

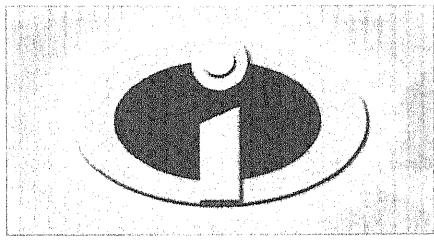
THE BANNER

The Official Newspaper of the College of Staten Island

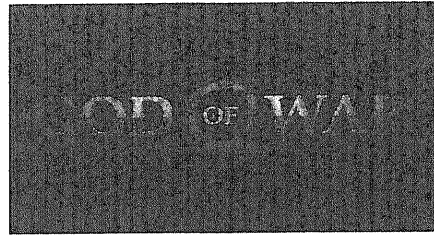
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Issue #15



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Cabs Are Here, and So is MTV's "Jersey Shore Family Vacation"

An Ode to the Legacy of the Original "Jersey Shore"

BY: VERONICA PISTEK

Get ready to fist pump like it's 2009 again.

"Jersey Shore" is back on MTV and the cast is still tan and DTP- down to party.

Though this iconic revival is not taking place at the original Jersey beach house, the crew - Snooki, J-Woww, Deena, Pauly-D, Vinny, Mike The Situation, and Ronnie - all gather together in Miami to have a fun family reunion and indulge in a whole lot of drama.

Since this reunion series is no stranger to the past, let's take a look at some of the most legendary moments of past "Jersey Shore" seasons that might resurface and bring us back into the days of hairspray and animal prints.

Ever since we were introduced into Sammi and Ronnie's soap opera relationship, the words "stop" and "Ron" have become embedded in our minds.

Who can forget the infamous fight between the couple in season 3: Ronnie flipping over all of Sammi's possessions- and even dragging her bed



Photo Credit: MTV.com

The "Jersey Shore" cast in the new 2018 reunion season.

while she held on like a sloth for dear life.

Even more memorable, this fight spurred due to J-Woww's anonymous written note to Sammi about Ronnie cheating in the club.

The note has become a sensation of its own. The note of infidelity reads: "Sam, the first night at BED when you left, Ron made out with two girls and

put his head between a cocktail waitress' breasts. [He] also was grinding with multiple fat women. When you left crying at Klutch, Ron was holding hands and dancing with a female and took down her number. Multiple people in the house know, therefore you should know the truth." Iconic.

If you were ever a fan of this crazy

Continued on pg #5

Let's Get Into the Danger Zone With "Archer"

We Are Going In Hard Tonight

BY: MOHAMED MAHMOUD

Season nine of "Archer" recently aired on April 25 and it was dangerously fun.

"Archer" is a cartoon on FX that follows the main character of the same name, who is a spy of ISIS. The new season is titled "Danger Island."

At the start, Archer is in a coma and is dreaming up the current season, due to being shot during the season seven finale.

This season was a good setu, as we follow the cast in an island-style format where Ray, the mad scientist, is like a constable on this French Riviera island. Mallory, the assistant, is a hotel owner and Archer lives in this hotel.

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"A Quiet Place" Should Be Seen and Not Heard

If You Loved Krasinski in "The Office", You'll Love Him in This

BY: JESSICA SCARIMBOLO

The beloved Jim Halpert is on to bigger and better things as "A Quiet Place" was released in theaters on April 6, 2018.

"A Quiet Place" begins with a husband and wife, played by real-life couple John Krasinski and Emily Blunt, with their three children who are all noticeably silent as they sign words to each other in what appears to be a vacant town.

Through a series of events, we notice that the family must stay noiseless in order to avoid being brutally killed by creatures that are drawn to sound; the only way to stay alive is to stay silent.

We see the group a year following the opening scene, where things are

getting much more difficult for the now family of four after the youngest son was killed by a creature after setting off a noisy rocket ship toy.

In the basement of their home, we see that the husband and father has the walls covered in newspaper clippings with tables filled with plans on how to keep his family safe.

Now that time has passed, the husband and wife have a big obstacle on its way as we see Blunt is now noticeably pregnant.

Though the film seems to be solely a horror film, the ending shows the importance of bravery, selflessness and family love as the father screams to redirect the attention of the creatures who are seconds from killing his children.

It's true: John Krasinski directed and co-wrote the film, which was incredibly well-received by audience members. Even notable celebrities took to social media to share their positive thoughts about the film.

"Jurassic World" star Chris Pratt posted an Instagram video urging his followers to immediately stop what they were doing to go see the film while other celebrities like Jimmy Kimmel, Elizabeth Banks, and Ryan Reynolds also praised the film and specifically, the work of Krasinski's directing.

While I'm sure all the praise from everyone was well-appreciated, the tweet of one notable person in horror stood out more than others: Stephen

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"Ready Player One" Makes Over \$500 Mill Viewers Escape Reality in the Virtual OASIS

BY: HAZIQ NAEEM

Steven Spielberg's newest movie, "Ready Player One" is a fun, action packed, and nostalgia-inducing.

It was released on March 29 and since then, it has made over a whopping \$500 million at the box office.

The movie is a screen adaptation of the popular book of the same name, published in 2011 by author Ernest Cline.

In the futuristic society built by Cline and depicted on the big screen by Spielberg, inequality runs rampant and most people live in slum-like conditions with living spaces stacked one on top of another.

The privileged few own huge corporations and try to expand their influence over everything they can get their hands

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BOOKS, COMICS, & MANGA

The Hit Series "Injustice: Gods Among Us" Continues in "Injustice 2"

Green Lantern Becomes the Star of DC Universe

BY: MOHAMED MAHMOUD

Created by Taylor Xermanico Nanjan, "Injustice 2" Issue 54 entitled "Hate" was released on April 17.

"Injustice 2" is a sequel to the previous "Injustice" series of DC Comics.

The story takes place outside the main DC continuity, where the Joker tricks Superman into killing Lois and in turn, set off a trigger in her heart; if ever her heart stopped, a bomb would detonate in metropolis, which would then kill many.

As a result, Superman kills the Joker, causing him to begin ruling in an authoritarian fashion, while Batman, who was opposed to this method, would rather rule in a democratic fashion.

"Injustice 2" shows something that has never been seen before in comic book history: two opposing ideologies between iconic superheroes who split their teams apart in order to support their own beliefs. In "Injustice 2," the story follows the events that transpire after the battle between Batman and Superman.

Currently, we are following the events of the Green Lantern. Hal Jordan has been punished and has to face his crimes against fighting the Green Lantern Corp with Superman in the original "Injustice" series.

It seems Hal still has some regrets for the actions that he committed against the corps when he has hallucinations of one of his teammates; this shows promise and depth. It gives a chance for redemption and

it makes Hal much more empathetic.

Another scene featured a scene that includes Sinestro's daughter, Sonarika,

involved with her death by some other means, which then angered Sinestro due to the implication. Right after Sinestro tries

saga, aside from the main cast.

We also might get to see characterization of Sinestro, since so far within the "Injustice 2" universe, we have been seeing marvelous characterizations of villains like Ra's al Ghul, Redhood, and Suicide Squad for example.

This shows a good parallel between the two series. In the first "Injustice" series, we get to see the ideology of superheroes like Batman and Superman and other justice league members, while in this series we get to see villains depiction.

The next scene shows another green lantern has been killed in the prison where Hal Jordan was staying, the motives were unclear but it seemed that it was due to the red lanterns, which is another perfect example of the expansion of within this series.

The red lanterns at the end of the issue came to attack the prison base of the Green Lanterns. This raises the questions, why they would go out their way to attack a prison base? What are they after? Why is the leader, Atrocious, heading the charge? What roles will each of these characters play?

This issue overall was very well written, where it depicts a mix of drama and mystery, with an overall decent pacing. It was captivating and the end of issue left readers at the edge of their seats, leaving a craving for the next issue.



Photo Credit: readcomics.io

where she questions her father in the prison to see what happened with her mother. Though Sinestro admitted that he would not harm his own wife, he also admitted he was displeased when his wife took Sonarika away when she was a child.

Sonarika believes Sinestro was in-

to take her daughter's power ring while she was distracted.

Adding dynamic characters gives the story a chance to move along more than if it just followed the life of Hal Jordan. We see the way various characters were affected in the aftermath of the first "Injustice"

Set Sail For "One Piece"

The Conclusion of the Whole Cake Island Arc

BY: MOHAMED MAHMOUD

The translated scans of "One Piece" of the 902nd chapter were finally released on April 23.

"One Piece" is an ongoing manga series by a sector known as "Shonen Jump" that has been running within this company since 1997.

It follows the adventure of Monkey D. Luffy who wants to be the king of the pirates, where him and his friends want to find the famous treasure called "One Piece" in order to become the next king of the pirates.

In this arc, one of their crew mates of the main character, had his chef and companion, Sanji Vinsmoke, stolen from their crew and forced into a wedding from an enemy pirate, Big Mom, where they later find out it was an assassination plot in order to acquire his vast fortunes.

They had finally rescued him but not without a few sacrifices; one of them being Pedro a friend of Sanji.

Sanji looking out in the ocean as the day breaks down is saddened over the fact Pedro had died. Carrot, a student and friend of Pedro, tries to console Sanji by petting him.

Carrot is also a human-rabbit hybrid, where she gets calmed down by having her own head patted and felt by doing this to sanji would make him feel at ease as well. This was great character development for Carrot because she was the one who needed to consulting when she felt sad and have her head pat.

