A Critic’s ManiPedi Festo



Today marks my second article for Salvation South, the new online magazine founded by my old buddy Chuck Reece (widely known as the founder and face of The Bitter Southerner; more on me and Chuck coming soon to the blog). This week’s feature about young guitar hero Yasmin Williams marks the beginning of my weekly gig riding the SS culture desk. Even if my desk is a half-busted peach crate stood on end in a spiderweb-free corner of the back porch, I am tickled to have this platform on the regular.

My mandate calls for me to cover Southern culture, or culture about the South, or maybe things that are Southern adjacent. That could be music, books, films, teevee, comedy, dance, mumbly-peg championships, Civil War re-enactments, worm gruntin’ festivals, whatever. Add the fact that I can gin up a decent argument for some degree of Southern-ness for just about any cultural artifact you can find and you have a recipe for an absolute free for all based on not much more than the random direction I point my shiny-object detector in any given week.

Occasionally, when space or context considerations force us to cut ideas from the SS article, I will provide some expansion here at the i2b blog. The blog will also continue, at intervals, to serve as my platform for ideas and musings that do not fit the Salvation South mission. Like this ramble you are reading now, assuming you are still there. Hello?

There is an abundance of excellent cultural work on offer

right now, and it is nearly impossible for most people to get their work noticed. There were roughly 300,000 books published and 100,000 recordings released in 2021. Most of the PR oxygen goes to a handful of big names, leaving the small press and indie labels – not to mention the self-promoted artists – scrambling for scraps. This is why you won't read about Taylor Swift at my joint. (For the record, I like her a bunch and admire her smarts and professed values. But she does not need my help.) And don't even get me started on the absurd inundation of video swamping the web tubes.

Too many "critics" are mere hype agents, mostly underpaid scribblers hoping to hit clickbait gold with limp twatwaffling about this or that "must see" or "what *we all* are watching" flavor of the minute. I empathize, but only just. At the other end of the stick, there are the spawn of Bangs poison-penners who live for the snappy putdown, the curt dismissal, or the sneering above-it-all brush off.

(NOTE: Not all critics, just too many! There are tens – yes tens! – of excellent writers and thinkers that I rely upon in my excavations. Who are your favorites?)

Lucky for my readers: I don't have the time or patience to hype the mediocre, and there is way too much truly cool shit on the wind to waste time on a takedown of something I do not care for. (Unless J.D. Vance shits out another book. That guy just pisses me off.) I am beholden to no press agent or advertiser or corporate megamedia conglomerate. Naturally, Chuck holds veto power as Editor; I've never met a set of toes I could not step on given enough time, but I think we are cool here. It really comes down to my taste and my ability to sift gold from an inundation of sand. I write about the things I believe in. Whether my taste aligns with yours is in the lap of the gods.

My primary goal is to amplify the work of committed culture workers who might fly below the most folks' radar, artists and

scholars whose work might offer my readers a taste of that somethingsomething that reminds us that humankind offers an enormous and rich banquet of epic wonder.

Come on and really: Life is hard enough making it through one more day of this mean old world. Surely it is easier to just listen to/watch something familiar, slip into the equivalent of that fuzzy old robe, and just sit the fuck down and rest.

Sure, we all know there is more there there. But who has time or energy to look in the dark corners of the interwebs in hopes of finding something unexpected and excellent?

Turns out I do, because I need the hunt and discovery like a pig needs mud. And since I'm down in the wallow anyway, why not share the occasional acorn or truffle?

I love to immerse myself in the back catalog of writers and musicians I have just discovered, some current, some long dead or forgotten. Days on end listening to the same artist, comparing early works to later, songs re-worked over time, the evolution of the artist's voice…that life could always be so fine. Some people binge Netflix; I binge musicians and writers and have done since an early age. (More on this in an upcoming post.)

Onward.

This week for Salvation South I wrote about Yasmin Williams, a young WOC from Virginia who is breaking down the artificial white-guys-only image of guitar virtuosity. In my lede, I explained one of the personal reference points that comes into play when I listen to music: Shimmer. If you missed it, kick over to the article and read the first 4-5 paragraphs.

