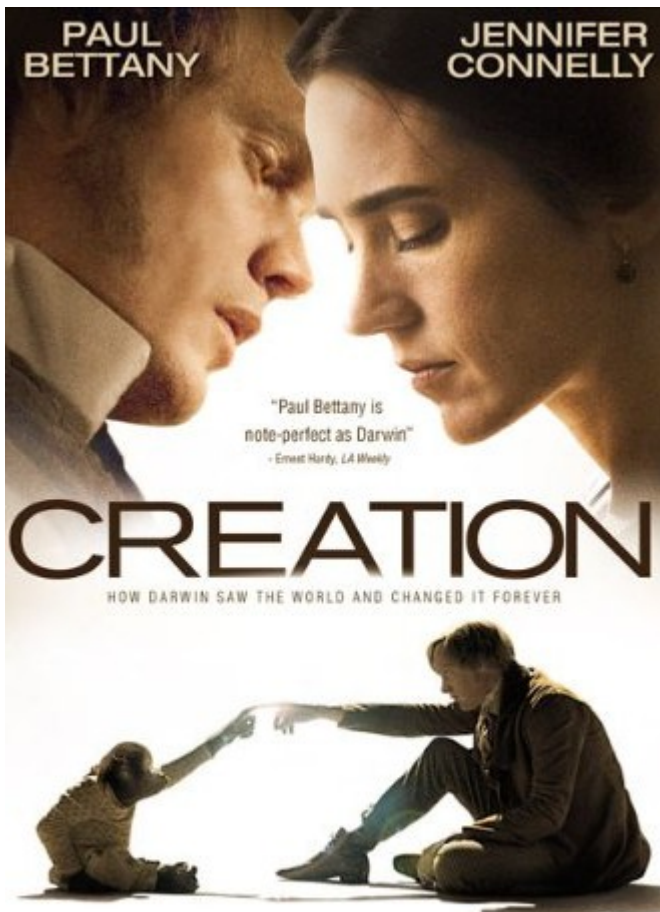


CC recommends: Movies

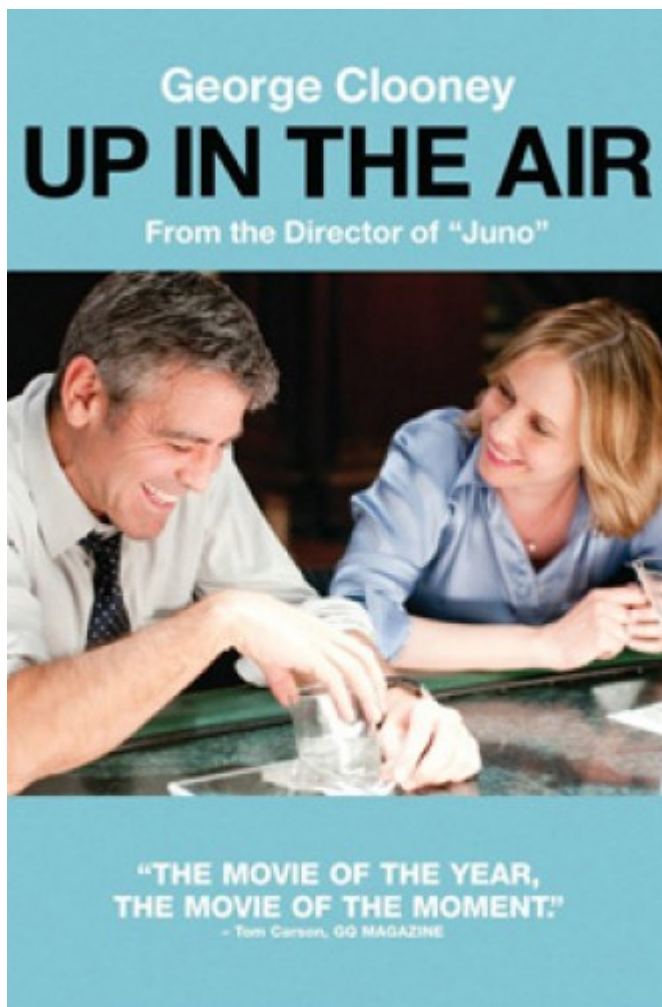
selected by [Jason Byassee](#) in the [December 14, 2010](#) issue