It showed that this arc molded her into

a strong warrior. Sanji's bride, Pudding, had her own personal dilemmas. Pudding had a tragic scene, in one of the older chapters, 848, where she thought about when Lola left to decide who she would marry.

This depicts that deep down, she actually wishes she could've left with Sanji, but simply can't bring herself to do it because of how guilty she feels, after hurting all those people.

As a child she had to hurt and deceive a lot of people because she didn't want to get hurt herself. But she was able to change her ways because Sanji was the first man to show her genuine compassion.

This was another great example of character development. But despite that, she feels regret above anything else, because she truly wishes she could be with him. Before the two parted ways, they had done an off-paneled kiss.

The reason she kissed him was likely due to sealing their wedding vows, in other words it confirms now they are a married couple. Pudding had erased his memories of the kiss, but Pudding can think of him as her husband sealing the marriage before bidding farewell to him.

The next is the aftermath battle with Luffy, and Dogtooth, the second son of Big Mom. Dogtooth and fell on his back after his defeat which has significant meaning. We, the readers, have told time and time again about how Dogtooth never laid his back on the ground, as his honor wouldn't let him to do so, despite lying to his family all along.

However this time, it is he who con-

sciously gets up from having fallen forward and decides to let himself fall on his own back, admitting his defeat this way.

A backstory was shown of Dogtooth's youth, depicting how he became the man he was today. A calm man with a cool demeanor, where he has a scarf to cover up his scar on his mouth and never yields or falls on his back in battle.

But it all started when his little sister, Brulee, was attacked by some hooligans because Dogtooth had gotten into a fight with them for making fun of his scar. He then made a vow to never let his face be shown so no one in his family would face the same pain his sister had faced.

A side note that I found very touching was that, in one of the earlier chapters, another one of Dogtooth's little sister, Flampee, pointed out there was a contest that

declared the best little sister. Out of her 41 older brothers, 40 of them voted her the best little sister.

She assumed the one who didn't vote for her was Dogtooth. But after the revelations in this chapter, it was implied that Dogtooth might have voted for Brulee as his favorite little sister. This really moved me, considering how aloof Dogtooth was most of time and how most of the siblings of Big Mom don't usually get along. The characterization was on point.

The chapter wraps up with the crew having food made by Sanji in there ship, Sunny. This is a very nice conclusion for both the Arc and Sanji's character Arc within it. Despite all the bumps in the way and whatever opinion you might have of it, this is undeniably a pretty symbolic way to close off Whole Cake Island.

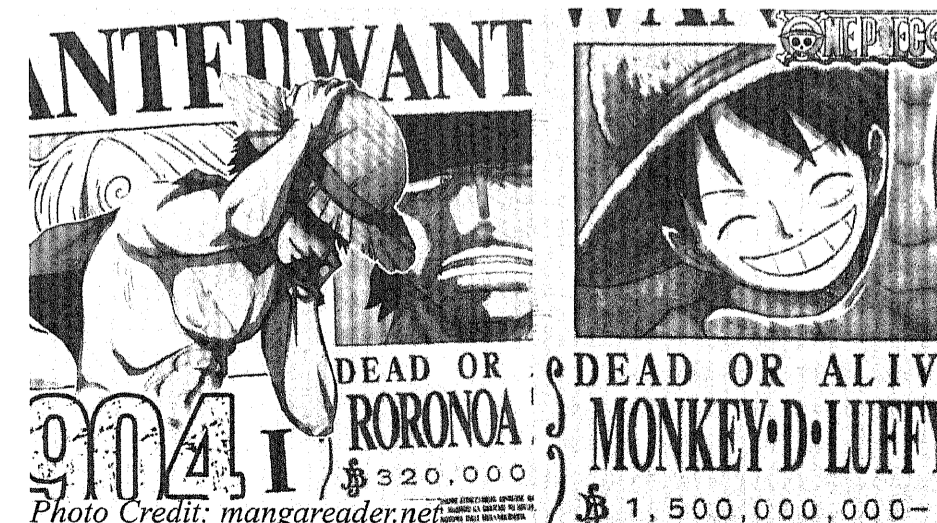


Photo Credit: mangareader.net

"Ready Player One"

Continued from Front Page

on. Inventor, James Halliday, creates a virtual reality game where the limits of possibility are one's own imagination, changing the way people live and how reality is experienced.

Most people decide to spend their days in the virtual world that Halliday built, which he called the "OASIS."

Before Halliday dies, he builds a series of three challenges into the game and those that get through them all would become the new owners of the virtual reality world, being able to do whatever they

see fit.

It's been years since Halliday's challenge was announced, and no one has been able to beat it.

Wade Owen, an orphaned teenager who lives in the slums, spends most of his time in the OASIS and continues trying to complete the challenges Halliday created.

Much like the gaming world of present day reality, players in the fictional OASIS have avatars that they get to build and get to use fake names, effectively constructing themselves into a version they want others to see and know. This comes with enormous risk, as revealing your true identity in the virtual world is

taboo.

Many users of the OASIS have never met in the real world, but meet regularly in the virtual world and consider each other friends, which might baffle some viewers who aren't acquainted with the workings of the online world.

The main conflict of the movie occurs when IOI, a shady firm that is a competitor of Halliday's OASIS, which employs people under indentured servant-like conditions to complete the challenge, so they can take ownership of the virtual world and expand their profits and control.

Most of the OASIS inhabitants do not want IOI to take control of the vir-

tual world, and once Wade Owen is able to complete the first of Halliday's three challenges, people from IOI target him not just in the virtual world, but also the real one when Wade lets slip his real name in the virtual world.

The movie has many nostalgic characters that the inhabitants from OASIS bring to life, such as "King Kong" and "The Iron Giant".

The visual effects are stunning, the movie is colorful and dynamic throughout without making the world of OASIS seem overly superficial, chaotic, improbable, or monotonous.

There are very few scenes that would cause one to scratch their heads in confusion or consider hard to believe or digest even in a movie, which is an achievement given the opportunity the movie had to do so.

The movie is meant to be fun and lighthearted, and that's exactly what it delivers.

It has undertones of deep structural imbalances and human issues, such as that of inequality, economic repression, and the waning of human connectedness, but none of these issues really take the foreground throughout the movie and nothing meaningful is revealed about them.

The ending of the movie is quite predictable, even clichéd perhaps. The viewer isn't given a shocking turn of events, but it is palatable and satisfying nonetheless.

Although Cline is working on the sequel to the novel, there is no guarantee there will be a sequel to the film.



Photo Credit: Readyplayerone.com

"Let's Get Into The Danger Zone"

Continued from Front Page

Pam, the HR rep, is the co-pilot and Cheryl once again is an airhead heiress.

Archer ends up banging her when she's on her honeymoon but she's married to someone else--which is one of those situations you'd expect from Archer since he is a playboy. This causes her and the husband to split and leave her behind.

Because her reputation is ruined, she has no money and nothing to pay for the stuff she bought. She then gets thrown in jail on Danger Island.

Lanna, Archer's lover interest, is actually a crazy princess of an island nation that is full of dangerous animals.

Even though Archer is dreaming this in a coma, he creates a dynamic where each of the main cast is going to meet. We see potential plot points converging and concepts being created.

The best part is the image of Dr. Kreiger, a German mad scientist who is a clone of Adolf Hitler, but currently a parrot in the dream whose name is "Crackers".

When the characters try to take Lanna home they chose to fly through Archer Airlines, which is poorly managed so it



Photo Credit: Medium.com

naturally it crashes.

This crash should have caused suspense due to the fall being fatal, but we see banter between the crew as they fall. Lana tosses Crackers out of the plane for trying to abandon her.

Archer Airlines is a clever way to take advantage of what this animation can do. It adds more dimensions to the visuals, more possibilities to the narrative, and it keeps the characters contained to a small

space, which usually brings quite a bit of fun.

There was a small nod at the audience who are still wondering what happened to Archer and whether or not he will get out of the coma.

Fans will pick up that Archer is struggling in between life and death, but non-fans should also appreciate what this means; "Archer: Danger Island" isn't a morbid exploration of purgatory.

"Jersey Shore Family Vacation"

Continued from Front Page

cast, you could recall all of the greatest moments of the bromance between Pauly-D and Vinny.

This true power couple became friends since the very beginning. The viewers have had the opportunity to witness their relationship blossom: from the hilarious fake proposal, to their endless comedic segments.

One of the most memorable segments from this beloved bromance was "The Ultimate Guidos" starring Pauly-D as Joey-D and Vinny as Louie. In this very episode of season 3, FPC- fist pump, push-ups, chapstick was born.

Snooki, now known by her real name Nicole, has had some pretty unforgettable experiences throughout the past seasons of "Jersey Shore".

If you have ever heard yourself cry that you are a good person while doing a bad deed, odds are that you have borrowed this phrase from drunk Snooki.

The hilarity of watching a four foot nine girl run around the beach screaming, "Where's the beach?" while toppling over into the sand before getting arrested has never left our memory.

Throughout the cast's journey, friends have definitely came and left. The enemy that has been a staple of "Jersey Shore" culture goes by the name of Angelina.

Struggling to be relevant, Angelina fought tirelessly with most of the crew as they often referred to her as the "Staten



Photo Credit: MTV.com

Island Dump."

No one can forget even if they tried when J-Woww gave Angelina the most brazen ultimatum. This statement goes along the lines of "You can either stay or..." well, you know the rest.