Since Shimmer is basically my own new coinage, I emailed Yasmin those grafs for a reality check. Here's our exchange.

yw: Shimmer is an interesting concept as a musical genre. It

goes beyond the more surface level, general musical genre definitions and delves deeper into the qualities of a musical piece itself. Shimmer seems to use an almost spiritual description of a genre and encompasses how music can make us feel or remind us of, which is certainly a unique approach to describing a musical genre. I'm assuming Shimmer can apply to any genre, since its definition lends itself to a wider interpretation. I think, logically, everyone would have a different interpretation of what qualifies as being a part of Shimmer, which might make this term difficult to use in a musical critique. However, this could be a good thing as a lot of music criticism focuses on comparisons and not on emotion.

rr-k: I really appreciate the consideration you gave to this. And yes: There will be disagreement as to what qualifies as Shimmer and what does not. Then again: What is Jazz? What is Country? And so on forever….

yw: Yes exactly! But since Shimmer is a new term there isn't a general consensus on what it means yet, whereas jazz and the like have an understood implication. I think this is good though. Shimmer is less about comparing one band/song to another band/song or forcing music to fit into a neat genre "box," than it is about analyzing the actual qualities of the music and what makes it great or makes us feel. Anyway, finally some fresh ideas in music criticism, thanks for this!

rr-k: There is no consensus because nobody but you and me even knows it exists!

yw: Hahaha well yeah.

Two comments in particular stand out for me.

"Shimmer seems to use an almost spiritual description of a

> *genre and encompasses how music can make us feel or remind us of…”*

…and…

> *“Shimmer is less about comparing one band/song to another band/song or forcing music to fit into a neat genre “box,” than it is about analyzing the actual qualities of the music and what makes it great or makes us feel.”*

Man, talk about getting it.

My other big goal for this column is finding a way to articulate the *thing*, that whatever-it-is-ness a piece or body of work delivers that gives me a tingle in my fingers and toes, gives me that warm spread in my belly I used to get from beer.

The driving Question, capital ‘Q’: What is happening when artists give us a glimpse inside something bigger than ourselves and let us in on something mysterious and ineffable?

Shimmer is part of that calculus. I’ll be struggling to find more language, an always imperfect medium for expressing the ineffable, to fill out the equation. Along the way, I would love for readers to weigh in on this conundrum. I am opening comments again here on the blog despite the constant barrage from Eastern European porn and vape merchants. Help make it worth my while.

That’s it for now. Hold the victims of war in your hearts, and hold your loved ones close. While you do that, here’s one of my fave songs of recent vintage. Let’s all be one of these.

All the Critics Love U in New York



If there's any celebrity you can be sure you *did not know* in any significantly real way, it was Prince. Shape shifter, name shifter/eraser, master of every style you can name. Intensely private and essentially flamboyant. Exhibitionist. Hermit. You don't know him except in the ways you think you do, and that has as much to do with what you wanted him to be as it does with which little pieces of mythologizing he wanted you to see at any given time. Like the classic Trickster of legend, he could present multiple faces at the same time, and the face you got to glimpse, briefly, depended on which side of the road you were standing on. If Prince had been around then, Kurosawa could have made this pint-sized product of Minni-freaking-sota the centerpiece of *Rashomon*. That would have been cool.

What do I know of Prince? We're roughly the same age. He's probably the most under-appreciated guitar player in like ever. Over the years that I have been heralding him as easily the best thing since Hendrix and sliced bread I've received more than a few puzzled looks and dismissive chuckles about me just being a contrarian. This week, many people were surprised when Billy Gibbons described his playing as "sensational".

But even that is only a piece of it. From his textbook knowledge and respect for those who came before him – JB, Sly, Jimi, Miles, George Clinton, &c. – to his savage dance chops and ultra-sharp fashion sense, to his early adoption and

mastery of technologies like the Linn Drum; the guy put a package together that was both historically intelligent and, somehow, way out in front of the coming surge of hip-hop and Michael Jackson/Madonna style pop that followed him by a few years. The man had his gifts. Add in an almost incomprehensible work ethic, and you have Prince.

