



#23
MUSIC // FILM // ART // STYLE // AUGUST 2009

FAN THE FIRE

M A G A Z I N E

ANTI-CHRIST

**THE MOST CONTROVERSIAL FILM OF THE MODERN ERA,
TURNS OUT, COULD BE ONE OF THE FINEST**

PLUS

TIJUANA PANTHERS INTERVIEW
FRANKMUSIK, **THE TEMPER TRAP**
AND **MSTRKRFT** ALBUM REVIEWS
THE INVENTION OF LYING
AND **SURROGATES** PREVIEWS
MESRINE: KILLER INSTINCT
AND **THE UGLY TRUTH** REVIEWS
ART BY **MICHAEL WANDELMAIER**
AND STYLE BY **MARQUIS MONTES**

FAN THE FIRE

M A G A Z I N E



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MUSIC

Border Patrol

The latest Long Beach report uses a date in Mexico for their name but this one self-dubbed has well as home in the thriving local LA music scene

12 MAY 1986 AUGUST 2009

FEATURE

The name came out of a story my neighbor told me. It involved him, a black porcelain panther, Tijuana, a shiv, and the early 1970's.

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ANTICHRIST

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ART

Brave New World

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Somewhere Under The Rainbow

12 MAY 1986 AUGUST 2009

“...*Antichrist*
was always
going to steal
this month's
cover...”

There's never a quiet month in the Fan the Fire offices, but this month has been particularly busy. Our iPhone app now in the iTunes store we've had a tonne of follow-up work to be getting on with, our club night Friday Night Fist Fight is back again, now settled monthly at Catch in east London, but most importantly, our advertising media pack is now up to date, so if you're interested in reaching our expansive readership across the very latest of platforms, please get in touch. As for this month in the entertainment industry, it's an equally busy four weeks ahead.

Whether we liked it or not, *Antichrist* was always going to steal this month's cover. The most controversial film in years, *Antichrist* garnered all the press, if not the awards, at this year's Cannes Film Festival. With scenes of graphic sexual violence and a tormenting narrative only Lars von Trier could accomplish, critics are generally split down the middle declaring it either a masterpiece or an atrocity. Find out what we thought in our film section along with reviews of rom-com *The Ugly Truth*, French gangster movie *Mesrine: Killer Instinct*, *Land Of the Lost* and *Imagine That*. We also preview new graphic novel adaptation *Surrogates*, starring Bruce Willis, Ricky Gervais' *The Invention Of Lying* and the world-ending *2012*. This month we're also giving away copies of *Flight Of The Conchords: Season 2*.

On the audio side we chat to latest LA export Tijuana Panthers, whom despite their fresh faces, already boast an EP reminiscent of a surf-influenced Strokes. We also check out new albums from Frankmusik, The Twang, The Temper Trap and MSTRKRFT. On the style and art fronts we have great features from brilliant illustrator Michael Wandelmaier and photographer pairing Marquis Montes, each making waves in their respective field for inspiring and imaginative work, setting an impossibly high bar for newcomers hoping to break in on their direction.

Enjoy the issue

Sam Bathe

CONTRIBUTOR
OF THE MONTH

Working as solo freelance photographers before forming a partnership in their native Montreal, Canada, under the name **Marquis Montes**, Valerie Boulet and Jose Enrique Montes Hernandez are two of the most exciting minds in the fashion game.

A team in work and in life, they feed off each other to produce imagery reveling in both their strengths. Concentrating their efforts in style photography, they work not only on esthetics, but in particular, on concept, to tell a story and evoke something more than simply beauty.

Having completed their degrees only a few years ago, they are at the beginning of what promises to be an exciting career and already two signature shoots down the line, Marquis Montes have caused a stir many photographers could only dream of.

FIND MORE OF MARQUIS MONTES' STUNNING PHOTOGRAPHY AT MARQUISMONTES.COM

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MAGAZINE

■ SATURDAY, 11 JULY 2009

Robbers & Cowards

To celebrate the release of their new single 'I've Seen Enough', Long Beachers Cold War Kids have a novel new way of listening to the best track off their latest album.



Head over to Cold War Kids' [MTV](#) site for the chance to remix the track how you want. Swap in the four band members, or click the colour bars at the top of the page to change the instruments they play. Though to be honest, the classic version is the best, not that we didn't have fun playing around with the song.

Posted by Sam Bathe

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Lipstick Fever



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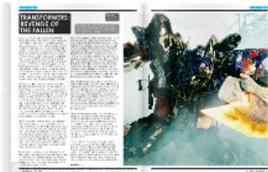
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FAN THE FIRE

■ THURSDAY, 9 JULY 2009

Dreamscapes

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MUSIC

Listen To More... Two Door Cinema Club



Out of Bangor, Northern Ireland, despite being featured on Kitsuné's Maison vol. 7 compilation and being booked for festivals across the summer, Two Door Cinema Club somehow remain unsigned. But don't expect that to last for long. The recent Kitsuné interaction also brought a single release on the cool French electro label, and while this time around 'Something Good Can Work' might have been a small scale event, next year don't be surprised if their track is the sound of the summer.

Two Door Cinema Club's indie pop electronica is effortlessly uplifting and makes you want to get up on your feet and dance. Their jerky riffs are a sound far beyond the clichéd indie bands bogging down the industry at the moment, on the rise, and with a refreshingly entertaining EP under their belts, the future is looking very bright indeed.

YOU CAN LISTEN TO MORE TWO DOOR CINEMA CLUB AT MYSPACE.COM/TWODOORCINEMA CLUB

MUSIC

Live Review: Kitsuné Maison at Scala

To celebrate the release of the next instalment in their amazing Maison compilations, Kitsuné took over Scala, London, on Saturday 20th June.

Put on in association with Neon Noise Project, in between the bands much-hyped DJ duo Aeroplane spun electro tracks from throughout the decades, but the real attraction were the live performances on offer.

First up were Chew Lips, and though we were expecting a lot from this London three-piece, bar single 'Solo', front-woman Tigs was very frustrating in both vocal performance and on-stage demeanour. Delphic, however, were a completely different story.

Playing almost non-stop to try and pack in as many tracks as possible, blending their tracks seamlessly, the band's New-Order-esque electro went down a storm. From the stunning 'Doubt' to Maison compilation offering 'Counterpoint', it's no surprise Bloc Party plucked Delphic out to support them for their recent Olympia dates. You'll be seeing a lot from Delphic in the coming months.

Headliners for the night, and on Kitsuné's own label, autoKratz worked the crowd into a frenzy with their pumping rave-disco sound.

Despite looking like he needed to dash to the bathroom for the entire set, Russell on synth and laptop/mixer set the beat for vocalist David to jump about and scream out the band's minimalistic lyrics. Though their music doesn't have quite the emphatic power of peers The Whip, whom themselves never really make the breakthrough they deserved, autoKratz still have a lot going for them and are more than worth checking out.

Last of the major acts on the night was We Have Band, whom after touring almost every London club at the start of the year, recently took a little time out to finish up new tracks for their album. Breakthrough single 'Hear It In The Cans' was always going to steal the show but the rest of their music is far from lagging behind, proving a fitting end to the electro affair.

Hopefully it isn't too long until Maison Vol. 8.

TV

Waiting For The Fall: Undeclared

Every year, bar LOST's now January season premières, the TV-loving public waits with baited breath to see what the fall will bring. The finest of America's new shows, after being hyped up over the summer, crash down on the schedules from September and October as eager viewers search for their latest obsession. Sadly, if you check your calendar, we're in July.

After January's new shows and the conclusion to last year's big hitters earlier in the year, we're now left with the summer hitters schedule. New seasons of True Blood and Entourage are doing their best fill the gap but over a whole week, they're struggling to make up for what is usually a strong line-up every night as winter draws in.

To stave off the need for fall fever, we'll be working our way through shows we've missed over the years and have only now found the time to catch up on. In the coming weeks we'll check out How I Met Your Mother, The Wire and Freaks And Geeks, but first Judd Apatow's second TV breakthrough; Undeclared.