This resulted in Angelina calling everyone out for being fake. Classic reality television.

In New Jersey, it is in the culture to go clubbing. Throughout every season,

the cast has attended countless bars and clubs: but one specifically named Karma.

At Karma, too many bad things occurred, no pun intended. Take J-Woww publicly urinating behind the bar, for instance.

Undoubtedly, there were fights that resulted in someone being taken out in a cop car, or even worse- someone getting hurt.

"Jersey Shore" culture has many oth-

er memorable coinages, such as GTL: gym, tan, laundry, the annoying duck phone, and t-shirt time.

In an age filled with turmoil and instability, it's comforting to know that comedy is here to stay and entertain us with some wild adults from New Jersey.

Get your pasta and meatballs ready to watch "Jersey Shore Family Vacation", and honor the legacy that "Jersey Shore" has brought to MTV.

"A Quiet Place"

Continued from Front Page

King.

King's tweet praised the work in its entirety, complementing everything from the acting to the camera movements, overall calling the film "an extraordi-

nary piece of work." Krasinski described King's tweet as "mental," clearly being pleasantly shocked by the compliments he received from the remarkable director.

In an interview with Jimmy Fallon, Krasinski also spoke on reading the tweets of fans of the film after seeing the

film. He laughed when referring to tweets where people admitted being scared to turn their radio on in the car after leaving the theater.

When speaking on the film, Krasinski admits that he has actually never been a fan of horror. This might make you won-

der, "how the hell did he create such an incredible horror movie?"

Krasinski says that he was sent the script for the film only three weeks after he and Blunt welcomed their second daughter into the world, making the strong family survival aspect of the film what truly invested him, though now he is a huge horror fan after directing the film.

The language used throughout the film is American Sign Language, and was positively represented with a deaf actress, Millicent Simmonds, who played Regan Abbott, a deaf character.

This "Cloverfield"-like film was so well received by critics and audiences, that a sequel is already in the works.

Although this film is considered horror, there are many social and political layers within it that give this film depth and is perhaps why everyone finds it to be so modern and intellectual.

The silence is what makes the film, as well as a parent's worst fear--losing their children.

In that aspect, Krasinski is definitely Father of the Year.

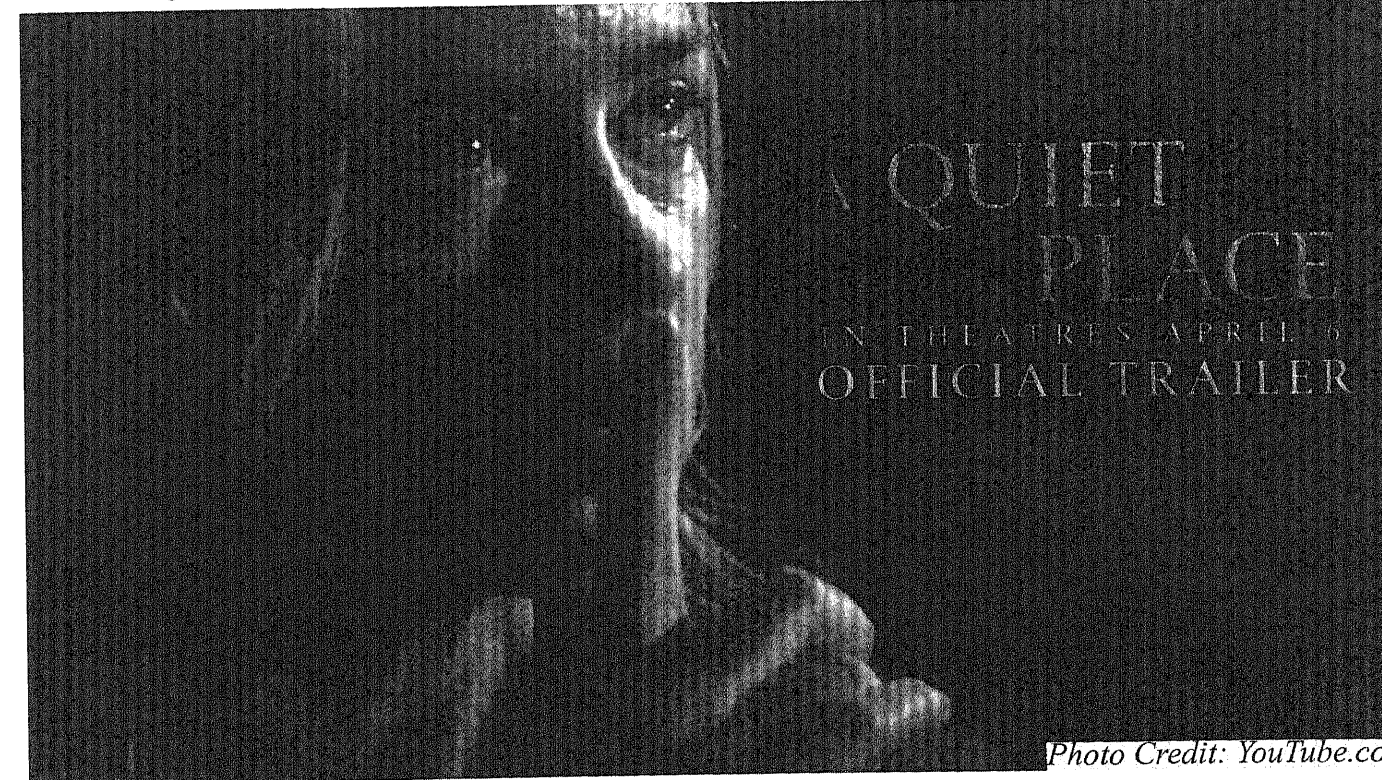


Photo Credit: YouTube.com

Screenshot from the Official Trailer of "A Quiet Place"

FILM & TV

“Solo: A Star Wars Story” Blasts into Theaters

Han Solo Gets His Own Spinoff Film

BY: ERIC RANSOM

Han Solo finally goes “solo.”

In a movie directed by Ron Howard, Han Solo will star in a “Star Wars” spinoff based on the life of the character before meeting Luke Skywalker and Princess Leia.

Originally played by Harrison Ford, this film stars up and coming actor Alden Ehrenreich in the lead role of Han Solo. Young and full of spunk, this version of Solo will tell how he met characters like Chewbacca and Lando Calrissian, played by Donald Glover.

In one of the largest casting processes in movie history, dozens upon dozens

of well-known and lesser-known actors were considered for the role of Han Solo, including Chris Pratt, Miles Teller, Dave Franco and Tom Felton. Ultimately, Ehrenreich won the role.

Other actors such as Woody Harrelson, Emilia Clarke and Thandie Newton will play new characters, Beckett, Qi'ra and Val.

The Millennium Falcon will be introduced to Solo in the movie as well, as well as hints of showing the famous Kessel Run have been included in the trailers.

Its plot will focus around the beginning of the edgy, free spirited nature that embodies Han Solo throughout the origi-



Photo Credit: screenrant.com

The second Star Wars spinoff movie to date, Solo: A Star Wars Story will be released on May 25, 2018.

nal trilogy, living in a galaxy at the mercy of the Empire.

In Han Solo's backstory comes the origins of gambler and trickster Lando, originally played by Billy Dee Williams.

For Donald Glover, it is a dream come true to star in a “Star Wars” movie, being a big fan of the franchise his whole life.

He even wore a “Star Wars” shirt for his yearbook photo in high school.

Along with his music and television career, Glover has acted in such movies as “The Martian” and “Spiderman: Homecoming”, as well as voicing Simba in the upcoming live-action remake of “The Lion King”.

After “Star Wars: The Last Jedi” grossed over \$1.3 billion worldwide since its release last December, the Solo spinoff movie hopes to follow in its footsteps.

This will be the second “Star Wars” spinoff in the catalogue, the first being “Rogue One”, released in December 2016.

“Solo” will be released in the U.S on May 25, 2018, which is quite a significant date in the history of Star Wars. It was on that date 41 years ago that the first “Star Wars” movie, “Star Wars Episode IV: A New Hope”, was released in 1977.

Cutting edge graphics and modern visuals will shed a new light on Han Solo that the original movies technology could not achieve.

This will be the first “Star Wars” mov-

ie that Ron Howard has directed and the most prestigious director since J.J. Abrams to take on a part of the franchise. Howard was originally offered to direct “Star Wars I: The Phantom Menace” in 1997, but declined the job after saying the task would be “too daunting.”

He is also the only director of a “Star Wars” movie to have ever won an Oscar for best director.

Other “Star Wars” spinoff movies are in the works, including stand-alone movies based on bounty hunter Boba Fett and Obi-Wan Kenobi.

Rian Johnson, director of “The Last Jedi”, is set to expand the franchise with a trilogy of his own after the ninth installment is released in 2019, as well as director/actor Jon Favreau, slated to write a live-action TV series.

Both 2017 and 2018 have been remarkable and historic years for film grossing records. Along with “The Last Jedi”, films like “Avengers: Infinity War”, “Justice League” and “Spiderman: Homecoming” have raked in money worldwide.

“Star Wars” movies have been some of the highest grossing films in cinema history, especially as of late with the sequel trilogy. “Solo” aims to be no different, continuing the idea that “Star Wars” films can be made for the next 100 years, helping to bring a galaxy far, far away a whole lot closer.

Cease All Motor Functions and Watch Westworld

This HBO Hit Series is Back and Bloodier Than Ever

BY: MOHAMED MAHMOUD & LUCIA ROSSI

Season two of “Westworld” recently premiered on April 22 and it was worth the wait.

