

Movie Review: 'G.I. Joe: Retaliation'

Melanie DeCelles
STAFF WRITER

This weekend I saw "G.I. Joe Retaliation."

I saw this movie for many reasons; my deep love of action movies, my appreciation of explosions, a promise made to myself to see any movie that features Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson and my willingness to follow Channing Tatum into any festering movie project he decides he wants to attach himself to.

Despite the many reasons I had to love this movie I have to say, I absolutely hated it. This movie was so bad halfway through I kept wishing all of the main characters would die off. Again I had every reason to believe I would like this movie. I don't request a lot from my action

flicks, hell I'm an avid fan of the Fast and the Furious franchise (May 24!) but even my low set bar was too much for this movie.

The movie follows the Joes as Zartan, masquerading as the president, attempts to disband the special forces unit by ordering a military strike that kills many of the Joes within the first ten minutes. Since the easy going camaraderie in the face of danger was kind of the only thing this movie had going for it I assure you, you will bitterly mourn the departed Joes for the rest of the film.

The rest of the movie is an odd reintroduction to all the major players still alive from the last film. While most of our beloved Joes have gone on to a better place (and hopefully better movies) the villains remain roughly the same. This recycling of bad guys might be why the filmmakers decided not to

treat their villains with any respect whatsoever. You have a megalomaniac that barely gets any screen time who announces he wants it all, the world and everything in it, you just have no idea why.

At a crucial point in the film one of the villains has a slight change of heart which is done with such an amazing lack of detail you feel sure that it's a setup for an eventual betrayal, it's not, they were really just that lazy. Plot holes and awful characters aside I know that most people are only going to see this film for the fight scenes. Don't. In the amazing world of 2013 we've had movies constantly push the realms of on-screen fighting. We've had superhero movies with battles in mid-air, fire burning on all sides and we've had tense thrillers where men are pummeled in bathrooms against toilet bowls. The requirements for fun violence is higher

now than it was in the 80s. Someone should really tell Jon M. Chu, the director of this film, about these developments. We unfortunately aren't impressed with fight scenes that replace action with bullets and Bruce Willis (who has no shame). The only fight scene with any merit takes place on the side of a mountain and even that gets old after they use the same stunt for the thirtieth time.

The lackluster action combined with a bizarre fascination with unrealistic countdown scenarios (it can't be three minutes for a third of the film, and honestly, I'm pissed you dragged it out that long) give the entire film a slight sheen of daytime TV, you could swear that you've seen this film before on FOX in grammar school on a sick day. All in all it was a terrible movie, but The Rock was in it, so it least it wasn't a total bust.

Youth Lagoon's 'Wondrous Bughouse' texturally rich, well-crafted

August Lysy
STAFF WRITER

The vor Powers, under his band name Youth Lagoon, released his second album Wondrous Bughouse over one month ago, at which time I had intended to review it, being quite proud that I had purchased an album produced post-1990s, and having purchased it within the first week of its release—something I have never before done.

Some time has passed now but I wish to review it all the same, so I will. Though I am not familiar with Powers' first album, I find his sophomore release to be both aurally (for lack of an applicable word) and texturally rich and well-crafted. Although, like most contemporary "independent" music I have listened to, the lyrical meaning is obscured in references only discernable by the artist's personal experience (arguably), the cornucopia of Powers' sounds tends toward recognizable feelings and emotions.

As one might expect with a title like

Wondrous Bughouse, the album pervades a colorful, yet hauntingly nostalgic expression, which—to this author's mind—tends toward regret or lament.

The album opens with an ambient instrumental track that evokes images of paint slowly dripping and dissolving into distilled water; this track—in some way foreboding—establishes the despondent mood for the entire album.

The second track introduces a disturbingly disharmonious interlude—a la the cyclical squeak of a roundabout—that plays upon a greater theme of the album, which can be described as a darkly-ironic juxtaposition of strange, sometimes unsettling images and sounds and a fragile, quasi-childish innocence, which itself is reflected in Powers' vocals and harmonies.

For instance, in track three Powers delivers lines such as, "I won't die easily" that's what you said after you watched the disease spread, the doctor conceals a grin to tell her she couldn't have babies [sic]; all with a squeaky voice, reminiscent of Daniel Smith of Danielson.

The album, I believe, does have an arc, or at least somewhat of a partial resolution to these dark themes. For example, in track eight there is a noticeable relaxation in the harmony and a driving rhythm. This interpretation, though, is complicated by the accompaniment of such lyrics as, "evil is in the air, I'm not coming out."

Nevertheless, love and religious imagery noticeably emerge in the final two tracks. Once again, however, we find the seemingly incongruous juxtaposing of love and a disturbing image of bloodletting: "I say love exists and this is what it is, I'm polluted by my blood so help me cut it out and rinse it down the drain... [sic]."

Still, this may be Powers struggling with the paradoxical concept of Christian redemption, which—hear me out—is not too great a stretch considering the line, "Shepherd, I've been lost too many times to be free [sic]" (n.b., Powers' handwritten, childishly-scrawled lyrics, included in the sleeve notes, contain few capitalizations: Shepherd is one).

This interpretation is further supported by lines such as "the living and the

dead are waving to the corpse... everybody's wanting to see him come alive, pour the ashes into a cup, mix it with wine here's to sleep drink up, here's to death drink up [sic]" which recall the resurrection and Last Supper of Jesus. If one can even argue for a resolution in this album, the closing track, indeed, offers but a partial one. It begins with a few repetitions of the lines, "mortal, we are mortals on the run, god you've seen what I've done, you know where we come from, and yet we're children of one [sic]."

I say this is may be a partial resolution because there is an argument to be made that the previous songs are referenced in "god you've seen what I've done [sic]" in which case this song may represent some kind of dark enlightenment for Powers, who, as I cursorily remarked above, may sound to be mulling over past regrets and, thus, irredeemability.

This track closes instrumentally, much like it began, but in a swirling melody that references back to the squeaky roundabout of track two.

In all, Wondrous Bughouse is worth a serious listen if you're in the mood for subdued, unsettling emotional release.

ILLINOIS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

GRAD SALUTE 2013



GRADUATING IIT STUDENTS ATTEND GRAD SALUTE!

MONDAY, APRIL 22 OR TUESDAY, APRIL 23, 2013
HERMANN HALL, BALLROOM NOON - 7 P.M.

AT GRAD SALUTE YOU CAN:

- PICK UP YOUR CAP AND GOWN
- GET YOUR GUEST TICKETS
- ORDER CLASS RINGS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS
- HAVE A CAP AND GOWN PHOTO TAKEN

FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE VISIT: www.iit.edu/commencement

QUESTIONS? email commencement@iit.edu