Starring many of the actors now propping up Apatow's ever successful film productions, Undeclared follows the life of Steven Karp, played by a remarkably young looking Jay Baruchel, during his first year at college, still undeclared on his major study. Experiencing the trials and tribulations of freshman life, Undeclared is suitably packed with the humour that has made Apatow such a big draw at the box office, but he's suitably aided by Baruchel and the supporting cast.

After his work in Freaks And Geeks, which was also unjustifiably cancelled after one season like Undeclared, Seth Rogen plays Steven's geeky dorm-mate Ron. Jason Segel also plays a minor character and along the way there are cameos from Ben Stiller, Will Ferrell, Adam Sandler, Martin Starr and Kyle Gass.

Undeclared feels like it paved the way for current underrated show Greek, but this is certainly more of a cruder offering. Hitting audiences with its honesty, some of the situations Steven finds himself in will have you in tears as the show manages to stay relatable.

Initially Undeclared struggled to find an audience on TV, and Fox cited poor ratings for it's cancellation in 2002. Since it's release on DVD, however, the show has found a cult following similar to Freak And Geeks, and is just the thing for a dingy summer's day. Or to be honest, a bright summer's day.

ART



STYLE



Border Patrol

The latest Long Beach export owe a debt to Mexico for their name but this is one surf-influenced trio well at home in the thriving local LA music scene

WORDS SAM BATHE



WE CERTAINLY HAVEN'T exclusively featured bands from the Los Angeles area but given the thriving music scene on the west coast, they're certainly making a case for it, and the centre of it all seems to be Long Beach. Just south of LA, the port city has a thriving creative community and vibrant music scene, bringing us Cold War Kids and much hyped up and coming bands Deep Sea Diver and We Barbarians in the last few years, Tijuana Panthers are next on the verge of a major breakthrough.

Coined from a neighbour's Tijuana tale involving a black porcelain

at, in Phil's words, "the happiest place on earth".

THEIR DEBUT EP AND single 'Creature' recently hit stores in their local area and online via iTunes but beyond that, future plans are still somewhat up in the air. "We are going to release a few other new recordings either as singles or maybe a full length", explains Phil, but beyond that how they move forward is pretty fluid. In fact for the moment, they're still delighted when the invitation of a house party comes along.

To some, Tijuana Panthers' laid back attitude might prove irk

"The name came out of a story my neighbor told me. It involved him, a black porcelain panther, Tijuana, a shiv, and the early 1970's."

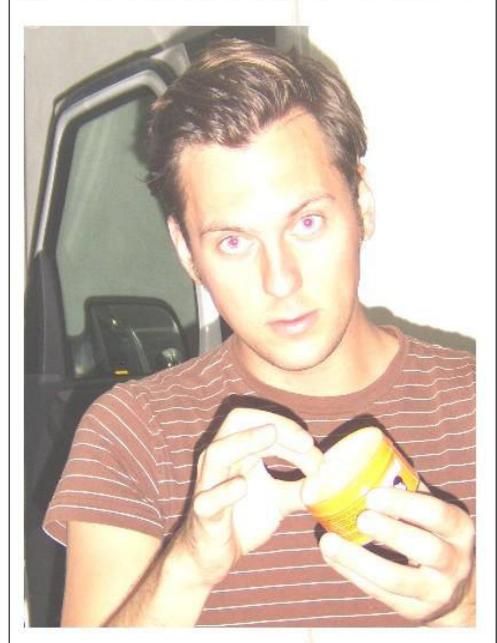
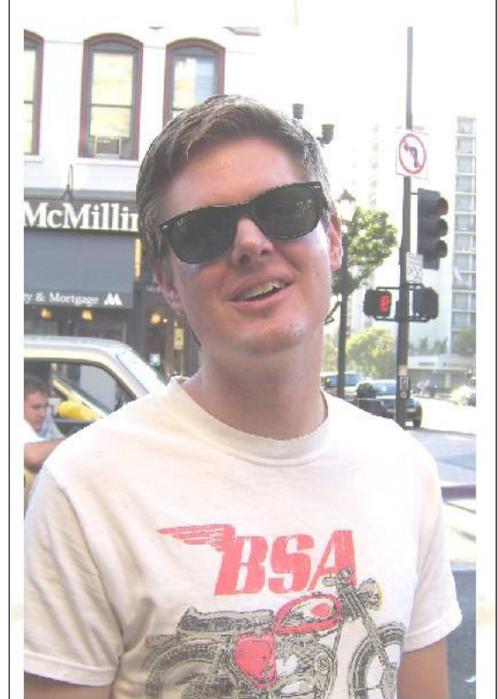
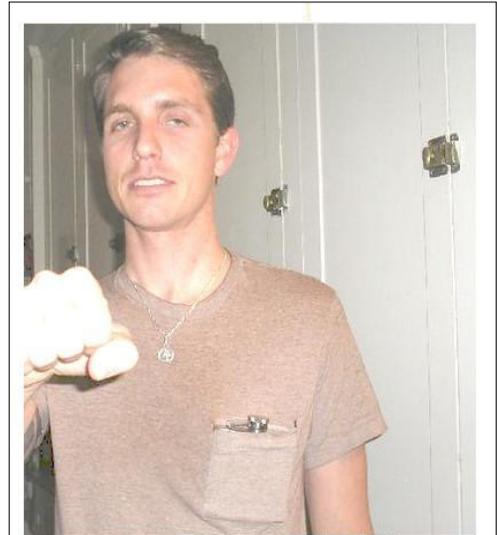
panther, a shiv and the early 1970s, the Tijuana Panthers are an exciting three-piece confirming once and for all, indie surf rock is back for good. Sounding some thing like a Link Wray influenced Strokes, the Panthers have an effortless confidence and nonchalance to their music that gives it such energy and vibrancy.

They are, however, still certainly a band finding their feet in music. While they cram gigs and recording sessions into their free time, the three-piece all still hold down full time jobs. Phil is a high school art teacher, Chad works the ever-popular graveyard shift at a restaurant and flies planes when he gets the chance and Daniel works

some, indeed for a band with so much talent they could and should undoubtedly be making waves across the US, not just in their homely California, but it's refreshing to see three musicians driven by their music, not simply filling their bank account.

New songs are steadily rolling out online and with bands like The Soft Pack talking up the three-piece so highly, even playing a cover of one of their tracks at a recent show, it's obvious fans' excitement is more than justified. Long Beach has done it again.

TIJUANA PANTHERS' DEBUT EP IS AVAILABLE NOW ON ITUNES AND VIA THE BAND'S MYSPACE PAGE



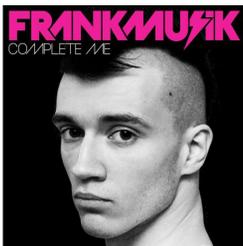
DAN BLACK 'UN'

RELEASED
Out now

Since the break-up of indie pencil pushers The Servant, the one promising talent, frontman Dan Black, has found a much needed in ease of live with his solo project. 'Un' is a fresh electro-pop album tinged with dirty hip-hop that gives it an edge different to the recent '80s throwbacks. It might not be as euphoric as it should be and at times Black certainly goes easy on the back beats but with tracks like 'Alone' and 'Pump My Pumps', boasting his, if not inventive, but catchy lyrics, with this new direction, Black could go a long way.

★★★★★

FRANKMUSIK 'COMPLETE ME'

RELEASED
August 3

A bedroom music projects that got a whole lot bigger than anyone expected, when Vincent Frank wrote and recorded debut EP 'Frankisum' in his Croydon flat no one would have guessed he'd soon be a highflier on BBC's Sound of 2009 poll. With spikey electro tracks like '3 Little Words' and 'Gotta Boyfriend', Frank has got a real chance of making it in the long term but 'Complete Me' all too superficial for him to make his case just yet and could have done with a producer to throw a little grit into the mix. The cover art really says it all.

