



April 7, 2018 [Cult Critic](#)

Strange Divinity

Directed by **Carlos Marcelin I** Review by **Nabadipa Talukder**

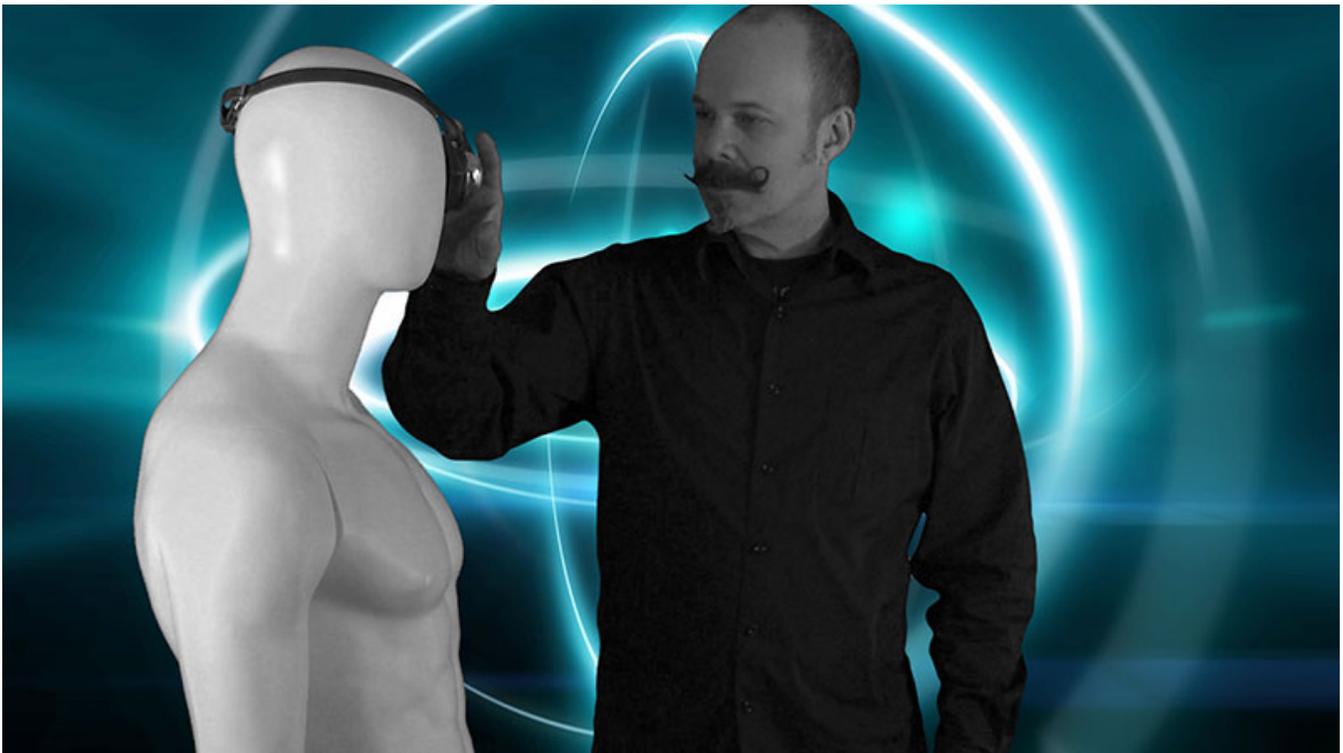
“Trying to understand the way nature works involves a most terrible test of human reasoning ability. It involves subtle trickery, beautiful tightropes of logic on which one has to walk in order not to make a mistake in predicting what will happen. The quantum mechanical and the relativity ideas are examples of this.” – Richard Feynman.

Quantum mechanics is and always has been an elusive subject. The unpredictability of how humans work, of how nature works and all of its anomalies and to be able to predict with accuracy the outcome, is an infinitesimal part of it. Every situation has infinite possibilities and outcomes. And of all those infinite possibilities you choose one and that one choice changes the entire course of your life. If it were possible to choose your destiny and choose at every situation the most favorable result, then the unpredictability of life would completely disappear. What if there existed a device, which could decipher all of the outcomes beforehand and you could choose the situation of your liking? What if you could alter the stream of time, make it do your bidding?

The film begins with the invention of the device, the C – Nitizer, by Professor Otto Von Grunberg who works for the FBI in the Department of Quantum mechanics. He is helped by Sally the Demi-god who helps him with his book of knowledge; she is sent by Orb Nadia who is

a higher state of being, free from the shackles of time to assist humankind with this power as humans can only sense time in a linear fashion.

The story that ensues is one that will stimulate and keep you guessing the fate of the protagonist. The film dances between the realm of mysticism and the living world, mixing the obscure with real. Since the film has no dialogue, the onus of the storytelling falls completely on the visuals, acting and the background score. And it doesn't fail to match your expectations as it manages to thrill and enthrall you with its visuals and keep your attention fixed. The film is monochrome for the most part of its narrative, which is the part where the act of the main protagonist is in play, but there are bursts of psychedelic colors in a kaleidoscope-like fashion and sepia tones depending on the character present on the screen. The colors and abstractions used have a very seventies vibe to it.