How Prince helped me know myself comes down to this simple question:

How could anyone possibly fail to recognize such evident talent?

Probably the way that I did.

Because instead of listening, I reacted to the packaging cues that came with the Prince product. And because he hit the scene in the late 70s with a funky beat, puffy shirts, lots of synthesizers, and a (deceptively) silly reliance on lyrics about fucking, I saw him clearly for what he was: just another callow Disco Boy, a Travolta, a Bee Gee.

It's hard to remember (or, if you are a little younger, comprehend) the degree to which DiscoSux fever encompassed the world of funky music. Earth, Wind & Fire, James Brown, P-Funk: all these and more took their share of unfriendly fire from people who were essentially painting the entirety of black popular music as beneath-contempt shit.

DiscoSux fever was a symptom of reaction against gay and minority encroachment into the historically masculine world of rock and pop. This music was aimed at gender-fluid communities and urban black folk. For a generation of mostly white, hetero-norm critics and fans for whom rock'n'roll equaled priapic guitar stroking and golden-maned Dionysi sporting socks stuffed into spandex trousers, this was music that threatened the natural order. <fn>The pulse belonged on the 1 and 3, dammit, none of this 2 and 4 backbeat shit. Whaddya, Disco Duck?</fn> It was outsider art storming the

academy. And I was a privileged, by-birth member of the patriarchal academy, though I didn't even know that such a thing existed; such is the blindness of by-birth membership.

Prince said fk all that noise, and it was pretty clear that he was throwing down on, well, people like me.

> *Look out all you hippies, you ain't as sharp as me*
> *It ain't about the trippin', but the sexuality*
> *— All the Critics Love U in New York*

Hey. I resemble(d) that remark.

So I could "listen" to *When Doves Cry* or *1999* and quickly sort this alleged genius off into the "just another over-hyped fraud" bin.

In that same song, this upstart had the nerve to sing:

> *It's time for a new direction*
> *It's time for jazz to die*

As a burgeoning jazz-bo, I tooks what I tooks and it was more than I could takes. I didn't need to hear the music behind this pixie poppinjay. These crude insults told me all I needed to know! Pistols at dawn!

Later, when Miles compared him to Duke Ellington and Chopin, it was easy to dismiss the comments as Miles trying to glom onto the popularity of the younger phenom. Because come on: he's really just another Disco Boy, and everybody knows that DiscoSux, so pass the bong and cue up some Coltrane or some real rock'n'roll. Dude.

One night in 1993 I watched a terrific Neil Young *Unplugged* on MTV<fn>In those days, children, the M stood for "Music". You can look it up!</fn>. The next show was Prince live in some mega-arena, and I watched it and thought, "Meh, pretty

good” and then he walked offstage and into a limo that took him somewhere and he walked into a small club and took the stage and proceeded to melt my face with a yellow guitar and the most scorching Hendrix-style blues I’d heard since before Stevie Ray died. For the next hour I was slain. I’ve been listening to Prince ever since.

So what does the phenomenon of Prince teach me about myself? Every time I hear his music, even as I am digging it down to my toes, I am reminded that I am a fallible human being, prone to unpleasant bigotries and prejudices that cause me to stop paying attention to what is real and true. The impulses that put me on auto-piloting sort mode – this person is this, that music is that, I don’t like “those” kinds of people/music/movies/food/&c. – are the things that make me miss the My Favorite Worldness of life. It’s good to have a ready reminder – one that the iPod throws up randomly and often – that for all my pretense to erudition and discernment and such like, I am just as likely to react like a dope as I am to apply any kind of intentional awareness to, well, anything.

Which means, naturally, that any opinion I hold is inherently suspect and worthy of re-examination. Consider yourself duly warned.

The most delicious part of the irony is that the song I quote above, had I bothered to listen to it in 1983, would have delivered exactly the kind of face-melting guitar heroics that won me over ten years later. Check it.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pJxt_Ey6tbo

Who knows? I was full of myself in those days<fn>Unlike now, when I am extremely humble and enlightened.</fn>, so I might have dismissed it anyway.

