

# Cheap Seats and Sticky Floors

## Carrey not his usual self in *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind*

By **MATT MOSLEY**  
Film Reviewer

Anyone who knows me knows how much I despise Jim Carrey movies. His comedies are lame and senseless, and his dramatic films are, to be kind... "overly sympathetic." I scoffed at *The Truman Show*, and laughed my ass off at the eccentrically good natured *Majestic*, but I must say, his new film *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind* is pretty damn good. Needless to say, my hopes were not high as the lights dimmed and Jim Carrey's name flashed on screen, in fact, to be completely honest, I was ready to trash the hell out of the film. Much to my cynical surprise though, Carrey's performance was muted, fitting, and devoid of any annoying "rubber face" expressions.

Carrey plays Joel Barish, a down and out sensitive male whose thoughts are monopolized by a bruised and bloody heart. His ex-girlfriend, Clementine Kruczynski, a spunky little "riot girl," played outstandingly by the adorable Kate Winslet (love chicks with blue hair), acts as if she doesn't even know him. Joel finds her behavior to be mind bending and he soon finds the reason behind her actions and his madness. She was a client of Dr. Howard Mierzwiak, played by Tom Wilkinson. He is a specialist in the art of memory erasure, a process by which selected memories can be erased from one's consciousness. Torn, and unable to move on, Joel decides to undergo the process himself. With the help Howard's assistants, Elijah Wood and the hilarious Mark Ruffalo, Joel begins the process of Clementine elimination.

The plot may sound a bit simplistic, but the film is not. The majority of screen time is spent prancing through Joel's memory bank in search of anything related to the "ex." The structure is mentally exhausting, yet fascinating, and completely appropriate for the

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subject matter. Stop for a second and think about your own head and what it would be like to travel through that maze...yeah quite a thought. The film goes backwards, forward, loops around, and spins like a rollercoaster. It is like *Memento*, except it's maxed out, cracked up, and totally f\*#ked. I loved that.

I don't mean to make it sound like the film was "all that and a bag of chips" (sorry for the nineties cliché) because it does have some issues. *Eternal* was written by Charlie Kaufman (*Being John Malkovich* and *Adaptation*) who is a master when it comes to the oddities of storytelling. His style is very much in your face and always about the writing itself. When you focus more on the writing and structure, you lose character. You never quite feel close enough to Joel, or Clementine for that matter, which is sort of weird since the film takes place inside a characters brain. Can you get any closer? The audience is kept at a distance, and that is a result of the structure and style. I'm not saying that is a bad thing, the whole deal is sort of a trade off. Do you want to see a film and say, "Wow, that was nuts, I loved it," or do you want to say, "Wow, I really felt for those characters." Most people can relate to *Eternal* on an emotional level and in a way be envious of the memory cleansing technology, and there are individual scenes that flip your gut, but the overall picture comes off a bit cold.



Elijah Wood, left, performs well as an assistant to a doctor who specializes in memory erasure. Carrey (right) becomes a client of the doctor in the movie.

In the end though, you should appreciate the creativity and complexity of the film. Thinking about writing that, or directing it, just about makes my eyes roll back and my brain explode. *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind* is not a movie for the passive audience. It is challenging and requires a lot of work, much goes by without notice because you're trying to sort things out. It's almost like watching a foreign film without courtesy subtitles.



# SEE DEEZ REVIEWS

WPSH The Reactor  
Radio Club



REVIEWED BY:  
PILI STRELLA AND RACHEL SHEPHERD

ARTIST/GROUP:  
USHER

ALBUM TITLE:  
CONFESSIONS

LABEL:  
ARISTA RECORDS

RELEASE DATE:  
MARCH 2004

GENRE:  
Pop, R&B

OVERALL RATING:  
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If you like Usher, you should like his latest album, *Confessions*. It's a new album, but sounds like the same old Usher. He uses typical old-school Boys II Men styling - splicing together some pop and R&B. *Confessions* lacks originality and freshness. But, don't be too discouraged. Fortunately, his mixture creates something for every mood. It opens with a song called "Yeah!" featuring Lil' Jon and Ludacris, which is very upbeat. He has slow songs for those who may be down or just looking for something

slower paced like "Take Your Hand" and "Caught Up." And, although he is repetitive, Usher can still keep a beat and keep it lively. *Confessions* debuted at #1 this week and if Usher remains true to the past, it will stay at #1. But, to stay on top, Usher will need to come up with something new and polished next time around. This album is definately a don't buy. If you see it laying around and you are bored, grab it and listen, otherwise leave *Confessions* on the shelf.

THE KEY  
HORRIBLE \*  
I'VE HEARD WORSE \*\*  
BORROW OR STEAL IT, DON'T BUY IT \*\*\*  
I WOULD PROBABLY BUY IT \*\*\*\*  
STUPENDOUS \*\*\*\*\*