★★★★★

THE TWANG 'JEWELLERY QUARTER'

RELEASED
August 3

The fact The Twang made it big off their awful debut 'Love It When I Feel Like This' is as much an indictment of the state of NME as it is the British public's mindless desire to follow the latest cool trend of band with a northern accent. 'Jewellery Quarter' is sadly no better, still devoid of any imagination or witty writing to the point the record grows actively boring before the first track is even complete. Public reaction to The Twang's sophomore surely won't match that of their debut, so hopefully a third might never make it to release.

★★★★★

REVEREND & THE MAKERS 'A FRENCH KISS IN THE CHAOS'

RELEASED
July 27

Reverend & The Makers could have released debut album 'The State Of Things' as a one-track LP and it wouldn't have made a jot of difference. Even the band will admit, breakthrough single 'Heavyweight Champion Of The World' was the making of this Sheffield six-piece, taking their fame nationwide. This second album, therefore, was the chance to really prove their worth, and while it is an improvement, they still have nothing on fellow Yorkshiremen The Arctic Monkeys.

★★★★★

THE TEMPER TRAP 'CONDITIONS'

RELEASED
August 10

Aggravated by frontman Chris Martin, a large chunk of the music-loving public have grown to hate the now meteoric Coldplay. With regret, therefore, many a critic have likened The Temper Trap to the British band, albeit without the piano and arrogance, instead boasting a pounding drum beat and multiple guitars. The end result is a multi-layered reverberating LP that'll wrap you up in one listen, effortlessly sweeping from the first to last track. 'Conditions' may lack signature riffs that'll hook you in for the long term but that's a minor quibble.

★★★★★

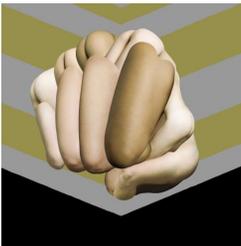
EMMY THE GREAT 'FIRST LOVE'

RELEASED
August 10

You might expect from Emma-Lee Moss' stage name Emmy The Great and the generally upbeat and chirpy nature of folk music, 'First Love' would be a joyous affair. Far from it. With Moss' incisive lyrics and cutting songs, she certainly has a lot to say and displays maturity far beyond her years. Some of backing to Moss' delightful vocals, however, could do with a little work and at several points lies on the brink of falling into repetition and mediocrity, but she just about pulls it off.

★★★★★

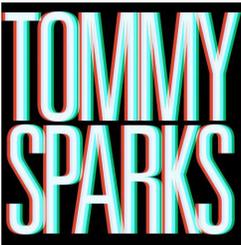
MSTRKRFT 'FIST OF GOD'

RELEASED
August 3

Far more eclectic and accessible than their last hard electro release 'The Looks', 'Fist Of God' marks a big step forward in terms of MSTRKRFT forging a career from their own tracks alongside their hugely successful remixing. From Daft Punk-esque '1000 Cigarettes' to single 'Heartbreaker', itself reminiscent of Gnarles Barkley, even mainstream electro-poppers will be able to find a route in. Old fans, however, still need not be put off. Tracks like 'Click Click' are back to the norm, even if they boast a few more lyrics than you might have expected.

★★★★★

TOMMY SPARKS 'TOMMY SPARKS'

RELEASED
August 10

As is the problem of a largely album filler debut, Tommy Sparks' self-titled record plays in fits and starts aside the real headline makers dotted throughout. Sparks' potential is obvious and singles 'She's Got Me Dancing' and 'I'm A Rope' show an aptitude for knowing what makes a great catchy pop track but the stuff either side isn't really up to much. Perhaps at this point another EP would have been more appropriate until Sparks has a full LP to really make his mark on the chart and not this fumbled effort.

★★★★★

THE DEAD WEATHER 'HOREHOUND'

RELEASED
Out now

One day we'll have a new Jack White side project that won't sound like The White Stripes with more instruments. That day isn't today. The latest adventure brings The Kills' Alison Mosshart, QOTSA's Dean Fertita and previous contributor in The Raconteurs, Jack Lawrence, on board alongside White. 'Horehound' is grungey gothic rock as you'd expect boasting White' trademark scaling riffs at every turn, which is all well and good the first few times around, but by now, it's all a little boring.

★★★★★

PHOENIX 'WOLFGANG AMADEUS PHOENIX'

RELEASED
Out now

Growing up in Paris' affluent suburb Versailles might not be the usual place for the foundation of amazing music but after Air, Daft Punk and Phoenix, times have changed. Now on their fourth studio album, 'Wolfgang Amadeus Phoenix' is their best yet, a masterclass in spritely electro-rock-pop. They share a few parallels with British band The Hoosiers, the one key difference, they're not awful, and starting this latest LP with get-up-and-dance tracks 'Listomania' and '1901' you can really easily get in the mood for what is very pleasing album.

★★★★★

SURROGATES

RELEASED
September 25

Surrogates shares some similarities with the idea behind the Matrix trilogy. In the near future, people are plugged into machines that allow them to live their lives through 'surrogates', robotic representations of themselves through which they can 'be whoever they want to be' and live a safe existence free from harm. There hasn't been a murder for fifteen years. Until now.

Apparently someone has found a way to kill surrogates and their parent bodies simultaneously. When two surrogates are killed, Bruce Willis launches an investigation. Eventually he is forced to abandon his surrogate and exist in the real world as himself, open to danger and death for the first time in years.

Jonathan Mostow's film continues the ongoing and seemingly limitless trend of comic book adaptations, this time bringing Robert Venditti's 2005-2006 work to the screen. The film joins the already overcrowded genre of sci-fi conspiracy thrillers, but looks vaguely like a cross between iRobot and Minority Report with a bit of the Matrix thrown in for good measure, which all sounds fairly promising, at least on paper.

Thankfully Bruce Willis, who at first appears to be following in the footsteps of Tom Hanks' Robert Langdon in the bad haircut stakes, sports a shaven head as his 'real self'.

Haircuts aside the concept is interesting and is certainly relevant in an age when the average person spends more and more time staring at a computer screen. Venditti explained when Surrogates was first published that the inspiration behind the story came from reports of people's real lives suffering as a result of their dedication to online personas. Hopefully the concept will ring true amidst the action and raise Surrogates above the level of the generic sci-fi thrillers we've had recently, Eagle Eye amongst the main offenders.





THE INVENTION OF LYING

RELEASED

September 25 (USA)

October 2 (UK)

In the alternate reality of Ricky Gervais' latest foray into the Hollywood mainstream, a project he has co-written and co-directed, everybody always tells the truth, and everybody always has. That is, until Mark (Gervais) breaks the trend and comes to realise the potential power of lies in a world where nobody can comprehend a mistruth.

This, naturally, gives rise to much deadpan honesty (read: insults) and a swathe of self-deprecating humour. That much is clear from previews, in which leading lady Jennifer Garner enjoys herself by insulting Gervais in a variety of situations.

It's a simple, high-concept film, but one that seems to suit Gervais' knack for uncomfortable, dry humour. There is a risk, of course, that film could descend into one-track comedy. Gervais is an intelligent writer, so there's no reason to assume this will happen, but there is a danger that the concept could be worn thin rather quickly if the characters aren't interesting enough to justify it.

Still, the concept itself is funny and the supporting cast, which includes new comedy go-to-guy Jonah Hill, of *Superbad* fame, are all solid. After the warm reception of David Koepp's *Ghost Town*, another success here could solidify Gervais as a reliable leading man on the silver screen, and really cement his reputation for filmmaking aside his already glowing TV credits for work on *The Office* and *Extras*.