Thanks, Artist Who Formerly Bestrode The World as Prince.

Somehow, having you be the constant reminder of my proclivity to dopiness ain’t all that bad. You sexy motherfker.

Food Porn



One of the best movies I watched in the past year is *Jiro Dreams of Sushi*, a 2011 documentary about Jiro Ono, the 85-year-old proprietor/chef of Sukiyabashi Jiro. This 10-seat, sushi-only restaurant in Tokyo – in a subway station, no less – is allegedly the greatest sushi restaurant in the known universe, and Jiro-san is sushi’s greatest artist.



Take a look at these hands.

The movie delves into the single-minded pursuit of perfection that drives the Master, and by extension, his two sons, both of whom live under his shadow and dominance. One son has opened his own successful restaurant; the eldest remains chained to the old man as apprentice-for-life (or so it must seem to 50-year old Yoshikazu), or at least until the old man kicks and Yoshi can take over the subway sushi empire.

The movie is gorgeously shot, and slow, and lyrical. The depiction of the Lear-esque intergenerational dynamic is subtle and clear. The director (David Gelb) manages to let the story unfold at a leisurely pace that matches the pace of the diners who savor every bite of the $250 prix fixe menu.

More than anything, the movie is about dedication to craft over a lifetime, the single-minded pursuit of excellence in a single-task. The results emerge in the food. It really looks glorious, and the meticulous care the chefs take in selecting ingredients and preparing and presenting the end product is captivating. It is truly worth the couple of bucks you'll pay to watch on iTunes or Amazon.

So we were pretty excited to see that Gelb was putting

together a six-part series for Netflix called *Chef's Table*. Each hour-long episode profiles a chef from a different part of the world, with each one notable for his or her innovation and brilliance in the culinary arts. Most of them have developed creative interpretations of their own culture's food legacy. They are all faithfully honoring their heritage through innovation. They are all critical and financial successes after the obligatory years of struggle and failures, veritable icons of forward thinking foodery.



Crouton garnished with organic yard sprigs on a bed of hair with guitar pick.

And as we watch the full series, something about it just stinks.

It could be that top tier chefery remains such a boy's club, with LA-based Niki Nakayama the only woman in the series. It could be the generalized arrogance of the chefs themselves; Jiro may be imperious, but he's never arrogant. But mostly, it could be that the food lives in a world apart from 99% of us; this really is food for the one percent. And the food experts delivering incisive analysis of why this chef or that is *so critically important* are the masticant version of fashion mavens who sniff at *pret a porter* and congratulate

themselves for acknowledging the existence of so-called "regular-sized women". It's like *Lifestyles of the Rich and Famous*. You can never be too rich, or too thin, or have your foie gras or veal raised in such a humane manner, fed lovingly on grass that was pre-masticated and glazed with a balsamic-and-baby-tears reduction! Gaze upon our privilege, peons, and imagine yourselves so fortunate.



A more realistic dream…

Funny thing, though. None of the food in *Chef's Table* makes me wish I was there to eat it. And to be honest, none of the chefs makes me wish we could hang out. And as such, it fails as food porn at the fundamental level – it does not engorge my desire to be in the action.

Food porn, like regular porn, is a substitute for the real experience. Food porn makes you hungry. Regular porn makes you horny.<fn>YMMV.</fn> Food porn makes you think, "hey, I could enjoy that, too". Regular porn? Same sort of thing. In the end, one wonders what it might have been like to actually participate in the antics on-screen.



We like to watch.

But not all food porn is created equal. *Chef's Table* falls short because it is so fussy and privileged. It's a soft porn *Downton Abbey*. You are probably sort of sure there is something happening, but the attitude is so detached and stuffy that you can't be sure. Having contemplated *noblesse oblige* for the better part of an hour, Lady Mary's hand accidentally grazes the sleeve of Mr Bates' jacket leading to sexual tension, guilt, and, alas, no resolution. Some Maggie Smith commentary would help, but only just. That's the food experience at the *Chef's Table*.



