citizen was positively brilliant. In the early scenes in which he interacts with his life long love Daisey (Cate Blanchett) one almost forgets its Brad Pitt's beneath the heavy makeup and CGI effects. Benjamin Button's outlook on life is one of constant contemplation. He has a passive voice that narrates and allows for a complex character development of the influential people in his life.

Unlike most three-hour movies, *Benjamin Button* uses its time to perfection. The majesty of this film could not be captured in any less time nor could it be drawn out any longer. The filming element of the movie is done beautifully in sepia tones in order to portray the reflective nature of Benjamin's life that accomplished so much but comes to an end in the inevitable way we all will one day. David Fletcher brilliantly planned out this final product and the film is definitely a contender for taking home multiple Oscars.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

*The Curious Case of Benjamin Button* dominates the box office with critical appeal and audience curiosity. Viewers may note similarity in the novelty of this movie in comparison to a classic like Forrest Gump.

## The Playlist

A look at the world of music, from the obscure to the obscure, the new and the old.

## Animal Collective's Merriweather Post Pavillion generating buzz

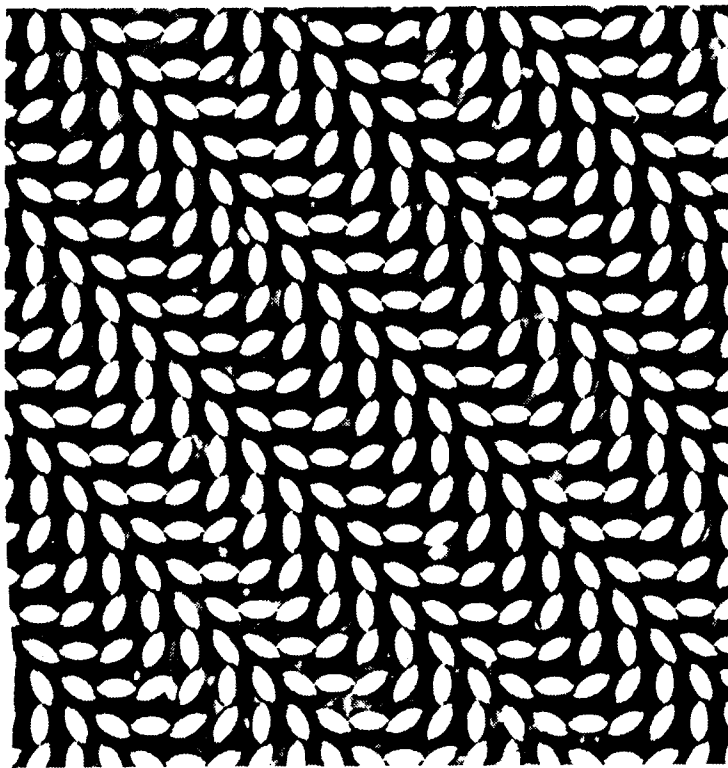
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With a non-linear, experimental collaboration, Animal Collective has a very eclectic sound. They're nearly indefinable genre-wise, consisting of styles splashed with a bit of indie rock, electronic music, and folk. The entire collective from Baltimore consists of the avant-garde musicians: Avey Tare (David Portner), Deakin (Josh Dibb), Geologist (Brian Weitz), and Panda Bear (Noah Lennox).

After Josh Dibb decided to take a hiatus from the group in 2007, a three member collective joined once again to create an album, drawing from Noah Lennox's samples to make *Merriweather Post Pavillion*, released on January 6th, 2009.

The opening song begins with dissonant sounds and no connection, slowly swirling around to create a peaceful ambience. Ghostly vocals begin with lyrics alluding to falling in love with a dancer. Claps and natural sounds scatter across the song, eventually progressing to an intense explosion of happy percussion backed with colorful samples. As the song draws to a close, you can't help but feel a slight lucid nostalgia.



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The cover for *Merriweather Post Pavillion* is actually a famous optical illusion.

The ghostly electronic churning from the previous track continues on into the next track, "My Girls," obviously meant for continuous playback. The sound starts to glimmer in an unfamiliar way, spinning until there's substance and the vocals begin. A happy echoing verse eventually accompanies it. After a few repetitions it shifts, the glimmering is joined with a soothing swish, and then a very diverse beat riddled with percussion samples. This track sounds so happy and delivers the apparent theme of the album: it's all about being happy and having a family. The song is about providing a humble home for "My Girls," with obvious lyrics like, "with a little girl, and by my spouse. I only want a proper house."