In Review



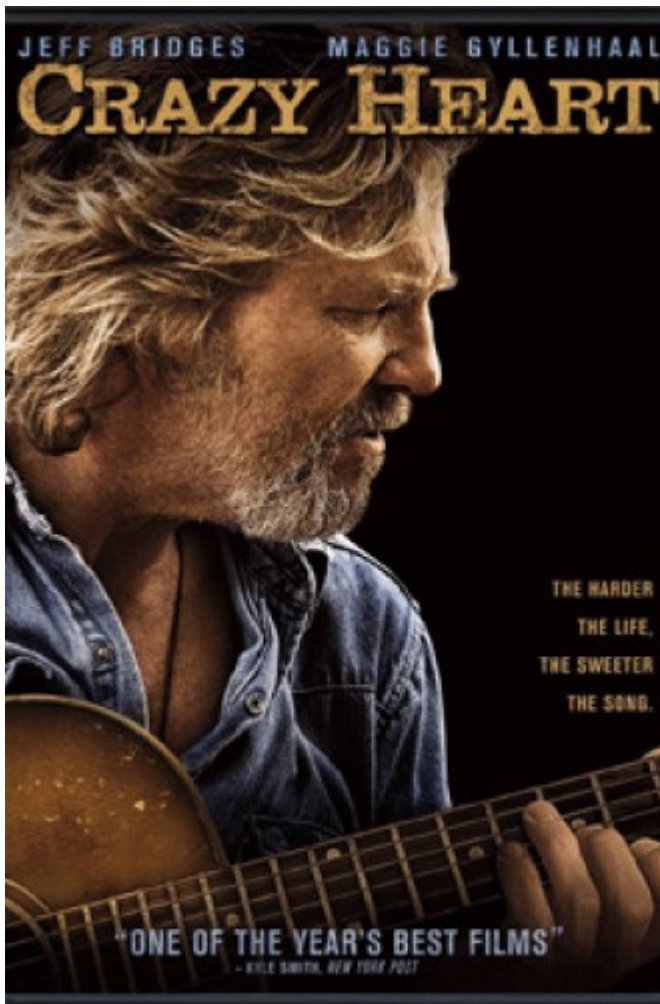
Creation

Directed by Jon Amiel
Lionsgate



Up in the Air

Directed by Jason Reitman
Paramount



Crazy Heart

Directed by Scott Cooper

Fox Searchlight



The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo

Directed by Niels Arden Oplev

Music Box



How to Train Your Dragon

Directed by Chris Sanders

Music Box



Five Minutes of Heaven

Directed by Oliver Hirschbiegel
Big Fish Films

Creation. The chief villain in this Charles Darwin biopic is the religious belief of his society (and of his own wife), which makes Darwin hesitate about releasing his theories on evolution to the wider public. Yet the film beautifully shows that what really shook Darwin's faith was not the finches of the Galapagos but the death of his beloved daughter. The title *Creation* may be ironic, but it's an ideal film to provoke discussion on that very subject.

Up in the Air. Reitman once again manages to wring humor out of something unfunny, as he did in *Juno* (where the subject was teen pregnancy) and *Thank You for Smoking* (cancer). This one deserves the accolades it got for its attention to layoffs in the Great Recession and its skewering of the disembodiedness of the

dreams of modernity. You live for frequent-flyer miles? Really? Our grandchildren will watch this film to understand our times.

Crazy Heart. You can guess almost every plot twist, but it doesn't matter. Jeff Bridges shows us the way that addiction grabs hold of hearts and squeezes—and how even those who manage to claw their way out of it still suffer for past actions. Is there any better genre of music to accompany such a story than old-fashioned smoky-bar country?

The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo. The Swedish adaptation of the first volume in Stieg Larsson's megasmash trilogy hugs the book closely as it details a 50-year-old cold-case whodunit investigated by a multiply tattooed and pierced computer hacker. Larsson's books are passionate in their denunciation of violence against women—a passion the church would do well to look for ways to express so vividly. The upcoming American adaptation is sure to sand down the original's hard edges.

How to Train Your Dragon. DreamWorks's summer smash about a Viking village's battle with an island of dragons features more than computerized eye candy and Gerard Butler (whose abs made him famous in *300*) in full Scottish brogue (were the Vikings Scots?!). It's also a morality tale about how your enemy may in fact be scared rather than irrationally diabolical. Just because it's sweet doesn't mean it isn't true.

Five Minutes of Heaven. Is retaliation really a more effective response to violence than forgiveness? Can a sort of reconciliation happen without "Kum ba yah" sentimentality? Liam Neeson plays a former Irish militant recently released from prison for murdering a unionist. He means to confess to the dead man's brother on live TV. The always remarkable James Nesbitt plays the confessor—with a dagger hidden in his jacket.