2012

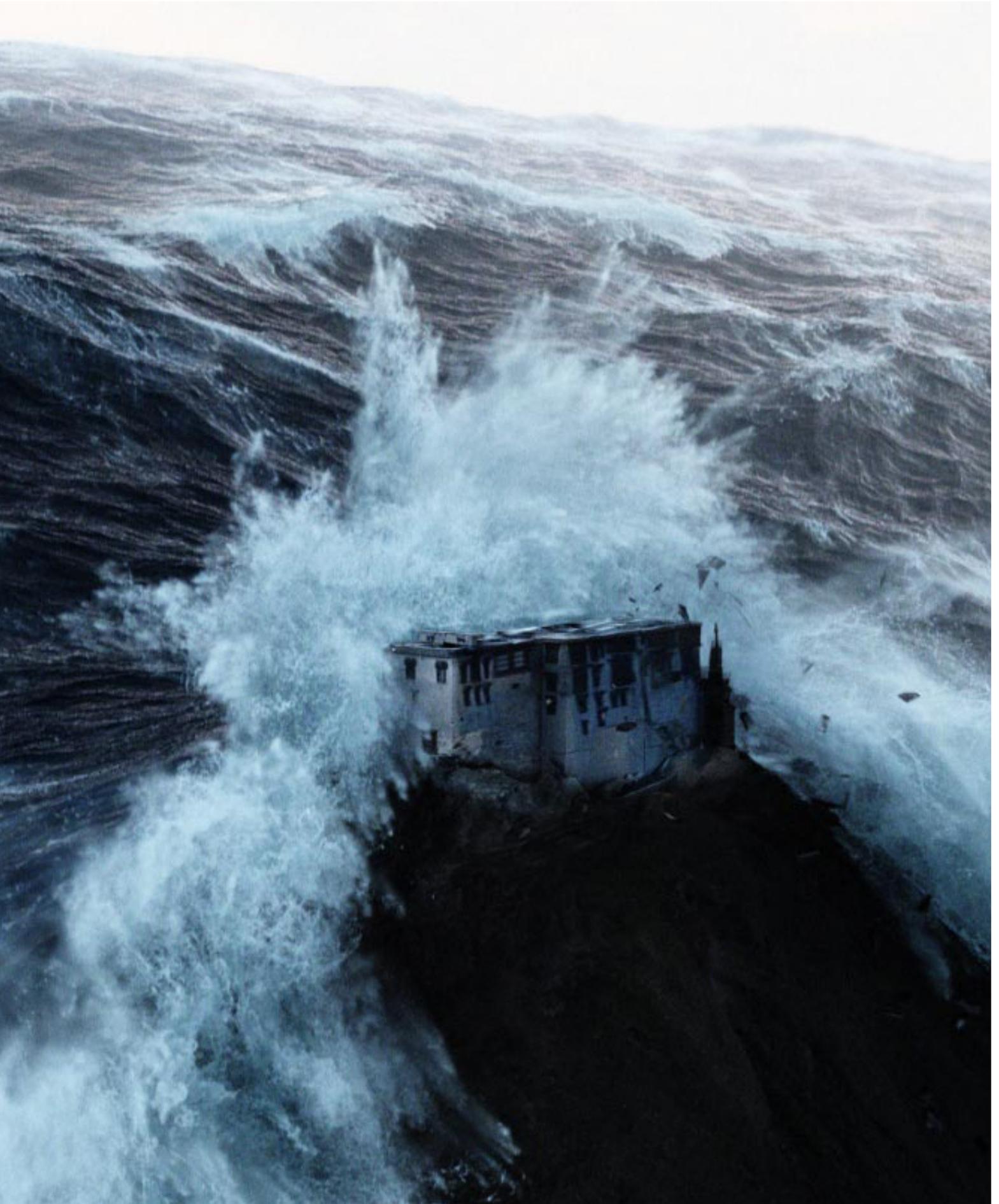
RELEASED
November 13

Should we be worried about Roland Emmerich? Surely anyone who takes such an obvious delight in obliterating humanity over and over again is worth a phone tap at least? Anyway, 2012 is coming, and sooner than you might expect, November 2009, with the usual Emmerich credentials. Massive budget? Check. Massive special effects? Check. Explosions? You bet.

A story? If you only watched the trailer you could be forgiven for being unsure. "Mankind's earliest civilization warned us this day would come" we are told, before the world gets destroyed by all manner of natural disasters. There's little in the way of dialogue. Still, we know what to expect. Global disaster; mankind struggles to survive.

John Cusack stars as Jackson Curtis, a writer whose family are caught up in the destruction. The last time Cusack starred as a writer he was wrestling with his inner demons inside a haunted hotel room in the under-appreciated 1408; this is somewhat larger in scale. Amanda Peet provides support as his ex-wife and Danny Glover is the President of the United States. 'Nuff said. Brace yourselves for the end of the world. Again.





ANTICHRIST

DIRECTED BY Lars von Trier
STARRING Willem Defoe & Charlotte Gainsbourg

RELEASED
July 24 (UK)
October 23 (USA)

Premiering at this year's Cannes Film Festival to a storm of both criticism and critical acclaim, *Antichrist* shocked the film world like very few films have ever done before. In one screening, four people fainted, and while that is pale in comparison to the 20 during a screening of 2002's *Irreversible*, given how cinematic audiences have grown increasingly hardened to graphic violence and dark and distressing scenes, *Antichrist* lay destined for infamy rather than now sitting on the brink of a worldwide release.

Vital to *Antichrist*'s success, the film is deeply rooted in reality. Set-up by a stunning, slow-motion, black and white prologue, *Antichrist* follows an unnamed couple whose son accidentally kills himself. After collapsing at the funeral, she (Gainsbourg) wakes up in hospital a month later, and while he (Defoe), a professional therapist, is in the latter stages of his grief, she is only just starting the turmoil. To help her understand and get to grips with her heart-wrenching anguish, the couple head out to their forest home, Eden, only things soon start to take a turn for the worse, not better.

At first it's very hard to know what to make of *Antichrist*. Films with shocking, here often sexual, violence are frequently made, but very few are from high profile directors and barely make a cinematic release, never mind receive so much press coverage. Some of the action is shocking to the extreme, and no doubt encompasses acts of violence or scenes of a sexual nature many won't have experienced on screen before. At least not with a serious overtone. Because of the way director Lars von Trier treats the narrative, *Antichrist* is set apart from films toting similar scenes, often classified under the 'torture porn' moniker. Certain actions no doubt bring comparison to the likes of the *Hostel* and *Saw* series, but this is a

completely different affair, and von Trier uses the scenes to shock and portray what lengths people will go to under self duress, in no way glamorising the violence.

The backbone to maintaining such a powerful overtone is von Trier's ability to create unremitting tension. While *Antichrist* isn't necessarily a scary film, it feels like it could make you jump out of your seat at any moment thanks to a simple and remarkably powerful score. Coupled with the unnerving rat-a-tat of acorns falling on the roof of the couple's forest getaway and the haunting atmosphere is complete.

Though a lot of people will not see past some of *Antichrist*'s most shocking scenes, it does in fact have a lot to say, and uses the graphic imagery to help get its messages across. Towards the end of the film, von Trier's motives slowly become apparent as the film draws to a very rounded conclusion, and has a lot to say about parenthood and modern culture's obsession with sex, although it might take a second viewing to really delve into the deeper and hidden meanings.

Despite *Antichrist*'s good intentions, however, the film will likely still be too much for large portions of cinema-going audiences. Where a mature mind might be able to understand and cope with a higher rated film on certain occasions, this is one release where the rating has to be adhered to. If the brutal violence is not too much, the overarching themes are so wickedly, and intelligently, constructed, *Antichrist* has the power to haunt a viewer for some time and is an experience not to be taken lightly.

Should the film be cut therefore, to allow for a wider audience to go see the film? Without a doubt, no. Though *Antichrist* was pitched to distributors at Cannes with "Catho-

lic" and "Protestant" versions, the former with several scenes removed and the latter uncut, to have the full effect of von Trier's vision, you really need to see the full edit. In the UK the uncut version has been passed for release, under an 18 rating, and likewise in von Trier's native Denmark, but in America it is very likely distributor IFC Films will choose the "Catholic" version, or fear the box office crippling NC-17 classification.

Aside from *Antichrist*'s shocking sequences, it can be all too easy to overlook what is a masterclass by cinematographer Anthony Dod Mantle. After winning an Oscar for his work on *Slumdog Millionaire*, this is a completely different project, and a completely different vision. From the slow-motion prologue and epilogues to the stunning forest shots, constant gloomy ambience and remarkable focal work, alongside von Trier, the pair have created a film that should most definitely be classed as a work of visual art.

