

TV REVIEW



Almost Human

Almost Human paints the picture of a very likely future, and was one of the better science fiction television shows produced in recent times. Set in 2048, it depicts the uncontrollable evolution of science and technology has caused crime rates to rise uncontrollably. To combat this, the overwhelmed police force has implemented a new policy: every human police officer is paired with a lifelike combat-model android.

John Kennex (Karl Urban), a troubled detective, has a reason to hate these new robot partners due to personal trauma.

After waking up from a 17-month coma, Kennex has to deal with a cybernetic prosthetic leg and huge gaps in his memory, which he tries to recover through visits to a black market memory-recovery doctor called a Recollectionist. Besides trying to remember as much as he can about the raid and The Syndicate, he is also coming to terms with being abandoned by his girlfriend Anna.

Kennex finds himself paired with an older DRN model originally decommissioned for police work and about to be transferred to the Space Station. Created to be as close to humans as possible, the DRN androids have trouble dealing with some of their own emotional responses, which was the reason they were replaced by the logic-based MX units. Kennex's unit, known as Dorian (Michael Ealy), immediately proves himself unique, with a clear dislike of being referred to as a "synthetic", and a dry, friendly, sarcasm-oriented wit. Key to the story arc is the growth and development of Kennex and Dorian's relationship, which makes the show as much a buddy cop drama as it is science fiction. Each episode circles around interesting new forms of crime which are only possible due to the advent of new technology. The writers have really done a great job in working with the producers and effects team to bring both these technologies and the crimes.

The show aired from November 17, 2013, through March 3, 2014, on the Fox Network. The series was created by J. H. Wyman for Frequency Films, Bad Robot Productions and Warner Bros. Television. Wyman, Bryan Burk and J. J. Abrams are executive producers. Although the show was positively received by the audience, had good ratings throughout the season, and even was nominated for the Emmy Awards for Outstanding Special and Visual Effects, it wasn't renewed for a second season given Fox's already heavy schedule and higher production costs than most other shows. The first season was promising, and will be loved by most science fiction aficionados, especially those who love a good mix of action and special effects.

Swimming against the tide

When I approached Hasin and requested to cover her on Star Showbiz, her first reaction was full of gratefulness. She said that the fact that the Daily Star wanted to interview her for a cover story speaks volumes about her journey as a media personality so far. In her words, "I feel Star Showbiz only covers those who have reached a certain level." Since there were no personal acquaintances connecting me to her, she couldn't approach me either and she wasn't sure whether she should or not. She believes that today's issue, this cover story, is a big achievement for her, one that will not only motivate her to do better, but augment her image in the eyes of her family, her loved ones and her fans.

Hasin's journey in the media has not been a smooth ride, not because of the media itself, but because of the sentimental resentment and stigma associated with working in the media. It is not easy for a Bangladeshi girl to shine in the media, especially when her family does not support her aspirations. Hasin comes from a very conservative family who never imagined her to do anything beyond earning an ordinary living from a conventional job, and raising a family. When she stepped into the media, her mother stopped talking to her. Although Hasin's mother came around later, she still doesn't wholeheartedly accept the career choices her daughter has made. However, Hasin's father has been quite supportive, and her elder sister has been her biggest ally, continuously motivating her and pushing her to achieve her dreams.

At the brink of a growing career, Hasin decided that she cannot keep fighting against all odds, so she conceded her family's pressures and got married early. Lucky for her, her new family of in-laws, especially her mother-in-law, has been very supportive of her career and this has helped her to continue working in the media. In fact, if she starts to appear less on television, her mother-in-law never fails to express her concern! Hasin has always felt that it is important for her to maintain a healthy relationship with her family members; she hopes to never alienate them in any form. Going forward, Hasin wishes to maintain a healthy balance between her family and her work in the media and this balance is the key to a long and successful career.

Not everyone is as brave as Hasin. Not everyone can last long swimming against the tide. But the tides are changing. Someday, this stigma of choosing to work in the media will be gone from our society, and it really needs to – or else we will never know about the acting talents that lie undiscovered in our society. Perhaps we need to wait till this happens before we see the media sector take flight and reach its full potential. Until then, I hope those like Hasin who have found a way to beat the odds inspire the next generation of creative talents to not give up on their dreams.

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LIVING WITH THE STARS

