

Haneke plays funny games with audience in 'Caché'

By Udayan Debasis Das
STAFF WRITER



I first came across director Michael Haneke's work ("Caché," "Funny Games," and most recently "The White Ribbon") when he remade his "Funny Games" into an English rendition.

My primary reason for watching "Funny Games" was that I had recently seen Michael Pitt in Gus van Sant's "Last Days," which was an affecting film. "Funny Games" was apparently an experiment on Haneke's part to see exactly how much nonsense an audience could take. He claimed that most people would not walk out of the theater (as they should) and would, in fact, due to contemporary desensitization, stay right to the very end.

I am glad to say that even though I was watching the movie on DVD, I couldn't get beyond 20 minutes of that film. That was before any of the gruesome violence or absurdity had even kicked in. If audiences were enduring this, then perhaps Haneke was right; things really were bad.

Given the argument that Haneke makes, and the audience's reaction, it is more instructive to ask how we got here. How and where did this process of desensitization begin, and how was it completed?

And undoubtedly, when one begins to take up that line of questioning, it is clear that Haneke in making that film is himself a contributor to that process of desensitization. As for the experiment and its outcome, given when this film was made, one could take any number of films from the existing collection made to prove this point – why waste money

and effort on such a project? Also, don't forget that once a celebrated director's name has been added, it adds another dimension to the experiment – is it not possible that some people stayed because they expected something special, right to the very end?

That brings us to "Caché": the "interwebs" buzz with discussions of the mystery of this film, its hidden meaning, its many likely locations of hidden cameras, etc.

This is all an exercise in futility, because quite simply put, the film is a sleight of hand. Worse, there is actually no illusion being achieved. Indirection is not necessary when the whole thing is a pure sham. Consider for example the reverse shot in Majid's apartment, apparently showing us where the hidden camera ought to be located.

Apparently the skill of the director here is that we cannot figure out where the camera is in that shot – a futile exercise because the camera need not be in the frame at all. And that, then, is the conclusion from watching "Caché": it is an elaborate bluff on Haneke's part. It is true that as a study of character it could have been interesting, but Haneke is not really interested in the human story that is there and it is quite incidental.

It is the nature of "hidden" that we are supposed to focus on, but the fact is, there is nothing "hidden" here – it is all very blank.

what's playing on Angela Ng's playlist?



What's playing on *your* playlist?
Email ae@technewsit.com!

More Morcheeba, please!

By Rebecca Waterloo
A&E EDITOR

A week ago, you may have wandered across the Chicago River to the House of Blues for an ear-gasm brought to you by Morcheeba. Described as Electronica, Alternative Rock, or the most accurate: trip-hop; Morcheeba is the type of music you would listen with your inner hippieself. After all, the word "Morcheeba" indicates "the way of cannabis". This originated from "MOR"—middle of the road; plus "Cheeba"—informal name of cannabis. (Wikipedia.org)

Although the crowd waited two hours to see the band after they were warned "just a few more minutes", it was all worth it when the lead vocalist (Skye Edwards) slowly towered over to the front of the stage in a bright red dress made of silk and giant red feathers, a red beaded necklace, and 3 ½ inch platform heels. Her hair was pinned back in a ball on the side of her head. Who's usually a small, African American girl from London; she completely sold the show Tuesday night with her whimsical vocals, toned arms and charismatic stage performances. The band was completed by a bass player, keyboards, DJ set, guitarist

and drummer. The mood was relaxing, and the band definitely knows how to jam. They played new and old songs including Crimson, The Sea, Trigger Hippy, Be Yourself, Rome, and Part of the Process.

A successful performance is based on crowd interaction. Participation was asked for one song (separate parts were assigned to the women and men); Skye's red necklace was broken in the first song and beads were thrown into the audience as souvenirs; A girl from Michigan State University who drove four hours to see Morcheeba was asked to come on stage and sing "Over and Over" with Skye herself, and a lucky ten people got to jam with the band on stage during the last song of their encore.

The colors of the show were spectacular, whether it was the lighting, Skye's red dress, or the décor of the House of Blues dimly lit up by neon lights on the balconies. If you haven't heard of Morcheeba yet, they have music ranging from the mid 90's to 2010 with plenty for you to pick from. Check out <http://www.myspace.com/morcheeba> for some sampler tunes.

(Photo by Rebecca Waterloo)



**Global Grounds open until
11 p.m. through March 10?
You bet we'll be there.**