With the violent scenes and cold, harsh feel to the cinematography, despite breathtaking performances by Defoe and Gainsbourg, *Antichrist* is somewhat emotionally uninvolved. You're much more of a spectator than another body in the film, but given the content, this is a blessing in disguise, and *Antichrist* would be too much if it were the other way around. For all its wonder, however, *Antichrist* is still not a film you can particularly enjoy, more an experience to admire. Upon reaching the closing credits, you'll really feel like you've achieved something by sitting through the whole film, though the rollercoaster ride might take its toll along the way. This is a film that will split audiences, some will love it, some will hate it, but all should undoubtedly concede, it is a masterpiece; cinematic art at its finest, and most shocking.

★★★★★





THE UGLY TRUTH

DIRECTED BY Robert Luketic **STARRING** Katherine Heigl, Gerald Butler, Bree Turner, Eric Winter, John Michael Higgins, Cheryl Hines & Nick Searcy

RELEASED
July 24 (USA)
August 7 (USA)

For a long while, chick-flicks have been getting a free ride. Though reviews in all magazines but *Cosmopolitan* will tell you to stay away at all costs, female audiences have been lapping up the lazy rom-coms, as time and again, troubled girl meets dreamy boy, girl either goes after the wrong boy or the relationship with dreamy boy breaks down, girl kisses dreamy boy as the credits roll. There have been very accomplished films along the way, sure, and I won't deny that for many men they remain a guilty pleasure, but the likes of *P.S. I Love You*, *Bride Wars* and *27 Dresses* really shouldn't be making the cut. And yet, as the female crowd flock back time and time again for each lifeless offering, studios will out the chick-flicks out for some time yet.

Perhaps it is a little naive to think they'll ever change, but with every new offering, I always harbour a little hope the director and writers have tried to do a little more. *(500) Days Of Summer* reinvents the genre, no doubt about it, and though it'll have a very successful long run through word of mouth, the clichéd appeal of two attractive Hollywood stars failing to admit their obvious love is guaranteed to have a much stronger, and box office top spot cementing, opening weekend.

Upon hearing the synopsis of *The Ugly Truth*, it soon became fairly

obvious this wouldn't be the film the push the boundaries and the generic chick-flick genre, but with an open mind I stepped into the world of morning TV show producer Abby (Heigl).

Forever dreaming of the perfect man, uptight and controlling Abby is struggling to find love despite her stunning good looks, messing up every potential relationship before it even gets going. To make matters worse, her TV show is struggling for ratings. In a last ditch attempt to save the morning programme, Abby is forced to take on public television rising star Mike (Butler). His show *The Ugly Truth* offers straight up relationship advice and insights on the male psyche, and his mere arrival causes a stir with Abby.

After bickering over his rudimentary views of love and lust, he bets Abby that with his advice, she can get any man she wants, and upon meeting her handsome neighbour, takes up his challenge.

Though the Hollywood glamour might lead you along the stuttering narrative, *The Ugly Truth* sadly falls a crop, once again, to the numerous chick-flick clichés. If you've seen the trailer, or the poster, you can guess the ending with some confidence, as what Heigl's latest love affair lacks, is invention. True, the clichés are more a problem with

the genre, but that doesn't excuse the film's complete lack of effort to inject even an ounce of energy, a handful of fresh ideas and a 'twist' at the end that the entire audience didn't predict upon walking into the theatre. The aforementioned *(500) Days Of Summer* proves rom-coms can go the extra mile and offer something different, showing up the *The Ugly Truth*'s plot as utterly bereft of imagination.

Unlike some chick-flicks where the easy can be relatively entertaining despite being a generally awful film, *The Ugly Truth* grows boring towards the end. The frustrating and frequently offensive views of both the male and female sex draw very few laughs as Heigl's talent showcased in *Knocked Up* deserts her.

The production values for *The Ugly Truth* are expectedly high and a decent budget certainly adds to the grandeur of the film but working with an incredibly lazy script, far from boundary breaking dialogue and a plot without any real connections to the real lives of the female audiences that will go to see it.

The Ugly Truth is a film only die-hard Heigl and chick-flick fans need worry about. And even then, you can definitely do better in the screen next door.

★☆☆☆☆



MESRINE: KILLER INSTINCT

RELEASED
August 7

DIRECTED BY Jean-François Richet **STARRING** Vincent Cassel, Ludivine Sagnier, Cécile De France, Gérard Depardieu & Michel Duchaussoy

The first of a gangster double bill directed and co-written by Jean-François Richet retelling the life of infamous French criminal Jacques Mesrine (Cassel), *Killer Instinct* is set in the 1960s before Mesrine attracting the Public Enemy No. 1 tagline, charting his rise to ascendancy the wrong side of the French law.

Picking up first during Mesrine's time with the French military where he is given the job of executing tortured prisoners, upon his return to France he soon becomes fascinated with the gangster lifestyle, engaging in low level bank robbery and murder before going on the run with his cohorts.

Played brilliantly by Vincent Cassel, whom you may remember from *Eastern Promises* and *Derailed*, Mesrine is portrayed as a brutal and menacing criminal but charming

man deep beneath, and on some level at least, Richet manages to get the audience to root for him despite his atrocious acts of violence. Almost trumping Cassel's great performance, Gérard Depardieu is right at home as Jean de Florette, a gangster a couple of rungs up the ladder who works with Mesrine on several cons.

The film is shot with a suave style, from an effortless CCTV montage in the opening scene to Godfatheresque wide-angle shots, falling somewhere between style and brawn as the action scenes slot nicely into the artistic direction.

Killer Instinct sets the foundations for Richet's second forthcoming Mesrine film, *Public Enemy No. 1*, and to complete the story, leaves it essential you catch the follow-up. As the closing credits draw in you're

greeted with a 'what happened next' for all the characters bar our titular criminal, and yet still feels satisfying enough as a sole entity, which is to Richet's credit.

Emerging as something of a homage to classic gangster films both in its native France and across the Atlantic in Hollywood, though *Mesrine: Killer Instinct* is based on a true story it does fall a crop to the usual gangster working his way up to the top clichés. Combined with a romantic side-story that comes to an interesting, though somewhat peculiar end, some of *Killer Instinct's* hard work is undone but far from the whole package, and given its breakneck pace and edge of your seat tension, is worth the investment, even if you don't bother with number 2.

★★★★★



PUBLIC ENEMIES

DIRECTED BY Michael Mann **STARRING** Johnny Depp, Christian Bale, Marion Cotillard, Channing Tatum, Stephen Dorff & Stephen Graham

RELEASED
Out now

Set in the Great Depression of 1930s America, *Public Enemies* tells the real life story of legendary bank robber, and FBI coined 'public enemy', John Dillinger (Depp). Robbing banks at will, and barely planning beyond the end of the week, Dillinger drew sympathy from the American public for his thirst for life and good treatment of any hostage momentarily taken on robberies. In the great crime wave in the 1930s, however, Dillinger became the focus of the FBI's efforts. Led by agent Melvin Purvis (Bale), Dillinger was effectively public enemy number one as the FBI attempted to stop the lawlessness in Midwest America, as it became his life's mission to at last apprehend the criminal.

Set in many of the real locations that Dillinger's remarkable life was

thrown back and forth, the high production values are as you'd expect from Michael Mann and his supreme attention to detail really pay off. *Public Enemies* immerses you in the life in the 1930s and Dillinger's fearless nature.

Oscar-winning Marion Cotillard plays as love interest Billie Frechette with the ever reliable duo of Johnny Depp and Christian Bale, producing a leading cast, backed up by the rest of Dillinger's gang, that portray their roles with great confidence and maturity, and it's especially nice to see Christian Bale in a role without his Batman voice.