The High Priestess

I really enjoy cooking shows, have loved them since I was a kid watching Julia Child and *The Galloping Gourmet* on public television.<fn>Your Narrator has always been something of a dweebnerd.</fn> Even their snobbishness – that hint of the genteel in accent and demeanor – somehow added to their charm,

and we had the idea that we were with someone who truly wished us all to become great cooks. And their food always looked kind of amazing and tantalizing.<fn>Plus sport! Watching the greats chop vegetables was like watching Baryshnikov or Federer. Jacques Pepin is bone fide Mack Heath with a blade. Watch Jiro-san slice sushi. Behold Julia poised before a duck, cleaver raised for the *coup de fowl*. Can we run that again on instant replay super slo-mo 360* telestrator?</fn>



The Galloping Punster

(My most enduring memory of Graham Kerr involved one of his intro stories. He was a shameless punster {“with fronds like these, who needs anemones?”}, and one day he told a nearly endless shaggy dog story that ended with him sticking a hypodermic into the top of a coconut, coinciding with the line “a furry with a syringe on top”. Well.)

Not for nothing, both of these icons were pretty liberal with the wine during filming.

The food shows of my youth were primarily instructional. We were intended to go forth and re-create what we had witnessed. In this sense, the oldie food shows were less porn-like and

more akin to a Human Sexuality instructional video. The mechanics were depicted, but one was expected to put one's learning into action.

Eventually, purveyors of foodie shows realized that most people can't be bothered to actually, you know, cook food. Like exercise videos, most viewers take the food shows as passive entertainment. Sure, some of the current crop of celeb chefs offer recipes and such, but most programming on the food networks are given over to spectacle, to travelogue and *Survivor*-style competitions where wannabe chow jockeys frantically yell at one another and sweat into the food they are handling in hopes of capturing the holy grail – a chance at their own food program.

But more than anything, modern food shows revolve around the Celebrity. Some actually cook, some just eat. Almost all of them paste their names on cookbooks and pots and pans and knife sharpeners and citrus zesters &c. Like Marylin Chambers and Jenna Jameson, our celebrity foodies have become franchises, interchangeable with brands like Trojan or Cuisinart, their photo on the cover a guarantee of a certain….something.

Latter day celebrity chefs run the gamut from sniff-sniff high society to here's how to make weenies in a blanket for a last-minute dinner party. Who do we love?



How does she not have

a headache from stretching her face like that?

Giada De Laurentiis is the chef with a 2000 watt smile. On camera, Giada has the miraculous ability to come off as your girl-next-door bestie, which is exactly who she is if you happened to grow up in the most exclusive neighborhood in Beverly Hills. Her food is every bit as utterly divine as Giada's smile and wardrobe. You can almost smell the garlic coming through the electric picture radio box. One could almost forget that she lives behind high walls and guarded gates. Almost.



Alcohol is a very important part of a balanced teevee diet.

My favorite high-tone food flinger is Hamptons-based Ina Garten – the Barefoot Contessa. She has the most soothing teevee voice since Bob Ross. Really, watch her some afternoon when it is raining and you need to relax. Have a glass of wine

or three – or maybe one of those pinkytinis pictured above – and let Ina's dulcet descriptions of produce and process float you away on clouds of imagined gustatory delight. Better than Xanax, guaranteed. You might even pick up a recipe or two that you have no intention of ever actually making.

Both of them make you feel like you'd be welcome to dine at their tables, though in fact you'd probably meet a couple of very serious security guys if you actually tried. Their food looks yummy, too. Let's consider them the purveyors of art house food porn. Very plummy, very luxe. Out of reach, but certainly delicious. An impossible fantasy. Let's watch another episode and pretend we're Jeffrey.

Others in our constellation of culinary heroes are more, um, proletariat. Rachel Ray brings the perky energy of an ex-cheerleader to her single-minded mission to dominate the food of the masses. She is just goddamned adorably cute, and did I mention that she is perky? Perky, perky, perky!!



Fresh fruit is an important part of a balanced diet.