“Westworld” is a series on HBO about a team of engineers led by Arnold Weber and Robert Ford who create live humanoid animatronics in Westworld - a theme park that stimulates the Wild West.

They soon realize some of their work is becoming sentient.

The season starts off as the host, Bernard awakens laying on the beach before being picked up by a search and rescue team after the first incident when the hosts attacked the people.

It is assumed that he may have passed out and woke up the morning after, but we get information telling us that this happened weeks after Ford's death from that moment.

In “Journey into Night,” either Bernard is sitting across from Dolores and what appears to be a past memory.

He mentions he had a dream with Dolores and the others as he saw them on a distant shore. She asked “Where you with us?” but she replies, “No, he left me behind.” This is one of the most interesting lines of the episode, because we are trying to determine what side Bernard is really on.

Bernard claims that he has no clue what happened but is slowly coming to a realization where all the hosts are dead,

laying in the water, that it may have been his doing.

It is then claimed that he killed them all; the line, “you left me behind” could have been referring to Bernard always being different from the other hosts and he may have chose humans over the hosts in the end. Whether or not he's remembering

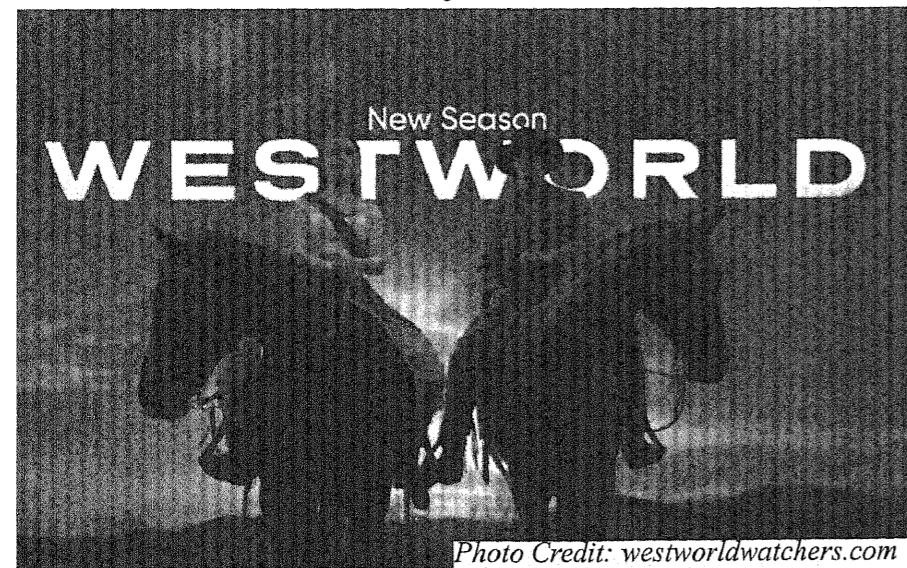


Photo Credit: westworldwatchers.com

this event clearly is still up for a debate as well as how he did it.

The story bounces back and forth between the past and present which makes piecing together the timeline all the more fun and interesting. It also foreshadows that Bernard will be encountering Dolores multiple times.

We are used to nonlinear storylines in

“Westworld” because of how the first season was structured.

Dolores is struggling with reliving events she experienced in the past and beyond while Bernard seems to also have flashbacks and technical issues with the functioning of his own robotic flesh.

Ford does mention that everything in

ciate it.

Teddy, however, is not like Dolores. He isn't ruthless and still shows chivalry, loyalty, and compassion for those she kills and sacrifices. He is more sympathetic which will cause a rift in their relationship later.

It seems that being free from human control may be enough for Teddy as he proposes to Dolores that they just stop and settle down, but of course she refuses. She's on a mission.

Dolores has plans to take Westworld but it is revealed that she wants to take the real world too.

It seems that in this season we will see even more of other parks besides Westworld. A tiger from another park washes upon the shore of Westworld and implies that this subconscious awakening has spread to the hosts in the other parks who are rebelling and killing the guests.

Maevae, who doesn't care to have revenge upon the humans, is still searching for her daughter but with the help of Hector, now a couple of their own free-will against their narratives, along with the human author of the host's scripts.

There are still many mysteries to uncover as the season moves along, and it's great to see how characters develop as well as see more flashbacks.

This was a strong start to the beginning of the new season and hopefully it will reach the expectations put forth by it's previous season.

FILM & TV

Don't “Block” This Movie

A Successful Sex Comedy That'll Make You Reminisce

BY: DOMINICK WOJTAS

The movie “Blockers” seems to maintain good spirits and sustain proper gags that are actually not over the top.

The film, directed by Kay Cannon, provides a clip of three middle-class teenage girls in an Illinois suburb that are about to embark on our modern version of a coming-of-age rite-of-passage - prom.

Julie (Kathryn Newton), Kayla (Geraldine Viswanathan), and Sam (Gideon Adlon) have been bestfriends since the first day of school. Still closest of friends, they are now giddy, disciplined, high-school seniors who are prepared to dabble in experiences once beyond them.

The girls mutually agree to create a pact that entails each of them to lose their virginity during prom night.

Keeping the pact hush, an unfortunate variable unbeknownst to the girls enters the equation on the morning of their prom.

Lisa (Leslie Mann), Julie's mother hears a numerous amount of pinging noises coming from her daughters laptop just moments after the three girls make moves towards prom. Kayla's father, Mitchell (John Cena) and Sam's father, Hunter (Ike Barinholtz) enter the room soon after the initial discovery and together discern that the source of the pinging is a series of text messages between the three girls in which they are plotting the nights sexual exploits.



Photo Credit: www.comingsoon.net

prom only to discover they'd left. From there on, the movie turns into a cat-and-mouse chase for the parents whose children have no awareness of.

It's the three parents that are at the

center of action during the movie and are the igniters of the most of the comedic and emotional substance.

The movie sets off in a series of hijinks the parents undergo in the search and re-

their past, and shortcomings as a parent.

Each one of the three girls is a good student, hardworking and dutiful. They are the polar opposites of what one might deem as a “troublemaker.”

All are grounded and conscious of the importance in choosing a proper university.

Perhaps their parents have this ideal of each of their child that in their mind is about to swerve off this perfect pact when a seemingly dangerous, foreign idea, looks to become realized.

The criticism in this movie is seeded with emotional truth. Exploring their sexuality is more significant to the girls than they had initially realized, something that the parents discover as well.

The parents discover even more about themselves as well as relationships with each other. Questions are answered and bonds grow stronger. As the rate of mayhem rises the initial fog gets lifted along with it.

Under the risqué nature of adolescence this is a cute, well-to-do story, which features insight about generational dissonance, coming-of-age, and bottled up emotions.

The gags are sustainable and the emotions are real. If one wants to watch a funny, current, coming-of-age, story “Blockers” deserves a slot in your queue.

cue mission of their children. The happenings during the mission bring the the parents closer to each other as well as speak to each internally, providing them with realizations about the nature of themselves.

Disney's “The Incredibles” Finally Gets a Sequel

A Second Installment, 14 Years in the Making

BY: BROOKE PRICE

In 2004, “The Incredibles” was first released and in June of 2018, we'll finally have a sequel.

If you haven't heard, this Disney must-see follows the life of the Parr family, who each have superpowers.

The Parr family is consists of former superheroes who are just trying to live normal lives. Bob Parr, formerly known as Mr. Incredible, was forced to retire from superhero work, but longed to get back into fighting crime.

Throughout the film, the Parrs struggle to mix family life with superhero life. The characters learn more about themselves as a family, as well as their superpowers.

“The Incredibles 2” will follow Helen Parr, or Elastigirl, the mother of the family, who gets back into fighting crime as her job. This leaves Bob to be a stay-at-home dad and look after their three superhero children.

“The Incredibles” franchise focuses on the concept of family and is produced by Pixar Animation Studios and Walt Disney Pictures.

Brad Bird is the director and writer for both the “Incredibles” films.

Bird gained influences for “The Incredibles” from thinking about his family life when he was younger. He also was influenced by comic books from the 1960's, as well as the spy films that came out during his childhood.

He wrote the script without thinking about the challenges associated with what he wanted the final product to look like.

“The Incredibles” used computer-generated imagery (CGI) to create and animate the characters in the film. Since “The Incredibles” was the first Pixar film to feature an all

human cast, it was a difficult task since some concepts were problematic to animate with CGI in the early 2000's.

“The Incredibles” was the first Pixar film that required more hair and clothes to be animated by CGI than Monsters, Inc. This was problematic since Violet was supposed to have long hair, which needed to be constantly animated by the animators if she went underwater, or if her hair was blowing in the wind.

Bird and Pixar did not want to change the production of the film due to animation complications. Overall, “The Incredibles” franchise has become a success due to the fresh new concept that has resonated with many fans.

Since it has been years after the first movie, Bird explained that the reason the film had taken a while to produce was because Disney had purchased Marvel, and many superhero films were being produced.

He also struggled to maintain an original concept for “The Incredibles 2” since there had been many new superhero films.

“On some level, it's like going out to the football field and there've been way too many games on it, and there's this dried dirt with a few sprigs of grass, and everything's kind of clunky, and life doesn't grow there anymore” said Bird in an interview from IGN.

Bird also stated that he wanted “The Incredibles 2” to have a meaningful sequel. He did not just want to make a sequel for money, but to make it fresh and unique that fans will appreciate and enjoy.