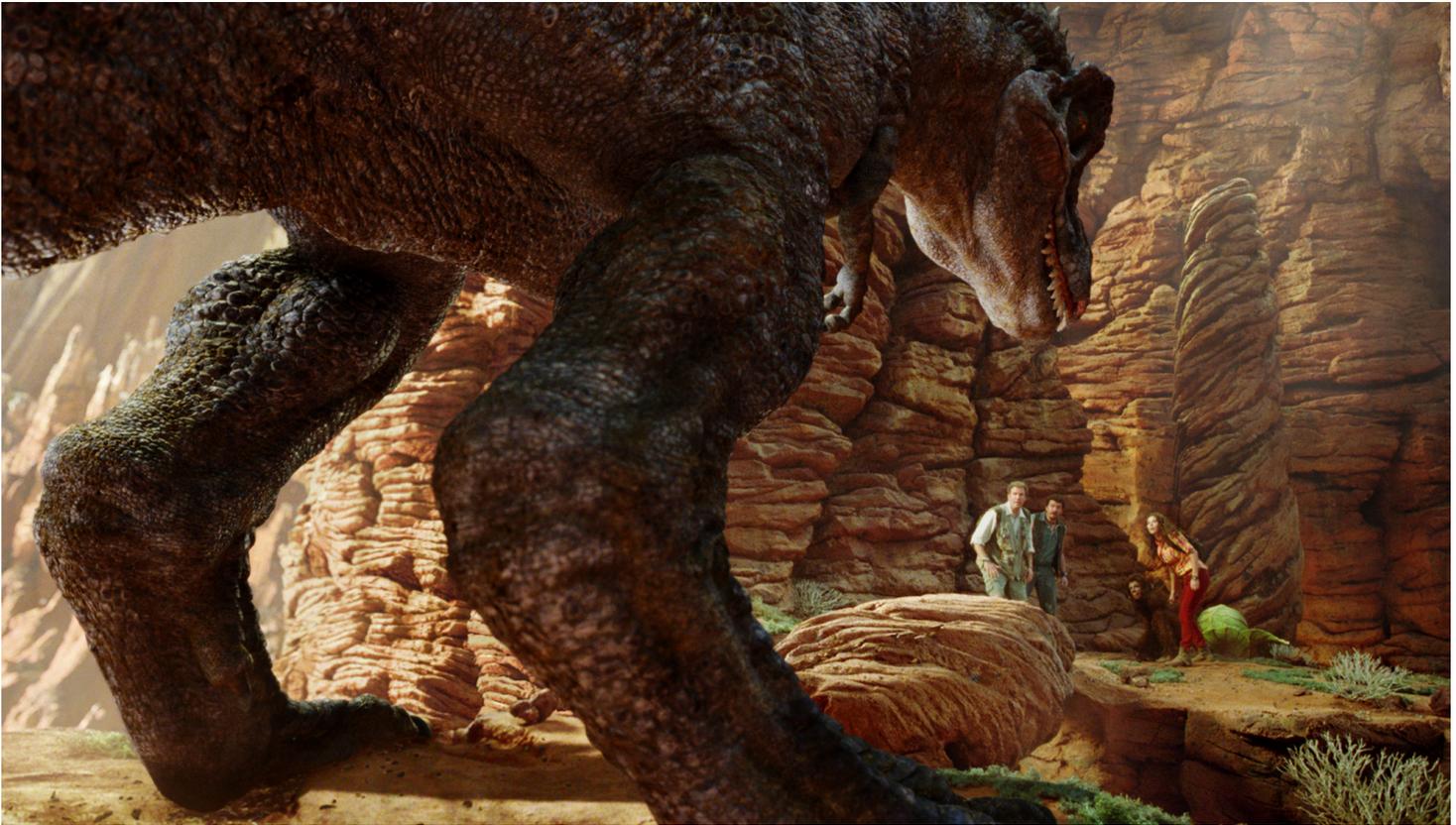
Alongside some stunning cinematography and a fitting soundtrack, with *Public Enemies*, Michael Mann should have a masterpiece on his hands, but somehow, he doesn't.

Though the film is very accomplished, it lacks the wow factor and real depth of purpose to set it apart.

Public Enemies lacks a focus and drive, despite Mann's passion for the story. The characters emerge on screen near fully formed and undergo minimal development throughout the film as you're meant to know every detail about the characters before you enter the cinema to really get the most out of it.

Perhaps the film should have cut with a quicker pacing, and it does deserve credit for creating a lovable criminal in Dillinger; *Public Enemies* is an enjoyable experience but it feels like it could have been a whole lot more and another gangster classic.

★★★★★



LAND OF THE LOST

DIRECTED BY Brad Silberling **STARRING** Will Ferrell, Anna Friel, Danny McBride, Jorma Taccone, John Boylan & Bobb'e J. Thompson

RELEASED
Out now (USA)
July 29 (UK)

Based on the 1974 television series of the same name, *Land Of The Lost* is the latest Will Ferrell vehicle to storm the film industry. Focussing on Dr. Rick Marshall (Ferrell), a once revolutionary scientist whose obsession with time warps has destroyed his reputation and career, when a fan of his work, Holly (Friel), encourages him to finish his tachyon amplifier to help them travel into a parallel universe, Rick at last makes good on a lifetime of work. Using the device at a roadside boating attraction, along with tour guide Will (McBride), they're thrown down an endless waterfall only to awake in new world filled with dinosaurs and mysterious creatures, unbeknownst in their own universe. The only problem, they need to find a way to get back.

Performing way below expectation in its native America, you can sadly see why *Land Of The Lost* struggled at the box office. Despite Will Ferrell's ever dependable performance and

quirky little asides, the script and plot are remarkably reserved as the film lacks any real sense of urgency or force.

The story starts to lose its way the moment Ferrell and co. touch down in the parallel universe. Beyond the time warp idea there's no real development to the lost souls and their adventure seems to be a lot of chasing around for no reason at all.

Worse still, while the costumes for the parallel universe races the Pakuni and the Sleestaks are an homage to the original series and intentionally unrealistic, they don't have the unabashed campy joy boasted by the TV show. Though it would have brought a different feel to the background non-human forms, as the film drags on, you can help but wonder what a difference it would have made if the costumes were more developed and refined.

Similarly the CGI finds major issues

fitting in. The T-Rex and other dinosaurs feel very much separate to the action, and while in *Transformers* the robots really feel part of the human world, here, the monstrous creatures comes across as nothing more than a bunch of moving pixels and you don't get the sense they're in the scene with the actors.

Though it might yet find a cult audience on DVD, if you pass on *Land Of The Lost* in theatres you won't be missing too much. The film feels very lethargic with gags that fall flat, caught between two audiences; adapting the childrens TV show or the big screen and an R-rated comedy for fans of Will Ferrell and Danny McBride. The intentional cheap look shouldn't have cost anywhere near the \$100m budget and with a sloppy and unimaginative script and fairly dull and drab narrative, *Land Of The Lost* could have been a whole lot more.

