



THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 09, 2006

## KBT Presents: THE KING AND THE CLOWN



This weeks film is all about entertainment. Comedy. Drama. Tragedy. [The King and the Clown](#) is a South Korean riff on [William Shakespeare's Hamlet](#), but only in the loosest of fashion. It is a fusion of bold storytelling, Korean history and traditional theatre wrapped in a taboo busting modern package which captures the essence of the dangerous thrill (and resulting joy) of performing art.

The story follows two actors who leave their tight-rope/comedy troupe because the leader of their band is more interested in selling the younger of the two, a fellow so smooth-skinned and effeminate as to be quite easily mistaken for the opposite gender, to rich noblemen for sexual favours. They make their way to Seoul to start their own troupe, and make a name for themselves by turning the gossip of the King and his ex-prostitute consort into satire of the monarchy. This leads to notice by a key minister of the King and gets the players caught up in the in political (and sexual) intrigues of one of Korea's long lasting [Joseon Dynasty](#).

The tightrope is a fitting visual metaphor seen constantly in the movie as the players, as they do in the 'play within the play' in [Hamlet](#), wield power of a sort by confronting the court with things

• [HOME](#)

[ABOUT ME](#)

[KURT HALFYARD](#)  
[CA](#)

[VIEW MY COMPLETE PROFILE](#)

### PREVIOUS POSTS

- [KBT Presents: THE WOODS](#)
- [KBT Presents: THE HITCHER](#)
- [KBT Presents: BLADE RUNNER](#)
- [KBT Presents: VITAL](#)
- [TIFF Wrap-Up in Short.](#)
- [TIFF Review: Woman on the Beach](#)
- [Even More TIFF Reviews](#)
- [More TIFF Reviews](#)
- [First Round of TIFF Reviews](#)
- [KBT on Hold for TIFF 2006](#)

### LINKS TO PLACES I GO

- [Twitch: A World-Genre-Cinema website I contribute content to regularly](#)
- [Internet Movie Database](#)
- [Fametracker](#)
- [Movie City News](#)
- [DVD Beaver: Eclectic Cinema](#)
- [My oft-neglected Website](#)
- [Rotten Tomatoes](#)
- [Walter Chaw: The Best Online Critic](#)
- [James Berardinelli: Another Good](#)

that no member of the aristocracy or monarchy could say outright. [The King and the Clown](#) spends a fair bit of time going into the consequences on giving the 'common people' so much power without the protections of station. They suffer for that power, and the effect of their art. When given the choice however, each player indicates that they would do it all again for the euphoria of performing.

If this movie were made in English and a Hollywood studio film (not that I'm suggesting a remake, the film is universal in its appeal, but Korean at its core) it would likely get an [Academy Award](#) nomination for best picture. In fact [The King and the Clown](#) has been submitted for the [Best Foreign Language Award](#); and up until recently it was the highest grossing domestic film in South Korea. This is even more impressive in that the director and principle actors were basically unknowns when the film was released.

POSTED BY KURT HALFYARD AT 12:01 AM

---

0 COMMENTS:

[POST A COMMENT](#)

[<< Home](#)

Read

- [GreenCine Daily: Arthouse News](#)
- [Brandchannel: Cheeky take on product placement in Films](#)
- [Filmstalker: Covers Mostly Mainstream Films very, very well](#)
- [David Mamets Articles on Film as a Medium \(Superb writing!\)](#)