“There's a saying in the business that I can't stand, where they go, ‘if you don't make another one, you're leaving money on the table.’ It's like, money on the table is not what makes me get up in the morning; making something that people are gonna enjoy



Photo Credit: Flickeringmyth.com

The Parr family steps back into the light to fight another day

a hundred years from now, that's what gets me up. So if it were a cash grab, we would not have taken fourteen years – it makes no financial sense to wait this long – it's purely [that] we had a story we wanted to tell,” he said.

There are many dynamic characters in both the original and the upcoming sequel. The characters contain different personalities, and encapsulate them with unique superpowers.

Helen Parr, voiced by Holly Hunter, has the ability to stretch her body to great lengths.

Craig T. Nelson voices Bob Parr, also known as Mr. Incredible, is the father of the family and possesses the power of super strength.

Violet Parr, who is the eldest daughter of the family, is often introverted and is voiced by Sarah Vowell. Violet possesses the power of invisibility and can generate force fields.

Dashiell Robert “Dash” Parr, voiced by Huck Milner, is the middle child in the family, but the oldest brother. Dash likes to cause mischief and play pranks on others; he also possesses super speed.

John “Jack-Jack” Jackson Parr is the youngest son in the family, who is voiced by Eli Fucile. Jack-Jack has the ability to shape-shift, and has some other powers including the ability to burst into flames, have laser vision, and become bulletproof.

Edna Mode, the sassy fashion designer, has a close bond to the Parr family. She is voiced by Brad Bird.

Lucius Best, also known as Frozone is a longtime family friend of the Parr family. He is voiced by Samuel L. Jackson, and can control and generate ice.

“The Incredibles 2” is set to be released on June 15, 2018. The film will also be released in an IMAX 3D version.

VIDEO GAMES

The Curious Case of Call of Duty

The Decline of COD and How the Franchise Can Recover

BY: STEVEN AIELLO

As with most markets, the gaming market is an ever changing industry in which the most popular IPs, or intellectual property, could change in any given year.

In recent years, games such as "Overwatch" and "Fortnite" have received the most attention from gamers.

"Shooters" have been a fairly popular genre in the gaming realm not just in recent years but in the years before the 2010's as well. Around that time, the most popular franchises were "Halo" and "Call of Duty", which is all but a distant memory.

Both franchises are still around and developing games, but in both franchises has died down considerably since their peaks in popularity. The decline for COD is especially notable because the franchise used to break records with every successive release in both pre-orders and overall units sold.

Although the games still reach figures of millions of units sold, the franchise is in the midst of a steady decline in both popularity and interest. The franchise did set a standard that might never be matched by any game ever again, but at the very least, it should have retained a sizeable portion of its player base over the years.

The fall of "Call of Duty" from a best seller to just a moderately respectable franchise is arguably a result of several factors that have marred the games of new and even the games of old. One of the more obvious problems is the number of games in the franchise, which clocks in at 19 games, alternate versions notwithstanding.

Since the franchise was created in 2003,

it has seen a new game every year, with a main series entry in every year except for 2004. The gaming industry has been oversaturated with "Call of Duty" titles for years, a practice which hasn't worked out for other franchises that have oversaturated the market in similar ways.

For instance "Guitar Hero", coincidentally published by COD publisher Activision, saw a similar flood of games throughout most of the late 2000's. In the case of "Guitar Hero", its numerous releases proved to damage the franchise's reputation and games ceased production for several years afterward.

A surplus of COD games wouldn't be a detriment if the games were more distinguishable from one another and made bigger innovations, but this isn't the case. "Call of Duty" has used the same engine and base mechanics since the release of the second game back in 2005, with only minor changes to things like movement or gun mechanics; the engine is both outdated and overused.

Even if the developers attempted to innovate more with each game, one year is simply not enough for a franchise to make a meaningful difference between each game. Each game is too similar to the previous year's release, which means the developers are spending money to develop a game that fans are burned out of for the time being.

Activision attempted to fix this problem by adding a third developer, which has only led to slight improvements at best. This short development cycle could also be an explanation for the franchise's biggest problem in recent games.

"Call of Duty" first began as a series depicting historical wars in a heartfelt, brutal



Photo Credit: gamestm.co.uk

and mostly plausible fashion. Since "Black Ops I", these stories have become more outlandish and unbelievable, breaking the immersion and enjoyability of each title.

Most games tell stories that rely on overblown setpieces or ridiculous plot elements without telling a coherent narrative. They're uninspired stories that don't stand up to the more timeless games like the first "Modern Warfare" or "Black Ops" games.

The games in general also suffer from the developer's tendencies to imitate ideas and concepts from then popular games rather than doing their own thing. This applies to both the multiplayer and campaign, and it has steadily removed the identity that the franchise once had for itself.

This is somewhat ironic considering that in its prime, other franchises were doing the same thing with "Call of Duty". That time has passed and as of recent "Black Ops IV", scheduled for an October release, was rumored to have no campaign and an "Overwatch" styled multiplayer with battle royale as an additional game mode.

Celebrating Two Years of "Overwatch"

Popular Game Reaches a Milestone

BY: AMANDA GIRARD

As the end of May slowly approaches us, the two year anniversary highlights one of one of the biggest names in video games — "Overwatch".

"Overwatch", created by Blizzard Entertainment and released May 24, 2016, is a first-person shooter that rapidly blossomed into one of the most prominent games of its kind.

The game currently consists of 27 playable heroes. The heroes are placed into four different categories, based on their individual unique abilities.

These four categories are offense, defense, tank and support. Winning requires an intricate and strategic coordination between these four roles, making "Overwatch" heavily reliant on team-based communication.

You can build your team by gathering up to 5 friends, or have a randomly selected team with other solo players.

In "Overwatch", the player could also choose from various types of game modes. Each game mode takes place in a different map that are based on real world locations (i.e., Nepal, Hollywood, Route 66, China, London, etc.)

Quick Play is the best mode to play for beginners, and it's also commonly used as a type of warm-up before players enter their competitive matches. The competitive game mode is where it gets intense: if you win, your skill rating (SR) will rise and rank up, and if you lose, it goes down.

This is where the game can get a little "toxic", or unfriendly; people really care about their SR. Depending on high or low your SR is, you get ranked in a series of positions.

These positions or rankings start at Bronze, and go upwards to Silver, Gold, Platinum, Diamond, Master, and finally, Grandmaster. "Overwatch" also offers arcade mode, where players can choose from up to five different game modes.

These game modes usually rotate from team deathmatch, capture the flag, 3v3, total mayhem, and more. One game mode that never changes and is always offered is called "Mystery Heroes."

Mystery Heroes is the equivalent to Quick Play, but instead of being able to choose the hero to play with, the hero is chosen at complete random, and each time you die throughout the game, you get a new char-

acter, and at times receive a character you have already played with.

Some of these arcade games rotate between one another, and depending on the time of year, they relate to events that are going on in "Overwatch". These events include holidays such as Lunar New Year, Halloween, and Christmas.

"Overwatch" also hosts their own events which include Overwatch Archives, Summer Games, and the most special one for the game: Anniversary. The Anniversary event occurs every May in celebration of when the game was released.

New emotes and skins are released every event for various characters, and can only be obtained during the event time frame. For this reason, microtransactions always peak during this time.

"Overwatch" also has microtransactions which allows the purchase of what are known

as "loot boxes." These loot boxes are randomized and contain cosmetic items for each hero such as skins (outfits), sprays, emotes, voice lines, intros, and victory poses.

The loot boxes also contain in-game currency worth anywhere from 50-500 "coins" where the player is able to redeem any of the listed items.

"Overwatch" is played on both PC and console, but is better well known for its competitive PC pleasures.

Since its release two years ago, "Overwatch" won Game of the Year in its first year, and has become so serious and competitive, it even has its own eSports gaming league, which is made up of twelve teams. Each team has six starters and up to six additional members whom are used to substitute and swap amongst one another.

However, the main reason behind the huge success of "Overwatch" is not just the gameplay and its replayability, but the connection the player feels to each hero.

The creative leaders of "Overwatch" tell an emotional backstory for each hero that makes them personable, and allows us to connect to them more closely. What makes each hero even more unique, is that they each come from different countries, which is important to their backstories.

Each backstory leads to how and why the hero decided to join the organization of "Overwatch".

With all this in mind, "Overwatch" remains an engaging and worthwhile game two years after its debut.



Photo Credit: playoverwatch.com

BANNER ARTS

"God of War" Exceeds All Expectations

Join Kratos on His New Quest in Norse Realms

BY: BRENTON MITCHELL

The "God of War" series is known for three things: slick gameplay, brutal combat and bloody revenge.

Over seven games, players followed Kratos on his quests for vengeance and retribution against the Greek gods who slaughtered his family and toyed with his fate.

After the release of "God of War: Ascension" in 2013, it was a quiet three years until the unexpected announcement that a new game was in production.

Two years later, "God of War" released on April 20 on Xbox One, Playstation 4 and PC.

With Kratos' actions in the previous games removing the possibility of a Greek setting, the latest installment in the series takes players to Midgard, a realm where Norse gods roam the land.

The game opens to grief, with an aged Kratos gathering wood for his newly deceased wife. Her last wish was for Kratos and their son, Atreus, to spread her ashes from the highest peak in the realms. The player follows Kratos and Atreus on their journey for closure, and along the way unlock insight into the beauty and brutality of the Norse realms.

