

[The ASI's best of 2011: JP Floru](#) [1]

Written by [JP Floru](#) [2] | Thursday 29 December 2011

JP Floru, Director of Programmes:

As a contrarian I'm reluctant to prove that I am human after all - what's wrong with being a Martian? But our Sam has asked us to do this ? so here we go.

Talking of Martians, the most interesting event I attended this year was **atalk organised by the Economic Research Council about Space Travel and Space Exploitation** ? some people there couldn't wait to move to another planet. My second most favourite event was attending**mass at Westminster Abbey** with the Pope. He is even smaller than I am, and has a very high-pitched voice with a strong German accent. Lots of incense and pump and circumstance, and red mitres and golden clothes. Yes!

As for films, for me only those where everybody is rich will do. This started when my communist teacher in school discouraged us from watching Dallas ?because it glamourised the rich in America?. Not for me, serfs crawling in the mud, fighting over a potato: films are to escape. I switched the DVD three minutes into **Black Death** last week. This film featured Eddie Redmayne, who I saw in the fantastic play **Richard II** at the Donmar last week. Favourite play of the year, though I don't really do plays**Richard II** would be the favourite play always, because of the ?Sceptered Isle? bit (tears), which also talks about ?That England that was wont to conquer others, hath made a shameful conquest of itself?. This second bit, presumably, talks about the European Union. All very topical.

Back to films.**Melancholia** by Lars von Trier ticks all the boxes: everybody is rich; they live in castles; there is some SF in it (without ghosts and Martians, all perfectly possible); it is sufficiently weird and hasn't been done before. Another potential contender, Almodovar's**The Skin I Live In** I disliked profoundly because too gory.**The King's Speech** had glorious decors but no story and I never got Mr. Darcy's allure anyway. **Downtown Abbey** (of course), though the second season was not as good as the first (of course). Had Lord Fellows been told by the BBC to write more about downstairs than last year?

Music: I listen to**XFM** at high volume while driving through Central London and making tourists jump. I like most of it, especially when upbeat. Surprise then that this year's winners for me are two melancholic tunes: [Video Games](#)[3] by **Lana Del Ray**; and [On Melancholy Hill](#) [4] by **Gorillaz** But I am more a classical music person: the grander and the more pompous the better: Handel, Vivaldi, Lully. Versailles rocks.

Politician of the year would be**Boris** (as all years for the previous five)**David Cameron** was a surprise second (late entrant after the Veto in Brussels). Ed Millibore: Zero Point. Other losers include: Rowan Williams, for being so predictably socialist (and therefore boring). Most dangerous politician of the future: **Yvette Cooper**.

Favourite places of 2011:**Sweden** (very civilised) and**St. Jean-Cap-Ferrat** (France) where I will move to when I win the lottery.

Most impressive video clip:[Zach Wahls Speaks About Family](#) [5].

What I look forward to in 2012: **More vetoes on Europe; The Iron Lady; and writing a second book.**

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