★★★☆☆

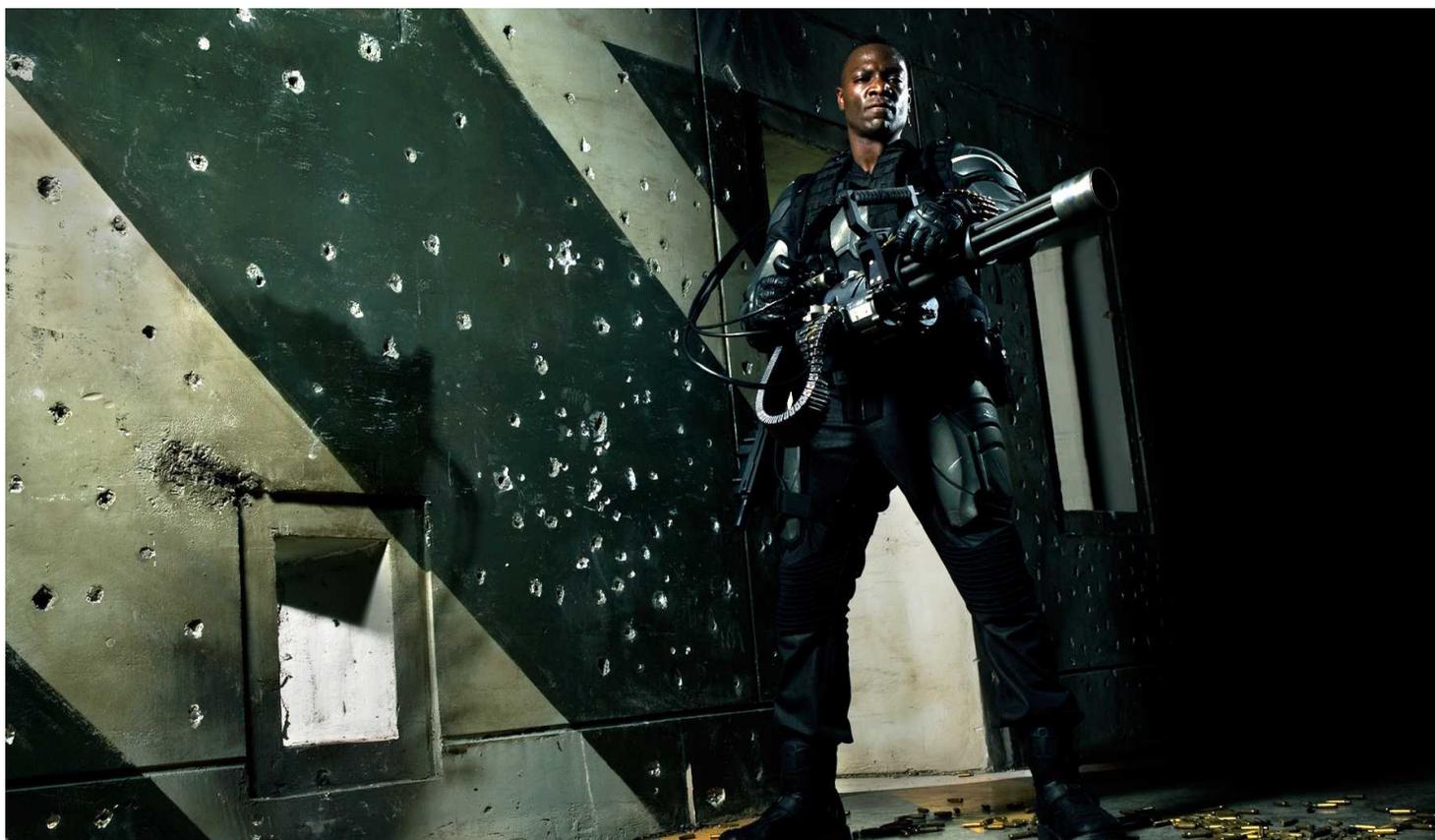
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G-FORCE

RELEASED
July 31

ADAM

RELEASED
August 7



G.I. JOE

RELEASED
August 7

A PERFECT GETAWAY

RELEASED
August 14

JUST HEAD OVER TO...
FANTHEFIREMAGAZINE.COM/BLOG



IMAGINE THAT

DIRECTED BY Karey Kirkpatrick
STARRING Eddie Murphy, Thomas Haden Church & Yara Shahidi

RELEASED
 Out now (USA)
 August 14 (UK)

Whether he's been trying to or not, Eddie Murphy has done a good job of throwing his career away for the second time in recent years. After storming onto the scene in the early 1980s with a regular role on *Saturday Night Live* and the start of the *Beverly Hills Cop* series and then re-invigorating what became a period of slack roles in the late 1990s, an Academy Award nomination for his performance in *Dreamgirls* should have been the jumping board for even greater, and more serious, success. Since then, however, Murphy has followed up 2006's Oscar awards with *Norbit*, *Meet Dave* and *Shrek The Third*, two of which push high of all-time worst ever movie lists, and the other a low-grade money making sell-out. Optimists will tell you *Imagine That* is the sweet child-friendly film to pull back waning fans, but whether their heads are in the crowds is another question all together. The concept at least, is something new.

Dropping Murphy in the shoes of investment banker Evan Danielson, whom on a similarly downward spiral, finds advice and inspiration from

the most unexpected of corners. With the help apparently magical towel and three imaginary friends, Evan is given market recommendations from his daughter (Shahidi). Working together, Evan quickly works his way up to the top of the company but when the owner declares he will be leaving, he faces a fight with scheming colleague Johnny Whitefeather (Haden Church) to fill the role.

While this is a marked improvement on his recent horror-shows, *Imagine That* is far from the film to perk up Eddie Murphy's lagging reputation. The mere concept is a little ridiculous; a children's film about finance, and though it does provide some potentially funny and entertaining moments, the promise is some way off being fulfilled.

Any banking quips will go straight over children's heads and aren't witty enough to entertain adults. Furthermore, the often slapstick comedy hardly raises a laugh, and neither does Murphy's obsession with pulling stupid faces. His performance is again is hugely disap-

pointing for a man widely regarded as being one of the best ever stand-up comedians in his heyday.

Though Thomas Haden Church is similarly frustrating in his misplayed role, young Yara Shahidi shows a lot of potential as Olivia Danielson.

To its credit, *Imagine That* does somehow orchestrate a closing sequence might pull a couple of heartstrings but that's despite raising barely a care for the characters throughout everything that went before it, and the grandeur from a remarkable \$55m budget is nowhere to be seen.

You might chuckle a couple of times, but it is literally a couple, and that's nowhere near enough humour, especially for kids. *Imagine That*, however, certainly is much better than *Meet Dave* and *Norbit*, for which you would have been easily forgiven for walking out of the cinema, but it is not a remarkable children's film by any stretch of the imagination.

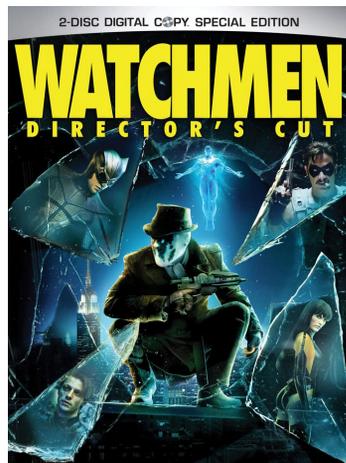
★★★☆☆



CADILLAC RECORDS

Though riddled with the usual clichés that hold back this genre, Cadillac Records is a solid biopic delving into the life of music exec. Leonard Chess and Chess Records.

Film ★★★★★
Extras ★★★★★



WATCHMEN

Overly long adaptation of the classic graphic novel, but after being branded 'unfilmable' by Terry Gilliam, Zach Snyder's offering is as good as we could have ever hoped for and hold true to the plot.

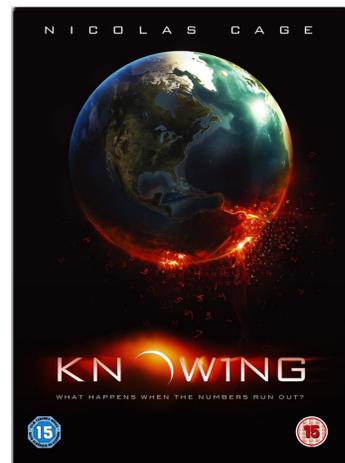
Film ★★★★★
Extras ★★★★★



ROBOT CHICKEN STAR WARS EP 2

Cult stop-motion sketch show Robot Chicken turns its attention to Star Wars for a second time, and once again with hilarious results. For both Star Wars fans and newcomers.

Film ★★★★★
Extras ★★★★★



KNOWING

Entertaining, though poorly plotted thriller that sees Nicolas Cage decipher a secret code to predict disasters across the world, until when he finishes the code, concludes the earth is soon to end.