In an incredibly unexpected turn of genre, "God of War" presents one of the strongest single-player narratives of the current generation. The plot is well crafted and intricate, with palpable elements of realism and humanity that bleed through the fantasy setting in a way that's undeniable. "God of War" is a story about grief, passion, growth, understanding, violence and fatherhood.

These dynamics shine through the game's overall immersion further developed through seamless presentation. There



Photo Credit: PlayStation.com

are no cutscenes throughout the entire game, instead players slip smoothly from controlled to pre-rendered segments with such ease that it's often hard to tell the difference.

This immersion allows for the player to develop a deep connection with each character, ingraining themselves in each character without the disjointed feeling caused by a cutscene or classic fade through black.

Being an open world game based around mythology, "God of War" packs an incredible amount of content that adds depth to the overall story and world. The

reimaginings of gods and monsters work in concert with old stories and legend presenting themselves in some very discreet ways.

Players who enjoy delving into everything a game has to offer will find an abundance of content waiting for them.

Of course, "God of War" is nothing without combat.

In previous games, Kratos' weapons of choice were chain linked daggers that he used with speed and ferocity. However, it seems he has decided to leave these behind, instead opting for a magical frost

axe with the power to return it to himself at will.

This axe is the weapon Kratos uses throughout the entire game, functioning as a tool to solve puzzles as well as dish out death using the various abilities he unlocks over the journey.

His son Atreus isn't just for show either, the boy's bow and arrow provide essential support to manage the game's difficult encounters.

Combat is smooth and impactful, with only two main button presses to manage and one default combo that can be unlocked early on. Outside of this standard combo, how Kratos uses his abilities is up to the player to figure out.

They also have choice over Kratos' primary fighting style, whether it be using the ranged capacities of his Axe, his Spartan Rage ability or his runic shield.

These options and RPG elements drive the replayability and strength of the combat system, and open up creative ways to encounter every kind of threat. The game is pretty unforgiving, with even the most low-tier of enemies providing reasonable danger if left unchecked.

This change allows the game to retain the element of tension while slowing down the gameplay speed, which is a welcome change that fits the overall tone.

In total, "God of War" is a gameplay experience that will keep players coming back for more. Whether it be to beat the hardest difficulty, encounter hidden secrets, or defeat difficult challenges, "God of War" has everything a player could want.

It is an absolute must-have for any self respecting fan's collection.



Photo Credit: PushSquare.com

Bishop Briggs' Debut Album Is Finally Here

After Much Anticipation, Briggs Releases "Church of Scars"

BY: BRIELLE SPARACINO

Bishop Briggs, a 25-year-old singer-songwriter, finally released her first LP, titled "Church of Scars."

In a biography on Briggs on Axs, it says she was born to Scottish parents, grew up in her hometown of Bishopbriggs, Scotland until the age of four, and split her remaining years until the age of 18 between Japan and Hong Kong, respectively.

Briggs' real name real name is Sarah McLaughlin--no, not the one you're thinking of).

The artist knew she wanted to sing when she performed in a karaoke bar in Japan at the age of four, and started crafting her own material at the age of seven. After relocating to L.A. once she graduated high school in Hong Kong, she performed in any venues that would have her, paying little attention to audience size.

Writing and performing music within the indie-pop genre is nothing new for the singer, although she is still considered a rising star in the eyes of the music industry. Briggs only released her first single, "Wild Horses" in 2016 after being discovered by George Robertson, an A&R representative while performing in a local bar in L.A.

Soon after her first single was released, it was picked up and used in an Acura commercial, which caught the attention of many fans who began Shazaming the song. Since then, Briggs has been riding on a steady stream of single releases, including "River," which is one of her most popular singles to date.

"Church of Scars" was officially made available to purchase and download on April 20th and is comprised of ten tracks, including "Wild Horses," "River," and Briggs' 2018 single "White Flag."

"Tempt My Trouble" is "Church of

Scars" first track. With a variety of melodies, Briggs brings a harder rock edge mixed with a more easily identified alternative feel in this song about two people who aren't friends or lovers, but are just down for a good time.

The second track is "River," and one can definitely get a taste of Briggs' songwriting skills in the first verse of the tune: "How do we fall in love?/ Harder than a bullet could hit you/ How do we fall apart?/ Faster than a hairpin trigger." This song is all about the passion between two people in a relationship, especially the rougher, sexier side of it.

"Lyn" takes on a much more somber tone; Briggs comes to terms with the fact that she was "blinded" by love for one person, and that she was lying to herself about the reality of their situation in the process.

Up next on "Church of Scars" is "White Flag." A female empowerment rock anthem at its finest, "White Flag" oozes strength and determination to be the best version of yourself and refusing to "give up the fight" even when things get tough.

"Dream" is slightly stripped down but maintains Briggs' headstrong style with a prominent drum in the background. In a message sent along with the single on her mailing list back in 2017, Briggs writes "DREAM is about having fears and doing your best to embrace them no matter how strenuous the grip is."

Track number six on Briggs' LP is "Wild Horses," which is yet another former single. This tune almost has a dubstep element to it, with its contrasting heavy bass and high-pitched circus-like beats. Again, listeners get a treat to more great lyrics from Briggs like "You caught my truth in the worst way/ Through the dirty lens of a broken smile."

"Hallowed Ground" is where the album's title "Church of Scars" comes from;

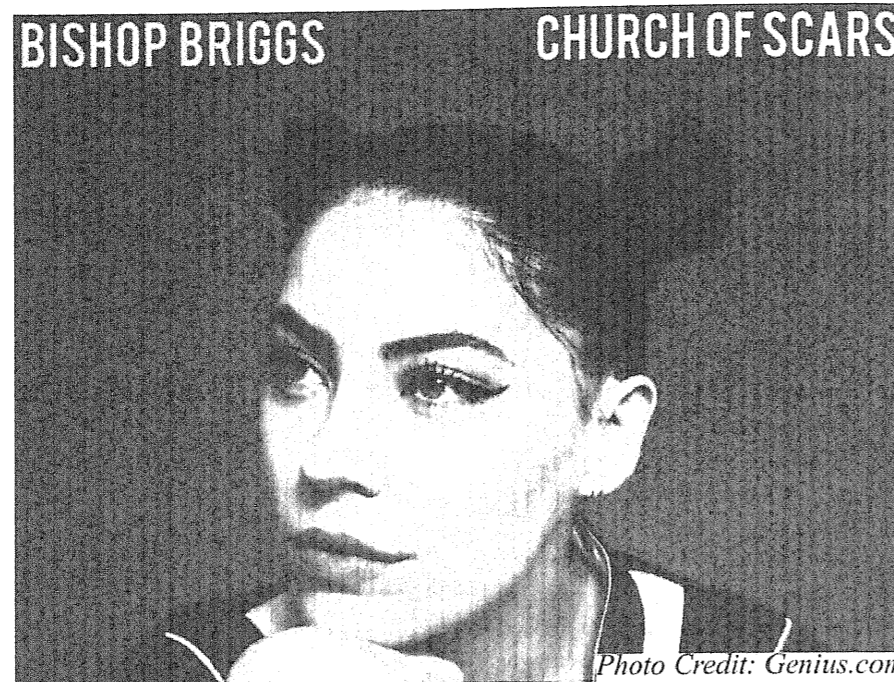


Photo Credit: Genius.com

in the second verse of the song, Briggs sings "My heart is a church of scars," which was "...really liberating" for her according to a Spotify commentary on the song.

"Water" clearly serves as the ballad on this album. In a Spotify commentary, Briggs mentions that this song was a last minute addition, but with the raw, unfiltered emotion in her voice paired with a choir accompaniment, this song is too good not to have on an album like "Church of Scars."

Briggs' energy is brought back in "The Fire." With a fiery melody behind her, Briggs knows that leaving her lover that wasn't right for her means being vulnerable and "running toward the fire."

"Church of Scars" comes to an end with "Hi-Lo (Hollow)." The song is about dealing with the highs and lows of someone else, and feeling hollow in the process. Briggs' ability to express these feelings through the inflection of her voice alone is astounding, and a soft-yet-steady dubstep beat behind the chorus makes this track worth a listen.

There is a Target Exclusive version of "Church of Scars" which features a song called "Hold On" as well as a remix of "Dream" by Noah Neiman.

Briggs is also in the middle of headlining her first North American tour, which started on April 27 in Vancouver, British Columbia and ends on May 30 in Nashville, Tennessee.

Sasha Sloan Slays With New EP

"Sad Girl" Expresses Heavy Feelings Through a Happy Veil

BY: BRIELLE SPARACINO

Sasha Sloan is a 22-year-old Boston native and somewhat of a newcomer to the music industry.

She hasn't gained much recognition until the last couple of years, despite her impressive list of songwriting credits with artists like Camila Cabello, Charli XCX, and Kygo.

Sloan was originally discovered after posting a link to her Soundcloud profile on Reddit back in 2014.

According to The Guardian, Sloan quit studying at the Berklee College of music where she originally studied music business, moved to Los Angeles and signed a publishing deal.

Since then, she's been sought after and worked with many electronic dance music (EDM) producers, and has either sang lead vocals on one of their tracks or kept to the background and got involved in the song's writing session instead.

Sloan released her first single "Ready Yet" back in 2017, which has made it onto "Sad Girl" as the EP's third track, and listeners were really able to get a sense of Sloan's signature sound: relatable angst-ridden lyrics masked with catchy, slightly synthesized beats.

