

## ‘The Darjeeling Limited’ Seesaws Between Deft, Forced Eccentricity

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CHICAGO – With his aloof character panache and colorful imagery, Wes Anderson is one of those directors you either love dearly or loathe dreadfully.

The mastermind behind such titles as “The Life Aquatic With Steve Zissou,” “The Royal Tenenbaums” and “Rushmore,” his next hatchling comes in the form of “The Darjeeling Limited” through the propensity of brotherly trio Jason Schwartzman, Adrien Brody and Owen Wilson.



From left to right, Jason Schwartzman, Adrien Brody and Owen Wilson in “The Darjeeling Limited”.

Photo courtesy of IMDb

But first things first. Prior to its Friday release, many enthusiasts on Sept. 26 were treated to a 13-minute [iTunes tease](#) [10] entitled “Hotel Chevalier,” which is “part one” of the film.

After being a voyeur with the short online and then enveloping the feature-length film thereafter (“The Darjeeling Limited” is coined after a train and has naught to do with the tea), you’ll concede that the short only whets your appetite to Anderson’s distinctive stylization while revealing Natalie Portman’s first glimpse of screen nudity.

Portman’s virgin-popping moment of screen skin is tastefully done. Noticing her one cheek – the below-the-waist kind – only seems peculiar because Schwartzman is fully clad while she’s fully not.



From left to right, Adrien Brody, Owen Wilson and Jason Schwartzman in “The Darjeeling Limited”.

Photo courtesy of IMDb

For moviegoers who flock to the theater without first being exposed to “Hotel Chevalier,” the film asks audiences to seek it out for themselves later. Because Portman’s cameo in “The Darjeeling Limited” is tragically wasted, the main reason to do so is for her (unless you need to see even more sly iPod product placement).

While Bill Murray kicks off “The Darjeeling Limited” with mirthful facial expressions that instill immediate hope for the film, he also falls off the film’s universe and thereafter isn’t used but in one ephemeral scene. I report lukewarm feedback for this film ultimately because its quirkiness is simultaneously its best and worst quality.

While I dig its idiosyncrasies and muted characters – Schwartzman, for example, loves to trek around far-flung lands devoid of shoes and the members of this tripod are persistently popping prescription drugs – the film tends to fall victim to the very eccentricities that make Anderson unique.



From to right left, Jason Schwartzman, Adrien Brody and Owen Wilson in “The Darjeeling Limited”.

Photo courtesy of IMDb

At indiscriminate moments, I’d find myself thrown out of relishing the film’s pleasantries because a scene felt forcibly quirky. “The Darjeeling Limited,” which is based on a worthy story that ultimately needed more density, shines during its naturally peculiar scenes but blots out its own sun with contrived injections.

While Schwartzman and Brody are exquisitely monotone and deadpan, Owen Wilson is the odd man out. I’ll refrain from prodding below the belt on the uncanny resemblance to his new, real-life emotional condition while playing a man who appeared battered throughout the entire film.

Anjelica Huston, who is perfectly placed in the middle of nowhere doing who knows what with who knows who, delivers a memorable performance with minute screen time.





“The Darjeeling Limited” director Wes Anderson.

Photo courtesy of IMDb

Such films as “The Darjeeling Limited” are an important part of film culture today, should remain a critical niche therein and are an utterly energizing departure from traditionally predictable Hollywood big-bang flicks. I authentically look forward to Anderson’s next project and hope he heeds just this counsel:

**Let thy camera only capture authentically eccentric expressions and let thy editor amputate everything else that poses.**



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