

Learning from 'The Master'

● Amy Adams chats about her work with celebrated director Paul Thomas Anderson and why she's not concentrating on her latest film's Scientology angle

Amy Adams learned a lot on "The Master" — most surprising of which was probably how funny reclusive director Paul Thomas Anderson really is. "I thought it was going to be a very serious experience. And although we definitely delved into serious subject matter in the scenes, the experience of working with him was a lot more fun than I expected," she says.

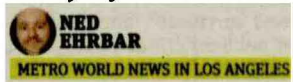
The film, in which Adams plays the devoted wife of a charismatic cult leader (Philip Seymour Hoffman) wary of her husband's latest disciple (Joaquin Phoenix), has piqued curiosity because of its supposed similarities to the early days of Scientology and L. Ron Hubbard. But Adams says she isn't wading into that pool of discussion. "I guess that's for people to discover on their own. I didn't think about it a lot, nor was it something that I explored at great length when going into it," she says. "I always say, 'See the film, and then if that's something you're interested in, sort of finding the parallels, then you'll find the parallels.' But I just see it as

more of a character study. I don't think that Paul was trying to make a movie about Scientology."

And when she says see the film, she means it. At the Toronto International Film Festival premiere of "The Master," Adams stayed glued to her seat even though it was the second time she'd seen it. "I hadn't seen it with an audience and everybody kept saying you need to see it twice," she says. "I'm typically too self-conscious to watch films that I participate in, but the first time through, I have to be honest, I did not clock my performance. It was so much more about where the film took me than how I felt about what I was doing."

Adams admits that working with Anderson and her co-stars caused more than a few "pinch me" moments. "It's surreal at times. I have to keep myself relatively grounded when I'm working or else I'll freak out," she admits. And one of the most surreal moments? Filming a scene in which Phoenix's character suddenly sees all the women at a party naked. "That was one of the weirdest nights

of my life because I was right at [waist] level," she says. "The reason that it was so surreal for me is that typically when we see women naked in our society, aside from in life, they're acting like they know they're naked. Here the idea is that we're all acting like we have clothes on. So to see women of all ages and body types jumping around and dancing and very unself-consciously presenting themselves, that was so surreal because you just don't see that."



Quoted
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