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## FEATURED FILM REVIEWS

### Electric Button (Moon & Cherry) – Review

by Miguel Douglas on June 19, 2013

Mayama, the star of her erotica writing club, has a bad case of writer's block. When Tadakoro joins the group, Mayama learns that he still a virgin. Mayama decides that introducing him to a variety of sexual indulgences might just be the inspiration she needs. As “research” for her book, she documents Tadakoro's sexual awakening. Mayama doesn't realize that sometimes the teacher becomes the student.

Working as screen writer for the colorfully flamboyant Mika Ninagawa helmed *Sakuran* (2006), director Yuuki Tanada's debut film *Electric Button* vividly explores the act of sexual attraction and its clashing separation to that of love. While these two functions of romance are often viewed as conjoined and nearly indistinguishable, *Electric Button* is a film that attempts to view each respective function as slightly independent from one another, further examining the emotional detachment that may arise within a relationship.

While many similar films often focus upon a male character as the sexually aggressive type, *Electric Button* inverts this notion, replacing the male character with that of a female character. This approach certainly plays upon the stereotype as seen in other films surrounding issues of sex, with *Electric Button* deriving much of its humor from the likes having such a radical role reversal. With Mayama, played quite well here by Noriko Eguchi, we see a woman exerting her sexual behavior in the most beneficial fashion in hopes of gaining something, which in the film's case is to gather writing material for her erotic books. She is overtly assertive, establishing a feministic fervor that is viewed not only through her sexual desires but also her differing characteristics from that of what one may perceive as a 'typical' woman.

Similarly, Tadakoro is viewed as a naive man relatively unfamiliar with the art of romance, falling in love in the most inappropriate ways with Mayama. While his innocence is a key factor in the film's narrative, we slowly see his transformation to that of a confident individual willing to confront the manipulative practices that Mayama is using on him. When he meets Akane, a young woman at his place of employment, the two being to fall in love without the need for sex, with Tadakoro finding himself in a mental conflict given his encounters with Mayama. We sympathize with his plight as someone unaccustomed to the art of sexual persuasion, with him being in a world where sexual intercourse does not always mean that there is love involved. The film offers a rather genuine representation of such a complicated subject, showing that there are – and usually is – a distinction between love and sex, with the two often being confused as entirely mutual exchanges.

At its center though, *Electric Button* is a coming-of-age tale of one young man's exposure to the emotionally darker, heavier side of love. While it is certainly comedic given its sexual material – where virgin jokes, atypical sexual experiences, and amusing explanations of the female anatomy collide – it is also a film that sincerely conveys the emotional frustration that occurs when having sex is not exactly a mutual expression of love. There is a distinction there, with writer-director Yuuki Tanada seemingly aware of the confusing nature that constitutes a “true” romantic relationship. Is it really just about having sex? Is it truly caring about the feelings of your significant other? Is it perhaps both? What *Electric Button* suggests is that the great equalizer would be to have both, but that does not mean that in the real world either approach can, and often will be, viewed more significant than the other by some individuals.

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#### Electric Button (Moon & Cherry)

**Original title:** 月とチェリー  
— | Tsuki to Cherry

**Release:** 2004

**Country:** Japan

**Director:** Yuki Tanada

**Running time:** 82 Min.

**Cast:** Noriko Eguchi | Akira Emoto | Misako Hirata | Akifumi Miura | Tasuku Nagaoka | Shungiku Uchida | Yoshikazu Ebisu

**Written by:** Miguel Douglas

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