The first track off of "Sad Girl" is called "Normal," which was Sloan's second single of 2018. This song is all about wanting to fit in even when it's out of character for you. "I should go/ It's getting late/ But I'mma keep on dancing 'til i feel okay" are lyrics that resonate with anyone, millennials and Gen

Z'ers aside.

The second track on Sloan's EP is "Fall," which starts off with Sloan's breathy voice accompanied only by piano and slowly incorporating a strings section into the piece. Sloan realizes she's made a mistake in letting her lover go, and in an act of utter vulnerability, she finally says "I'm ready to fall/ In love/ Again."

"Sad Girl" circles back to "Ready Yet" for the EP's halfway point, and focuses on how Sloan isn't ready to be friends with a former flame because "Sorry can't change time." Again, Sloan incorporates strings and even a soft percussion backbone into this track.

While giving a slight electric feel to the track without using a synthesizer, Sloan effortlessly describes the feeling of having to put yourself before someone who might have been toxic to you in your past, even if you want to let them back into your life.

"Hurt" is track four of six on "Sad Girl," and the listener can definitely feel the soft pop vibes radiating from this tune. Fearing that Sloan will only get "Hurt" if she keeps trying to get closer to a potential partner, she expresses her internal battle with lyrics like "I freak out every time we get closer/ 'Cause I'm scared that it's just gonna hurt."

"Runaway" was Sloan's second single, released shortly after "Ready Yet." Listeners get a taste of the synthesizer aspect Sloan's voice brings to her records on this track, where she questions herself and her constant need to leave a relationship before things can get good. She ends the song with "I was never one to say goodbye."

Sloan ends the album on a bit of a happier note, and you can definitely hear a synthesizer paired with Sloan's voice on "Here." With an extremely faint bass beat every now and then, Sloan is mainly accompanied by a guitar on this record where she faces the music and recognizes what's past is past.

The low-key melody with the unique

twist on Sloan's vocals make this song the perfect, slightly bittersweet end to an EP that told a story by exploring real and incredibly common aspects of love and relationships.

Sloan is the kind of artist who unapologetically displays her emotions on paper and in song, and that makes her someone that everyone can connect to, fan or not.

EPI: SAD GIRL



Photo Credit: Genius.com

"No Tears Left To Cry" Will Flip Your World Upside Down

Ariana Grande Returns with Symbolic Single

BY: VERONICA PISTEK

It's no secret that Ariana Grande has been in a powerful state of mind since the Manchester terror attacks in 2017.

"No Tears Left To Cry" is the recovery song filled with jubilation, light, and emotion that we all needed in wake of our world right now.

The pop-singer teased her fans with snippets of gospel-like melodies before her single dropped on April 20, 2018. While the world was anticipating a tear-jerking (pun intended), harmonious ballad, we received a song far beyond what we expected.

The petite powerhouse starts the song off with her smooth vocals vibrating to the words: "Right now I'm in a state of mind/I wanna be in like all the time/Ain't got no tears left to cry/So I'm pickin it up, pickin it up/I'm lovin, I'm livin, I'm pickin it up" before literally picking it up into a velvety 90's synth beat.

With controlled airy breaths, Ariana sings with a deeper voice to the first verse: "Ain't got no tears in my body/ I ran out, but boy I like it, I like it, I like it/ Don't matter how, what, where, who tries it/ We're out here vibin, we vibin, we vibin."

It's no shock that Ariana takes an advantage to showcase her pliable vocal range, while she belts the words of the chorus: "Oh, I just want you to come with me/ We on another mentality/ Ain't got no tears left to cry," which has fans everywhere singing their hearts out.

Along with her long-awaited single dropping, Grande also shocked her fan base with a visually striking and CGI crafted music video.

One clue that Grande hinted to her fans was an upside-down theme. The cover art has the title "No Tears Left To Cry" written upside down. Perfectly executed, the music video is filmed in different directions—spinning upside down, sideways, and right side up.

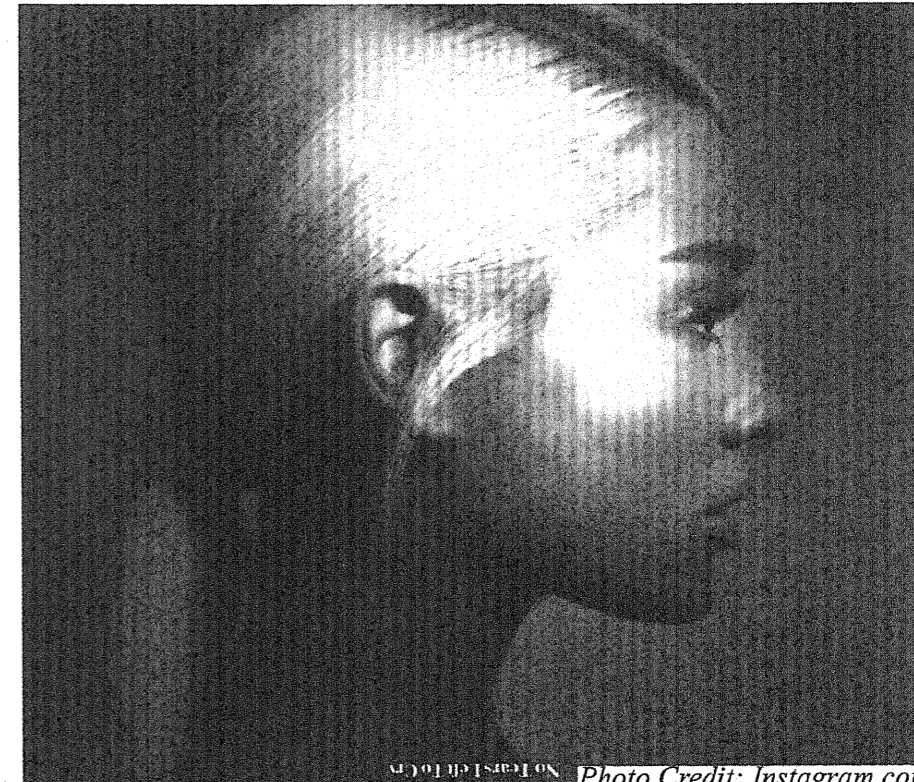


Photo Credit: Instagram.com

Ariana Grande's single cover for new single "No Tears Left To Cry."

Filled with futuristic "Doctor Strange" and "Inception" vibes, the music video represents the singer's lyrics on a symbolic level. Since the attacks on Manchester almost a year ago, Ariana has refrained herself from the spotlight and spent time alone to focus on healing.

The introduction of the video begins in darkness while the pop-star seems to be going through some sort of internal battle. As she sings the lyrics that "[she's] picking it up," Ariana transforms from being upside down

to walking right side up.

Possibly, as the world surrounding her is constantly rotating, the artist could be expressing how her life has been a constant whirlwind since the terrorist attacks, and how standing stable and grounded is a subjective state of mind. Paired with the lyrics that she is in a refreshed state of mind, Ariana is managing to move forward with positivity.

As the song continues, Grande physically and metaphorically basks in the light. As she is trapped in an abstract tunnel of lights, the

singer embodies the words that not only uplift herself, but also pay tribute to 22 victims lost in the Manchester attacks.

Another moment from the video that signifies her freedom from tears and negativity is when Ariana allows herself to effortlessly fall backwards off of a skyscraper. As expected, the irresistible tempo brings Ariana to her feet and "turns it up" with a short dance number on the top of a building as the sun starts to shine out of the darkness.

Potentially the most interesting part of the video, Grande sits before two masks of her own face while removing the one that she is currently wearing.

Fans have been interpreting this symbolic action in two different ways.

It could be interpreted that Ariana has had to face the public with a mask of strength, as she was truly suffering since the events last year and therefore has "no tears left to cry."

Another meaning that people are speculating is that Ariana is physically laying her past three phases behind: first, the "Yours Truly" era, the "My Everything" era, and the most recent "Dangerous Woman" era.

If you look closely, beneath the masks are pieces of paper with song titles from her new track list. Some of these include "God is a Woman," "Sweetener," "Breathing," and "Successful."

This leaves us with the clues that Ariana Grande is ready to grow and progress into a new stage of her life filled with refreshing music.

Despite the ups and downs, the hardships that Ariana and the world have gone through have led us to this personal masterpiece.

There is no specific date for Ariana's fourth album release, but for now we can enjoy this gratifying single and music video, and hope that she has more music coming our way.

New Summer Jams By Hip Hop Duo Rae Sremmurd

Rae Sremmurd To Release 27 Songs On New Album

BY: HAZIQ NAEEM

Rae Sremmurd, the American hip-hop group from Mississippi, will be releasing their third studio album titled "SR3MM" on May 4.

Composed of two brothers whose stage names are Slim Jxmmi and Swae Lee, the album will be consist of three albums in total, with one album by Swae Lee, one album by Slim Jxmmi, and one album by Rae Sremmurd. All three will be released as "SR3MM" on the same date— however, not individually by the artists.

Swae Lee's album will be titled "Swaecation," Slim Jxmmi's named "Jxm-

roduction", and the album by the duo, Rae Sremmurd, will be titled "SREMM3."

Producer Mike Will Made It has said that "SR3MM" will have 27 songs in total, so fans have a lot to look forward to.

The format of the new album expectedly confused many fans of the rap group, and Swae Lee took to Instagram with a whiteboard and a marker to explain the concept.

Swae Lee will be featured on Slim Jxmmi's section of the album, and Slim Jxmmi will be featured on Swae Lee's part of the album.