Each song bridges right into the next, conclusions becoming introductions, with themes shifting from anxiety about being a father to the daily routine taking a young child to the play ground. There's an apparent happiness in each song, with cheerful and sometimes very weird samples. It's hard to not feel a shyness and anticipation of new love, or a joy of persisting love from this album.

After I've talked this album up you might say, "maybe he just like these guys a lot." It's not just me; all over internet blogs and magazines critics have praised this album as Animal Collective just seems to be getting better. Big names in music publications including Blender, Spin, The Rolling Stone, and even The Onion have given the album exceptional ratings.

With the near universal acclaim this album has been receiving, reaching #2 on the U.S. Top Independent Albums and #13 on the U.S. Billboard Top 200, MTV even reached into the basket. Their "Buzz-worthy" blog had a post with the music video for "My Girls."

I'm not really sure what to think about the acknowledgement for *Merriweather Post Pavillion*. Could this be the best album of 2009 already? Can anything top this album with its diversity and genuine emotion? Whatever happens, I suggest finding the video for "My Girls" on YouTube: it's catchy and the video is interesting in its own right.

## Food For Thought

"Any man who can drive safely while kissing a pretty girl is simply not giving the kiss the attention it deserves."

— Albert Einstein

## He may not be into you, but we are definitely into the movie

By Maureen Koffler

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Rule Number 11: he's just not that into you if he's a selfish jerk, a bully, or a really big freak.

Now there is something that catches your eye and makes you really think about men in general.

Ladies, does he make excuses about taking you out, does he deliberately end a date early because he has an early meeting in the morning? Do you sit by the phone waiting for him to call? If you answered yes to any of these things, then you should go see the movie, *He's Just Not That Into You*.

The he's just not that into you phenomenon came about in one episode of *Sex and the City*, after which there was a book published in 2004 dedicated to making women realize that some men just aren't that into you and you should move on to better things. I have personally read this book, and single ladies, let me tell you, this theory that men may just not be that into you is a godsend. No longer will you spend all day pining over that man who you think could "potentially be the next love of your life." After reading the book, you will feel refreshed and enlightened. So grab your best gal pal, a huge box of popcorn, and go down to Tinseltown immediately to see the number one box office smash hit, *He's Just Not That Into You*.

Taking place in Baltimore, there are several different stories told that make you really think about what love means.

Jennifer Aniston and Ben Affleck play Beth and Neil, a couple who has been together, living in an apartment and sharing memories, for seven years. Beth wants to get married, whereas Neil has no intentions of ever getting married. Neil doesn't believe in marriage, which upsets Beth greatly. You girls can all imagine that Aniston's character goes through a great deal of pain because she really likes the idea of marriage.

Then comes the story of Gigi, played by Ginnifer Goodwin. Gigi is a young woman desperately wanting to date a man named Conor, played by Kevin Connolly. It turns out that Conor just isn't that into Gigi, so Gigi makes a pathetic attempt to drop by a bar that Conor usually frequents. From there she runs into the manager at the bar, Alex,

played by Justin Long. Hilarity ensues as Alex and Gigi grow even closer.

Next is the story about Anna, Ben, and Janine, played by Scarlett Johansson, Bradley Cooper, and Jennifer Connelly. Anna is a struggling singer who falls for Ben, who just so happens to be married to Janine. They have a few friendly encounters before each one begins to seriously flirt with another, which can only lead to bad things.

Drew Barrymore also makes a small appearance in this film, playing a woman named Mary

who meets men on Myspace and constantly gets screwed over by men.

I absolutely loved this film in every way. It was funny, touching, and charming. There were parts that made the whole theater echo in unison, "awwwwww." However, this definitely has to be labeled as a certified "chick flick." This means, you either go with your boyfriend and coo at the screen for a good two hours, or you just go with your best girl friends and you can all melt in the sappy goodness of this movie. The acting I'd have to say is fairly

average, but a lot of the stories are very relatable, especially to young women in their twenties who have sworn off love for good. This would make for a great Valentine's Day date, along with a dinner and roses. With an all star cast, you cannot go wrong. Even the manliest of men will probably enjoy this movie...of course he would never admit that to you, ladies. So sit back and enjoy the many reasons why America is falling in love with *He's Just Not That Into You*.

Ben Affleck  
Jennifer Aniston  
Bradley Cooper  
Kevin Connolly  
Jennifer Connelly  
Kevin Connolly  
Bradley Cooper  
Ginnifer Goodwin  
Scarlett Johansson  
Justin Long

HE'S  
JUST NOT  
THAT INTO  
YOU

February 13th

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

*He's Just Not That Into You* maintains the opportunity to stay in theatres this Valentine's Day weekend, making it the perfect "date" movie.