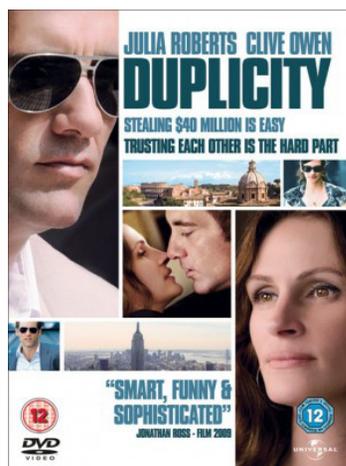
Film ★★★★★
Extras ★★★★★



HUSH

Striking low budget British horror/thriller that maintains effortless suspense until the very last moment as poster re-stocker attempts to rescue his girlfriend from her truck-driving kidnapper.

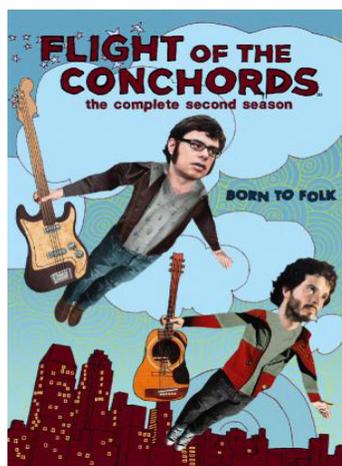
Film ★★★★★
Extras ★★★★★



DUPLICITY

Romantically tinged comedy spy-thriller as two spies attempt to con their employees and each other out of a fortune, only to forget who's conning who as Duplicity builds for a blockbuster finale.

Film ★★★★★
Extras ★★★★★



FLIGHT OF THE CONCHORDS S2

The highly anticipated second season of the all singing, all dancing comedy about a mock two-piece folk band. Very cleverly written and always superbly acted.

Film ★★★★★
Extras ★★★★★



LESBIAN VAMPIRE KILLERS

James Corden and Matthew Horne's failed attempt to break cinema, starring as outcasts who go on a backpacking trip only to be caught in a vampire infested village.

Film ★★★★★
Extras ★★★★★



Get Ready to Folk! New Zealand's fourth most popular folk parody duo **Flight Of The Conchords** are back to take on New York in the second season of their four time Emmy-nominated smash hit comedy released on DVD on 3 August by HBO Home Entertainment. To celebrate the release we are giving away 3 DVD copies of Season 2.

A must have for any music and comedy fan, the show has grown from cult to mainstream status. If you've seen the BBC4 broadcast or are a fan of the comedy stylings of The Mighty Boosh, Peep Show or Gavin and Stacey you're in for a treat. The DVD is packed with special features including outtakes, deleted scenes and several featurettes including a mini documentary on the band's pursuit of fame, Dave's Pawn Shop Commercials' and a hilarious dance clip hidden 'Easter Egg'.

Music comedy duo Jemaine Clement and Bret McKenzie return as the hapless musicians who left their native New Zealand for New York's Lower East Side in a bid for world domination. Familiar faces return including hapless manager Murray (Rhys Darby, The Boat That Rocked, Yes Man), who still works at the bare-bones New Zealand consulate, Mel (Kristen Shaal), their obsessive Super-fan and Doug (David Costabile), her long-suffering husband. There's a whole host of new, hilarious songs including 'Sugalumps': 'All these bitches checkin' out my britches/ Put 'em in a trance/ When I wear track pants' and Fashion is Danger': 'I'm larger than life with just a hint of lace'.

Over the course of the new season they resort to a variety of ridiculous and unconventional strategies in an attempt to jump-start their lives and career, working as prostitutes to pay off a reckless cup purchase, after Bret frivolously decides that they need more than one coffee cup in their apartment, starting up a gang to protect themselves from rappers they've dissed in their songs, dating an Australian – a massive taboo in New Zealand and even firing Murray who has to prove to them just why he's the man for the job. The bands efforts rarely yield dividends but do spawn new tunes about life, love and their pursuit of an elusive music video.....

To be in with a chance of winning the season 2 box set for yourself, simply answer the following question:

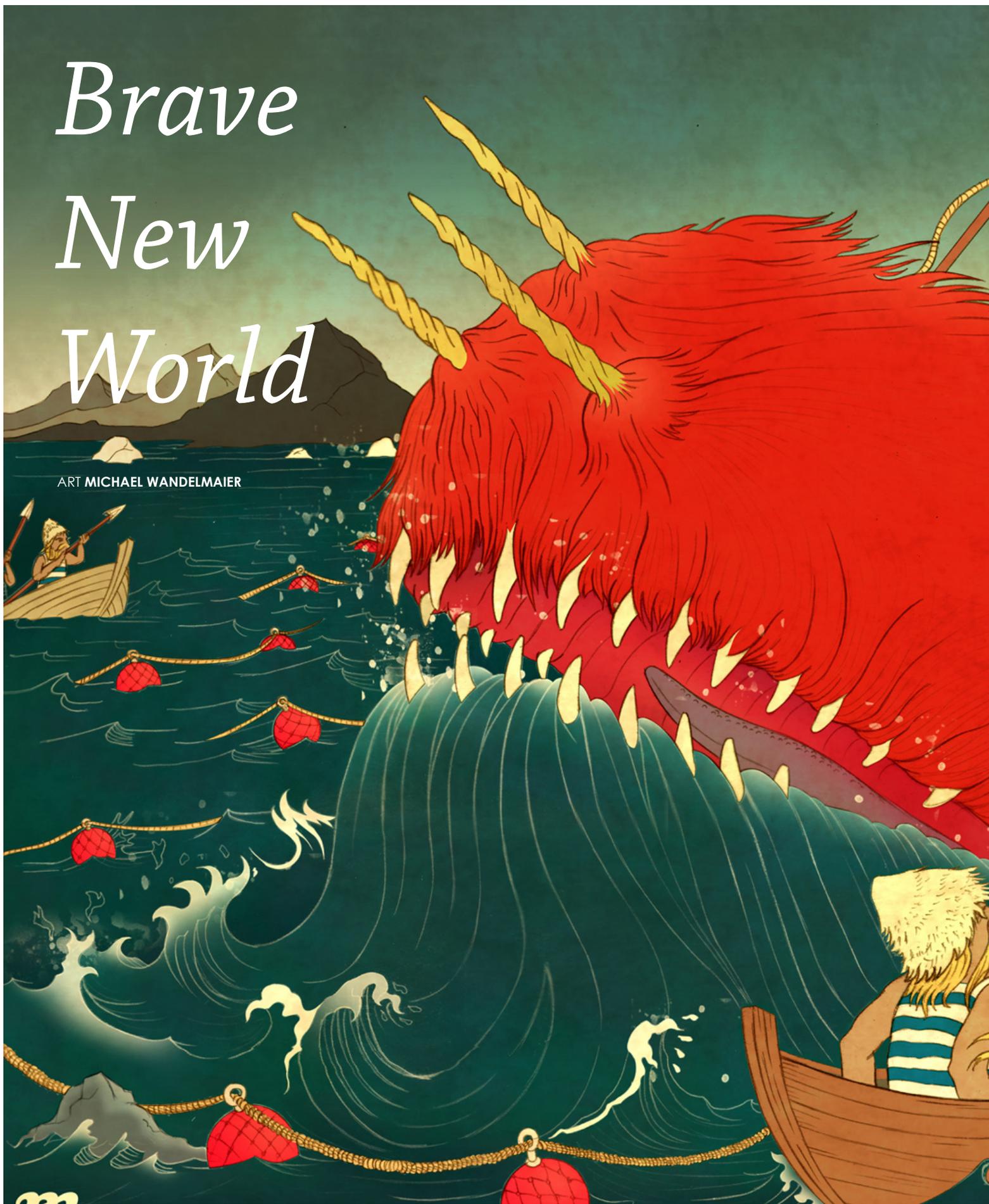
Lead characters Jemaine and Bret used to be what before becoming musicians?

A. Shepherds B. Builders C. Lawyers

Email your answer to competitions@fanthefiremagazine.com. Deadline 07/08/09.

Brave New World

ART MICHAEL WANDELMAIER













STYLE

*Somewhere
Under The
Rainbow*

PHOTOGRAPHY MARQUIS MONTES

























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