Her food is basic, easy to replicate, and frankly, perfectly revolting. This combination is even less appealing than you might think. But nobody works harder than Rachel. Her routine of filming up to a dozen half-hour episodes per day

can lead to some pretty bizarre performances. It often seems as though she's suffered a blow to the head with a board. Her perkiness never lags, even when she is slurring her words from exhaustion, and it's always a suspense-filled mystery to find out if the unlikely ingredients she's mangling will turn into something magical.<fn>That's a lie. It never turns magical. But somehow, still, it's hard to turn away.</fn> This is more mass-appeal fare, something more like *Debbie Does Meatloaf* than *Story of O.*<fn>Credit where due. Rachel had the Galloping Gourmet as a guest on her talk show (yep) where she asked him to tell the furry with a syringe on top joke. Respect.</fn>

Then there are our travel guides, intrepid globetrotters in search of, well, something.

Andrew Zimmern (*Bizarre Eats*) seems a nice enough fella, but jesus hitler, that guy would eat sauteed dingleberries with poo garnish if someone served it out of a filthy kitchen with a camera watching, and then his face would contort into the foodie equivalent of oh-baby-you-have-such-big-thing that makes regular porn so, um, convincing. He even moans a little bit when the food is especially disgusting. Let's not even get into the episodes where he eats actual testicles; the parallel is getting uncomfortable even for me, and I'm behind this increasingly horrific metaphor-cum<fn>See what I did there?</fn>-critique.



That is, in fact, exactly what you think it is.

Bizarre Eats is sort of like watching the kid in middle-school who would eat a live cockroach on a dare. You're not gonna look away, and you're gonna get grossed out, but there's no chance you'd pass your bottle of Jack to that guy. Put this in with the X-rated *Frankenstein* that Warhol produced mid-70s, or maybe one of those *Faces of Death* shitshows. A very little bit goes a long, long way.

Guy Fieri? Probably the less said the better. This lands squarely in the amateur, homemade porn realm, kind of gross, a matter of some curiosity at best. Watching this peroxided hipster wannabe chow his way through a three-pound burger with some inexplicable sauce is to watch a pimply couple with mullets slapping flab in the grainy light of a double-wide trailer. To be fair, though, Fieri brings superior production values, so you can really see the disgusting thing you want no part of.



The food is even less attractive than Guy himself.

Fieri is an actual restaurateur, ~~just like~~ not at all like our favorites from *Chef's Table*. Where the *CT* foodies might offer

a thin slice of radish on a bed of peat with sea salt reduction for $60, our pal Guy is all about huge quantities of alleged food at allegedly low, low prices. One of his joints offers something called “Gringo Sushi”, which is apparently just like sushi without the fish, rice and seaweed, subbing in french fries, crispy fried onions, and iceberg lettuce for that nasty foreign stuff. Iceberg lettuce in your sushi. No. Shit.

He is, as you may well imagine, a huge financial success, with his own Times Square “bistro”<fn>If by bistro one means a sub-Applebees botulism experiment with $18 dollar frozen burgers.</fn> that was the subject of one of the greatest restaurant reviews in the history of forever. Much like snuff films and Olive Garden, the mere existence of Guy Fieri is enough to convince one of the existence of a dark and malevolent force in the Universe, a sure sign of the decline of Western civilization.

Anthony Bourdain’s another story. Man, I’d love to travel and hang with that guy, though I’d probably suffer irreversible liver damage within a week. His tastes run from high to low, from bizarre to pedestrian. He’s as much at home in front of the most high-faluting avant-gastro as he is eating his way through the menu at *Waffle House*. Even better: Bourdain keeps his eye on the fact that food is an essential ingredient of human interaction, a basic glue that binds cultural identity.



Drunk as a skunk at the Waffle House. As it should be.

Bourdain is food porn a la Henry Miller and JP Sartre and Terry Southern. It's raw, it's dirty, it has that certain *je ne sais quoi*. And then you have to think about it a bunch and spill a lot of words agonizing over what it all means in the larger scheme of things. And drinking. Lots of drinking! With normal people! My kinda food porn!

