

Jet set

How *Up In The Air* moved to the head of the Oscar queue...

Even before its release, *Up In The Air* is rubbing cultural nerves. Expertly crafted comedy though it may be, Jason Reitman's third film opens with scenes of George Clooney's charming axe man telling people they've got the sack – real-life workers it turns out, who'd been laid off in the US cities where Reitman went to film.

"The movie changed, the world changed, I changed," says Reitman, who began writing *Up In The Air* six years ago when the world's economy was still going gangbusters. "I was 25, I had a girlfriend and the script was quite satirical. The scenes about people getting fired were funny." Come the global financial meltdown and suddenly they weren't so hilarious anymore – and Reitman got his wake-up call to reflect the true impact of job losses in his tale of a galling commitment-phobe who travels around the country on corporate downsizing missions.

Reitman always had Clooney in mind to star as Ryan Bingham, a man adrift whose callow personal quest is to surpass 10m frequent-flyer miles. "The connections between George Clooney's persona and Ryan Bingham interested me," he notes. When pressed to expand on those connections, though, he'll only tease, "I think it'll be obvious when you watch the film."

Still, writing a script with an A-lister in mind is one thing. Getting them to say yes is another. Reitman flew to Clooney's Lake Como villa to hand-



Down to earth: George Clooney and Jason Reitman share a joke on the set of *Up In The Air*.



deliver the script, then refused to leave until the actor read it. "And then we ate pizza," says Gorgeous George, who immediately saw the connections and told Reitman he wanted to stare them straight in the eye. "Since it addresses certain things in my life, I found it a little more harrowing than a comedy," sighs Clooney, who rewarded Reitman's faith with one of the strongest turns of his career to date.

With his first two films, *Thank You For Smoking* and *Juno*, Reitman has already defied the perception of famous filmmakers'

offspring as – his words – "talentless brats with drug problems". But being the son of Ivan *Ghostbusters* Reitman still hovers in the air. When *Buzz* sits down with him in a swanky London hotel, he shows us a pie chart on his iPhone, which keeps tabs of his interrogators' favourite topics. Questions about 'being Ivan Reitman's son' take up a hefty chunk. Reitman eventually posted the pie chart on Twitter (@JasonReitman, if you're keen to follow his frequent tweets). Clooney, on the other hand, is no fan of social networking of any kind. "I would rather have a prostate exam on live television by a guy with very cold

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JASON REITMAN

ALLSTAR



hands," he says smoothly but firmly, "than be on Facebook."

That Reitman achieves poignancy and insight without ever resorting to schmaltz is one of *Up In The Air's* many triumphs. Another is that despite sinking into cold, dark depths, it also comes laced with hilarious moments. Already firmly positioned as an Oscar frontrunner, it has thrust 31-year-old Reitman into the ranks of Alexander Payne, Wes Anderson and Spike Jonze as one of the best, most idiosyncratic filmmakers of his generation.

"When *Juno* came out and people liked it, it all went very fast. I blinked my eyes and it was all over," Reitman muses. "So right now I'm just trying to pause, enjoy it, take it in. Because you only make so many movies in your life that people like."

Buzz points out that Reitman is three-for-three so far... "Which means I'm doomed for a series of failures. Best career move right now? If I died. Seriously – you'd be like, 'What could have been...'" **MM**

Up In The Air opens on 15 January. For the latest features and video check out tinyurl.com/tfupair



Brazil, eu te amo!

Why Brazilian cinema is really cooking...

When *City Of God* scorched into cinemas in 2002, it swung a hot spotlight on the perilous beauty of one of the world's most fascinating countries – and gave its moviemaking scene a serious jumpstart. Seven years later, Brazil is ready to step up as a cultural powerhouse. When Buzz visited the Rio de Janeiro International Film Festival, we discovered a rack of startling films alive with the thrilling emotional tensions of a city where paradise lifestyle and bullet-strewn crime-zones eyeball each other.

No question, world cinema is taking notice. Rio will follow *Paris, Je T'aime* and *New York, I Love You* in the city-series of portmanteau love-letters by the planet's biggest directors. Woody Allen is also eyeing up Rio as the setting for his next international romcom. But with real-life drama driving the best Brazilian cinema, it should be no surprise to discover that Buzz's three favourite Brazilian wonders were all documentaries...



RIO BREAKS

The best surfing doc since *Riding Giants*. *Rio Breaks* follows 13-year-old Fabio and his friends, looking to escape the gun-toting gangs who control their slums. Winning a surf contest and becoming a pro could make their dreams a reality. Gentle, touching and gorgeously lensed, *Rio Breaks* meshes a heartfelt hymn to surf-love with a harsh tale of survival.



DANCING WITH THE DEVIL

Taking his camera into favelas that have never been filmed before, Oscar-winning Brit documentary-maker Jon Blair journeys into Rio's gangster heartland to become the first man to capture *City Of God*-style drug lords on celluloid. Not only that, he follows the equally ruthless cops trying to kill them and the priest who stands between them. Startling insights.



ONLY WHEN I DANCE

Described by the *New York Times* as a "Brazilian Billy Elliot", *Only When I Dance* is a surprising, touching doc about two teenage ballet dancers – 19-year-old Irlan and 14-year-old Isabel – struggling to escape from the favelas to fulfil their dream of dancing with a ballet company in New York. One flies, one falls – the joy and heartbreak is right there to see. **JC**