The characters in the film are very distinct and eccentric, even. The cast is small and even though the omission of dialogues, they manage to effectively bring the story to life without making you miss the undertones of a conversation. The protagonist, Otto Jr., has managed to emote effectively without making it seem over the top or obtuse. The Demi-Goddess Sally is the one guiding the protagonist's path through the whole journey, while Goddess Destiny plays along with the story making it dreamlike. Even though the production value of the film doesn't seem very high, the storytelling and the acting makes the film what it is.

The music in this film plays a very important role as the entire film runs on the different songs and the background score. The genre of the music is rock and one would think that it impedes the storytelling, rather it helps facilitate the journey of the film. Through the songs you learn more about the characters, the situations that they are in, the emotions that they are going through and the background story.



This is a film which even after the credits makes you pause and ponder about life and how much we don't appreciate the fact that life can be unpredictable. Yes, sometimes life doesn't go our way, but in moments of happiness, we find joy like we've never known before. If life got predictable would you be able to feel the full extent of euphoria that you are supposed to feel? How would it feel to have everything go your way? Would you still be able to appreciate fully, anything good that happens? Would life's experiences like this be as fascinating and attractive or would it just turn monotonous? What if a device this dangerous, fell into the wrong hands? Surely, it would lead to a catastrophe.

The way the story plays out with the music in the background is fascinating to watch as the director has played with the visuals beautifully. It's a bizarre rock opera without dialogues interspersed with a mirage of colors and filters that bind cohesively, bringing out the narrative making it surreal and thought-provoking.



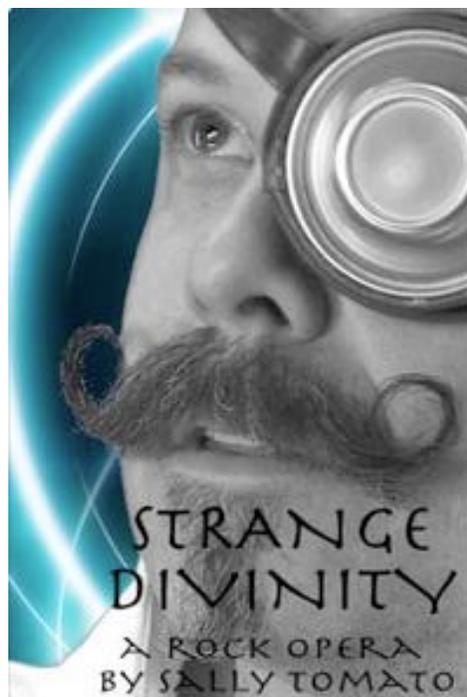


February 2020

Sally Tomato
Strange Divinity (video)
Review by Gary Hill

This is an unusual project. It's part music video, part film, part science fiction story, part rock opera and a bit more. The music is what I tend to expect from Sally Tomato, creative and artistic progressive rock. The video runs for about an hour and is quite a unique experience. There are a lot of aspects that should be covered separately here.

First, let's look at the story. I'm not completely sure of all the elements of the story, as some of it seems a bit obscure for me to grasp. That said, the basic premise is science fiction based. It's all about alternate realities and the massive power that being able to choose from among various outcomes would be. It's not a



new concept, it's been in science fiction for decades, and I actually wrote a short story that shares some elements with this story ten years or so ago. I suppose because of that story, I feel some connection to this one.

It should be mentioned that, while alternate realities has long been a feature of science fiction tales, new developments find it showing up in actual science. There is a growing movement in the community of physicists that believe in the existence of alternate realities, so perhaps those types of stories are not far removed from the truth.

This particular story seems to have some hints of addiction and the consequences of that, especially at the end. There is also sort of a metaphysical element of deities. That part definitely confused me, and some of the costumes seemed a bit silly to me. Still, it's just a small portion of what this is.

As a film, this has a real indie kind of vibe. It runs a lot of the time like a silent movie, with text cards explaining some of the story. There is a real psychedelic vibe at times. The choice of scenes and settings work well a lot of the time, creating some pretty amazing visuals. I also really like the clever use of color and black-and-white footage.

When it comes to the music, there is some really powerful stuff built into this. There are some highlights, but even the less potent stuff still works quite well. I'd suggest listening to the music without the video to really appreciate it. Alternately, just watch it as an extended music video rather than trying to follow the storyline. I found that attempting to get the narrative together distracted from my enjoyment of the music. When you just let it flow without too much brain power devoted, though, it works better.

As a piece of art this is unique and compelling. As story-telling, it doesn't work as well for me as I had hoped, since I found parts of the story a bit silly, while other aspects eluded my understanding to some degree. The music taken by itself has some particularly powerful moments. Your mileage may vary, and perhaps you'll be more drawn to the story. Either way, though, the combination of video imagery and music works very well.

This review is available in book format (hardcover and paperback) in Music Street Journal: 2020 Volume 1 at lulu.com/strangesound.

Experimental Forum experimentalforum.org



HONORABLE MENTION
Strange Divinity

World Music and Independent Film Festival wmiff.net/2018



BEST EXPERIMENTAL FILM
Strange Divinity
BEST ORIGINAL SOUND
Sally Tomato - Strange Divinity

Near Nazareth Festival nffestival.tk



SEMI-FINALIST
Strange Divinity

San Francisco International New Concept Film Festival www.sfnewfilm.org



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BEST EXPERIMENTAL FILM
Strange Divinity