Bourdain was at one time an actual chef, but he has, like most of our heroes here, transcended actual kitchen work in lieu of a more profitable career in celebrity. More than anyone else mentioned here, Bourdain's heart and soul is about a good story, well told. Even though food (and drink) is still the common thread, Bourdain's interest is in the mechanics of food and drink as social and cultural signifiers. He'll take you 80 miles out into Gullah-land to find the best barbecue around, but he's going to be sure you understand why the people behind that Q do what they do, and how they do it, and how it fits into a larger narrative about economics and politics and social stratification. Unlike the knobs of the *Chef's Table*, Bourdain invites us to enjoy the food while we also take account of the classist balance sheet of the whole endeavor. On *CT*, they're too busy congratulating themselves on their

commitment to holistic-eco-fetishism to bother noticing their inherent privilege and material excess.

Bourdain's focus on character development would be enough to disqualify his show as porn if it weren't for the fact that the food and drink and landscapes he brings us are exactly where you want to be at that very moment. No matter if he is in Charleston or Cambodia or Coney Island, you want to be there in his place, eating and drinking and smelling exactly what he is smelling. And talking about what it means over that fifth or sixth glass of bourbon.

Porn. It's what's for dinner.

My Favorite World #33



Amy Shumer is funny as shit. She's bawdy and profane and smart as a damned tack. And apparently, she's pissed off the Disney/Lucasfilm monolith with her parody photo shoot of Star Wars icons. That alone is enough to earn her solid hero status.



Hung like a goddam robot.

I wouldn't bother to post about her because she is literally everywhere in the media these days, but a friend the other day declared, "I literally have no idea who this person is." So on the off chance that one of my 7 readers is one of the 13 people in the world who aren't hip to Amy, here goes.

Her "project"<fn>As the lit/art eggheads like to say.</fn> is primarily an exploration of what it means to be a young White woman in the media/world at large, the judgements/assessments of a Woman as an object first and foremost, and then perhaps having some sort of talent or other redeeming quality that might/might not deserve consideration based on whether she is hot/not hot. Also, too, whether a woman has a right to enjoy sex/food/drink to excess and without concern for what anyone else might have to say about it. At a recent awards ceremony, she declared herself well out of fucks to give, but happy to take them as she wishes.

> *"I'm probably like 160 pounds right now and I can catch a dick whenever I want, like, that's the truth. It's not a*

problem!”

She had been introduced by AbFab’s Jennifer Saunders<fn>Another very funny woman who also ran out of spare fucks a long time ago.</fn>, who was a puddle of hysterics by the time it was all done. I’ve also watched Shumer reduce Ellen<fn>No last name necessary!</fn> to speechlessness. She takes no prisoners.

I could recommend any number of clips as exemplars of comedy-meets-art-meets-social-commentary that deserves placement in the imaginary hall of fame occupied by Lenny, Carlin, Pryor, Rock, &c.<fn>And why, oh why, mister pale patriarchal penis person is there not another woman on that list? The problem runs deep, and it damn sure ain’t the fault of funny women like Silverman, Diller, Rivers, Boozler, &c. Mea culpa.</fn> The extended piece on rape culture in a Texas high school football team is pitch perfect; jokes about rape are pretty difficult to pull off without being an asshole, and she nails it. The pastoral luncheon with Tina Fey and Patricia Arquette celebrating Julia Louis Dreyfuss’ “last fuckable day” before she is relegated to cronedom is superb. The trial of Bill Cosby is cruel and spot on. And even better, very funny.<fn>”I believe it was my mentor, the great Bill Cosby, who said, ‘Here, take this.'”</fn>

But for my money, the best thing yet in her work is this episode-length “remake” of *12 Angry Men*. The cast alone is to marvel at; it’s a sign of her clout and the respect she garners that this little show on basic cable could attract Jeff Goldblum, Dennis Quaid, Paul Giamatti,Vincent Kartheiser, Kumail Nanjiani, Chris Gethard, and John Hawkes for a single episode. But the genius is in the execution: a faux shot-by-shot remake, but instead of a murder trial, these men are to determine whether Amy is hot enough to be on television.



Well does she?

Watch it.

http://www.cc.com/full-episodes/d6vl24/inside-amy-schumer-12-angry-men-inside-amy-schumer-season-3-ep-303

My. Favorite. World.