This can be quite confusing, as many fans understandably were. Why separate

the album into three sections if both artists will be featured on the others tracks anyway? After all, Rae Sremmurd is composed of just Swae Lee and Slim Jxmmi.

The format for the forthcoming album is perhaps so each brother in the group can have creative control of their projects and not feel as if they have to sacrifice their artistic voices and ability for the group project.

This is actually quite an ingenious way to keep a group together, while also being able to go their own way.

"People have to understand, me and Swae are brothers, we've been doing this for a long time. It's just time for us to grow our separate careers and also, our group still [and] building on that — it's no reason not to." Slim Jxmmi tells Zane Lowe in an interview for Billboard about the peculiar organization of their new album.

To build up the anticipation for the album, the duo have already released multiple songs from each section of the album.

Swae Lee recently released "Guatemala," a summer song that sounds much like his previous hit song with French Montana, "Unforgettable." Swae Lee had said that he had a part two to "Unforgettable," and the beat on both sound similar enough to assume that "Guatemala" is Swae Lee's part two to this smash hit.

Slim Jxmmi is, of course, featured on "Guatemala," but the song is not by Rae

Sremmurd, it is by Swae Lee featuring Slim Jxmmi.

Swae Lee also released "Hurt To Look" from his side of the album, singing supposedly about an ex that he hasn't quite gotten over.

Slim Jxmmi has released "Brnxks Trucks" and "Chanel," the latter which features Pharrell along with Swae Lee.

Many have criticized Slim Jxmmi as second to Swae Lee, claiming that he may be unable to hold his own on a song without his brother.

The catchy theme of "Chanel" and it's glowing reviews has proved them wrong, and the rest of his album is sure to do the same.

Swae Lee has proved himself to be a certified superstar on his own many times over, with a feature on Post Malone's new album "Beerbongs & Bentleys," last year's biggest song of the summer "Unforgettable" with French Montana, and co-writing Beyonce's "Formation."

From the Rae Sremmurd part of the album they have released "Powerglide," "T'd Up," and most recently "CLOSE" featuring Travis Scott.

The songs from Rae Sremmurd's side of the album contains their signature style of high energy and good vibes only type.

The duo is sure to take over summer radio with all the hits they have been producing.



Photo Credit: Forbes.com

Brothers, Swae Lee (left) and Slim Jxmmi (right) that make up Rae Sremmurd.

MUSIC & BROADWAY

Greta Van Fleet is Classic Rock's Revival

Young, Led Zeppelin-like Rock Band Making Waves

BY: ERIC RANSOM

They're being called the second coming of Led Zeppelin.

Hailing from Frankenmuth, Michigan, new rock band Greta Van Fleet is making a statement – rock isn't dead after all.

With their long hair, booming vocals, classic rock riffs and original tunes, the band is channeling a sound that hasn't been heard from or relevant to this magnitude since the 1970's.

In fact, all of the bands ages range from only 19-22.

Formed in 2012, Greta Van Fleet is comprised of twin brothers Josh Kiszka, vocals and Jake Kiszka, guitar, both 22, younger brother Sam Kiszka on bass/organ, 19 and friend Danny Wagner on drums, also 19.

After signing with Lava Records, they debuted their hit song "Highway Tune" as a single in March 2017 and on YouTube, garnering over 14 million views since being posted in April 2017.

With its catchy Zeppelin-like riff and powerful vocals, "Highway Tune" quickly rose to number one on the charts of Billboard's US Mainstream Rock in only 14 weeks. The song and band were voted by Loudwire as the second best Hard Rock Song and Best New Rock Band of 2017.

Commercials and television shows have featured their music, including Chevrolet and the hit Showtime show "Shameless".

Greta Van Fleet's popularity has taken

them across the country and around Europe, including performing at Coachella and for Elton John at his 2018 Oscars Party.

Their initial EP, "Black Smoke Rising," featured four songs until becoming a full LP, titled "From the Fires" released this past November. With the four songs from the previous release, four new songs were included, among them being two covers and two new originals.

Heavily rooted in the blues and classic rock growing up, the Kiszka household was exposed to blues and rock records from their parents for years, molding their musical taste and inspiring them to play the music for themselves.

Though the band shares the same tastes, especially with the blues and classic rock, all four members have developed their favorite genres of music as well; Josh enjoys world music, Jake likes hard rock, Sam gravitates to jazz and Danny listens to folk.

It wasn't until Josh unleashed his vocal chops during a practice that opened the eyes of his brothers, marveling at the sheer force and flexibility of his vocal range.

Josh Kiszka's powerful falsetto has drawn some seriously high praise, being compared to legends such as Janis Joplin, Geddy Lee and especially Led Zeppelin frontman Robert Plant.

His Plant-esque vocals even caught the eye of the golden god himself.

"There's a band in Detroit called Gre-



Photo Credit: marathonmusicworks.com
Classic Rock is alive again thanks to an impressive new rock band, Greta Van Fleet.

ta Van Fleet. They are "Led Zeppelin I". Beautiful little singer, I hate him! He borrowed [his voice] from somebody I know very well," Plant said jokingly.

The inspiration for their peculiar band name derived from the day before their first live performance, when the grandfather of their original drummer, Kyle Hauck, told the members he was going to pick up Gretna Van Fleet, a woman in Frankenmuth. The Kiszka brothers were intrigued by the name, enough to name their new band after her.

After dropping the "n" in "Gretna" to avoid confusion with the real person, Greta

Van Fleet was born.

The band recently toured the UK, until returning home to perform at Coachella for the first time last April and will continue touring the US. The band recorded songs for their second album earlier in the year after finishing their first tour last Christmas, aiming for it to be released sometime around July 2018.

Equipped with amazing chemistry, tight-knit Greta Van Fleet may soon take over not just the world of rock, but mainstream music as a whole.

"Chicago" on Broadway Did Not Razzle Dazzle

Movie Lovers Beware, It's Just Not the Same

BY: LUCIA ROSSI

As someone who grew up loving the "Chicago" 2002 film with Renee Zellweger and Catherine Zeta-Jones, nothing was more disappointing than seeing the Broadway show from which it was based to be not as glamorous and underwhelmingly simple.

Perhaps my expectations were too high, but if the ticket price is \$100, shouldn't I be expecting the best of Broadway, especially for its longest-running show in history?

In short, there was indeed an immense amount of talent and energy from both the orchestra and its performers but they lacked the stage space, setting, costumes, and new blood.

"Chicago" is a musical that takes place in the 1920's prohibition-era which satirizing the corruption in the criminal-justice system showing how female murderers

could get off free just by being attractive and becoming a celebrity.

The main characters are Velma Kelly and Roxie Hart, who are aspiring Vaudevillians that committed murders and are trying to use their fame to avoid a death-sentence with the help of the best lawyer, Billy Flynn.

The best aspect of "Chicago" is no doubt its music and songs. However, in the Ambassador Theatre, the orchestra was placed in the middle of the stage leaving little room for the performers.

They used this to their advantage at times by doing scenes in and around the seating of the musicians and even included them at times, which was a great idea but this lack of space cut the potential of the show because it did not allow for any background setting and the audience was forced to use their imagination.

The closest thing they had to a backdrop

was near the end where there was a tinsel curtain. For the "Cell Block Tango," there were no jail bars or red handkerchiefs to symbolize blood in the murders, only chairs.

It was also disappointing that the "squish" person from the "Cell Block Tango" was a ditsy high-pitched voiced blonde, instead of the sassy black woman in the film. Billy Flynn however, was African-American, which provided more diversity to the cast.

The same outfits used in the "Cell Block Tango" were also the same costumes they wore throughout the entire show with an exception to one costume change to Roxie and Velma, which just ended up being similar costumes anyway.

There were no black and white sequined outfits, just simple black costumes that were not as revealing as the other performers.

Props did help at times, but there was no indication that the time period was of the 1920's except for the use of newspapers and vaudevillian style of musical numbers.

It was also a bit strange that the performers sat on the edges of the stage in chairs, in full view of the audience, when they waited for their cues.

Something so attractive about the film was the amount of drama and emphasis on women gaining power and control over their lives and fame, even at the expense of murder.

This dramatic and powerful feeling was absent from the Broadway show because like most Broadway shows, they included more humor. Although laughing is never a

bad thing, it took away from the passion.

Mary Sunshine, the reporter, also had a bigger role since she had her own song, and the show at the end revealed her to be a man. The meaning and purpose for all of this seemed unclear.

The most controversial criticism for this show would be the lack of young main performers.

Amra-Faye Wright and Charlotte d'Amboise played Velma and Roxie, and have been playing them since 2001. Not to be ageist, but they are in their 50's and it may be time for new blood.

Their bodies are in pinnacle shape and they can still do splits and cartwheels like nobody's business, but you could tell from their performance that they've been doing this a long time and it almost felt lazy because it seemed a bit rushed and lacked that dramatic emotion.

The other performers did amazing dance moves and stunts but the older cast seemed a bit slower paced.

This doesn't mean to say that older performers don't have a place here and shouldn't perform on Broadway. It was a privilege to see original cast members; it's just uncertain if it really fit with "Chicago."

Nonetheless, it's a very small cast and you could tell that they seemed tight-knit because they've been doing this together for a long time.

They say don't meet your heroes because you'll be disappointed and this was true when seeing "Chicago" on Broadway.



Photo Credit: chicagothemusical.com
Amra-Faye Wright played Velma Kelly in "Chicago" on Broadway.