

Film Reviews **Music to your ears**

Deborah Louise Robinson

All About Steve

Sandra Bullock stars in this heart-warming tale of one woman's quest to fit in. Mary Horowitz works for her local newspaper and is looking for love. She meets news camera man Steve (Bradley Cooper) and she becomes infatuated.



The first half of All About Steve is irritating because Mary is so annoying. I did eventually warm to her slightly, being taught along the way that no matter how different you are, there's always someone who thinks you're special, we must never ever change who we are just to fit in with others – and it is amazing the difference one word of sign language can make.....

In cinemas now
(3 stars out of 5)

The Ugly Truth

The Ugly Truth stars Katherine Heigl as TV producer Abby, a woman whose controlling ways have left her luckless in love. Gerard Butler plays Mike, the brash host of a trashy cable show called The Ugly Truth, he tells his viewers exactly how men differ from women, and why all relationships are doomed. Abby, a believer in the notion that Mr Perfect is out there somewhere, disagrees, and when her bosses give Mike a slot on her daytime TV show, these two are destined to lock horns. A predictable, but very funny, well written, finely acted comedy, this will appeal to both sexes because it really does tell The Ugly Truth!

DVD release: 8th Feb 2010
(4 stars out of 5)

The Time Traveller's Wife

If you can suspend your disbelief and ignore the holes in the plot, The Time Traveller's Wife is a heart-warming tale of love against the odds. Rachel McAdams and Eric Bana star as two lovers trying to make their relationship work even though they are often separated by time. Mildly amusing, sometimes touching, but a little nonsensical.

DVD Release: 8th Feb 2010
(3 stars out of 5)

Love Hurts

Richard E. Grant over-acts as a newly separated father in Love Hurts. To drag him out of his depression, his teenage son Justin gives him dating tips, and soon it appears he is irresistible to women! When Justin himself falls in love he finds his father's new lifestyle sad and superficial, but can he change him back? Sometimes funny, more often irritating.

Out on DVD now
(2 stars out of 5)

Confessions of a Shopaholic

Isla Fischer stars as a shopaholic who lands a job as a financial journalist, falls in love with her boss, and avoids the debt collector in this painful bit of Hollywood nonsense. Predictable, irritating, and utterly pointless; Confessions of a Shopaholic is a charmless waste of time.

On DVD now
(1 star out of 5)

Esther Kane

Ask someone to name a musician with hearing loss and the most common response is Beethoven. But in the world of music and entertainment, there are countless figures suffering with hearing loss, impairment, tinnitus or various other hearing conditions.

What happens to someone after their enjoyment of music becomes hindered or lost altogether?

Perhaps the most recent example would be country singer, Ryan Adams, currently on a break with Ménière's disease; a condition characterised by tinnitus and progressive hearing loss. Other examples include Pete Townshend, William Shatner and Brian Wilson to name but a few.

So what happens to someone after their enjoyment of music becomes hindered or lost altogether? Ear plugs are the most common and effective choice for ear protection, especially when it comes to live music. Tragically, those with severe sensitivity to sound may even begin to avoid loud music, and gravitate away from their foremost passion.

In some cases, generators are prescribed that emit white noise into the affected ear in the hope of desensitising it. These conditions can cause extreme unhappiness, especially as it detracts from the enjoyment of listening to music or attending gigs.

There is a new movement of hearing impaired music lovers attending clubs that spin music heavy in bass and rhythm

In Beethoven's case, it was said that his hearing loss forced him to saw the legs off his piano and sit on the floor to play. Feeling the vibrations of the music, he was able to continue composing for a decade after losing his hearing. As science and technology develop, groundbreaking ways of experiencing or "feeling" music are being tried and tested by those with hearing loss.

In the 2004 film It's All Gone Pete Tong, Paul Kaye plays Frankie Wilde, a DJ who rapidly loses his hearing. After coming to terms with his deafness, he is able to rebuild his career as a DJ by feeling the vibrations from speakers through his bare feet. There is a new movement of hearing impaired music lovers attending clubs that spin music heavy in bass and rhythm. Music is now felt, not heard.

Those with partial hearing loss and high sensitivity, such as me, find it especially difficult. I have attended gigs where standing near the front is unbearable, but standing near the back among the indifferent, talkative gig-goers just won't do.



Due to severe tinnitus, Joel Syzens gave up playing the drums, and began composing music soothing to the ear

Trying to locate an optimum volume when listening to music or television becomes tiresome; everything is just too quiet or too loud. Singing can be equally frustrating as the voice gets louder it can cause the greatest discomfort at times, being so near to the ear.

Joel sought several experimental treatments and therapies and began composing for acoustic guitar

American musician Joel Syzens decided to give other musicians with devastating hearing conditions a forum to connect with similar people, collaborate on recordings, and give each other support. He does this through his website relax-your-ears.com, and has also launched the record label A-Sharp Records.

Tinnitus and hyperacusis (a collapsed tolerance to normal, environmental sound) had threatened to take away his life's work and passion. Syzens gave up his drumming career, but he refused to give up music. He sought several experimental treatments and therapies and began composing for acoustic guitar.

"One of my current goals is to connect musicians and music lovers who have tinnitus and/or hyperacusis for collaboration and support," he says. Syzens intends to use A-Sharp Records as a forum where musicians with hearing ailments can connect, and to raise awareness about hearing conservation.

Discover his movement or listen to his soothing music for yourself at www.relax-your-ears.com.

What do you think about this?
email editorial@hearingtimes.co.uk



DG's New Year resolutions

Now we're well into 2010, I've had a chance to reflect on my resolutions and whether I've actually kept any of them. Erm...

Well, my first resolution was to get fit again after my surgery. So far I've begun walking to work – five miles each way – and have discovered a dance studio near me that specialises in Bollywood dancing, which I thought might be quite fun. But I have yet to venture there, mainly because, if I'm completely honest, I'm scared!

You see, as much as I love dancing, I find dance classes incredibly hard to follow. One time, there was a street dance class I was desperate to try, so I dragged all my friends along.

At the start of the class, I told the instructor I couldn't hear, but I found it near impossible to follow anything she said and in the end I left halfway through, feeling embarrassed about the fact I looked like a newborn foal, and despondent that

- I'd quit and
- I found it so hard!

Now, now, I know this is not the best thing to do – I should have stuck it out and I'm sure it would have got easier, but sometimes I get this rising ball of emotion in the pit of my stomach when I'm embarrassed, and no matter how hard I try, it doesn't go away, so I end up giving up on whatever I was doing.

And I don't think I can blame my deafness for that either – it's just the way I was made. I get embarrassed by non-deaf related things, and run away from them, too!

But, I'm going to give this dancing thing a go – it's got to be possible for me to work through the embarrassment factor and come out the other side, hasn't it? Well, I'll just have to keep you posted!

Another resolution of mine is to learn a musical instrument that I can hear. Having already played the flute – can't hear anymore, violin – can't hear anymore, and double bass – stolen by a very strong burglar, I went through the various options – the bass guitar, bassoon, cello, trombone, and then I finally decided on...

THE TUBA!

I mean, this is definitely low enough and loud enough for me to hear and anyone who's heard me when I lose my volume control will confirm that I've got the lung power for it.

Deafinitely Girly - tube player.

It's got a certain ring to it, don't you think?!

If you can't wait a month to find out what Deafinitely Girly gets up to in the next month issue, read about her exploits at www.deafinitelygirly.com