

IMPACT



Binghamton University's only arts
and media magazine

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letter from the editor

Welcome to Impact! We are so thrilled to have this publication on campus and in your hands.

Impact is unlike any other publications on campus. We're a fairly young publication - our first issue just released at the end of last semester. Thus, we aim to gradually develop our identity and niche with each coming issue and every new member and reader. We hope to be a source of information as well as entertainment for fans of art and alternative culture on campus and in the greater Binghamton area. Impact provides a new outlet for those who are passionate about culture and the arts to share their unique perspectives and inspire engaging conversations among its readers.

We're very excited about the contributions our writers have made in this issue. Allison Drexler, music director of the Pop, Rock, & Indie department of 90.5 FM WHRW, has shared with us (very humorously) some of her favorite new album releases. MGMT's new self-titled album garnered a variety of opinions, and Grant Herson and Nick Schafran have covered a few in the following pages. Also highlighted are a few films that stood out to us over the past few months, such as *Side by Side*, a documentary

on the digital film medium, analysed by Ruchi Jain and *Fruitvale Station*, a film based on the true story of Oscar Grant III, now playing at the local independent movie theatre and written about by Emily D'Emic. Nick opens up about his experiences at the screening of *Gasland II* in Binghamton's West Middle School this summer, and our "horror movie guy," Stefan Grzybowski talks about his view of *Insidious: Chapter 2*.

Be sure to check out our events calendar for a brief overlook at just some of the many things to do in Binghamton when you want to mix things up every now and then.

We look forward to growing our publication with you this year, and years to come!

Thank you for reading,
The Editorial Board
Binghamton Media Group

FILM REVIEW

If you're sick of chick-flicks and classic love stories, I feel ya. It seems like every film follows a fairly standard script. That is definitely not the case with *Adore*, a film by Anne Fontaine starring Naomi Watts and Robin Wright.

Adore is the story of two women, Lil (Watts) and Roz (Wright) who have been friends since childhood. They each have a son of the same age, and all four are close. So close, in fact, that there were times during the film I almost forgot that the women were the mothers of the boys. It seems as though every night all four of them get drunk together and make overtly sexual comments towards each other, and that's totally normal. After a weird scene in which the two women comment on how attractive their sons are and Roz's husband leaves to take a job in Sydney, each woman strikes up a sexual relationship with the other's son.

Adore is a confusing film. Not because of the plot, which is clearly easy to follow. *Adore* is a film that just doesn't know what it wants to be. Is it a teen boy's MILF fantasy? Is it a serious film about friendship? Is it trying to challenge traditional relationships, or does it play into traditional expectations of age and the taboo of cross-generational relationships? It just seems like someone took "Motherlover" too seriously.

The film is described as a drama about friendship between women, but I actually found it to debase strong female friendships. Throughout the film, Roz and Lil are called lesbians because they have a closer relationship with each other than with other men. The women also seem to not be able to let go of their youth and are very uncomfortable with the idea of their age. Instead of being empowering, I found the female characters to be depressing; they don't seem confident with themselves, they need the validation of young men, and they can't control their sexual urges. Instead of making the women seem empowered for being attractive, older, sexually

active women, it makes them seem desperate.

Adore attempts to come as close to incest as possible without actually crossing the line: the women look so similar that they could almost be sisters, and the images with the women spending time with the boys as young children stays with you as you see them engaging in sexual acts with them ten-plus years later. When Lil questions that Lil's son (Xavier Samuel) and Roz have been intimate, she says to Roz's son Tom (James Frecheville), "She's known him since he was a baby," to which Tom replies, "Then they've probably been thinking about it for quite some time." At that point, I gagged.

I have to give credit to the actors and actresses in the film though. There were certain parts of the film that were so ridiculous I couldn't help but laugh, but each actor seemed to take their part seriously. The most effective

"Adore attempts to come as close to incest as possible without actually crossing the line."

part of this film is that I now want to take a vacation to Australia. The film is gorgeous; there is no denying that. The camera work and setting is stunning. The beauty of their town even seems to taunt the characters. They can't escape from this paradise, and even in the most tragic scenes, the sun is out, mocking their pain.

The film is well made, for what it is, but the plot tries to be so many things that it doesn't work. After seeing the film, I felt like I needed to take a long shower. *Adore* is trying to be edgy, but it flops.



Adore

02

by Hallie Marks, a senior who hates ketchup and enjoys sticking it to the patriarchy

art mission presents:

fruitvale station

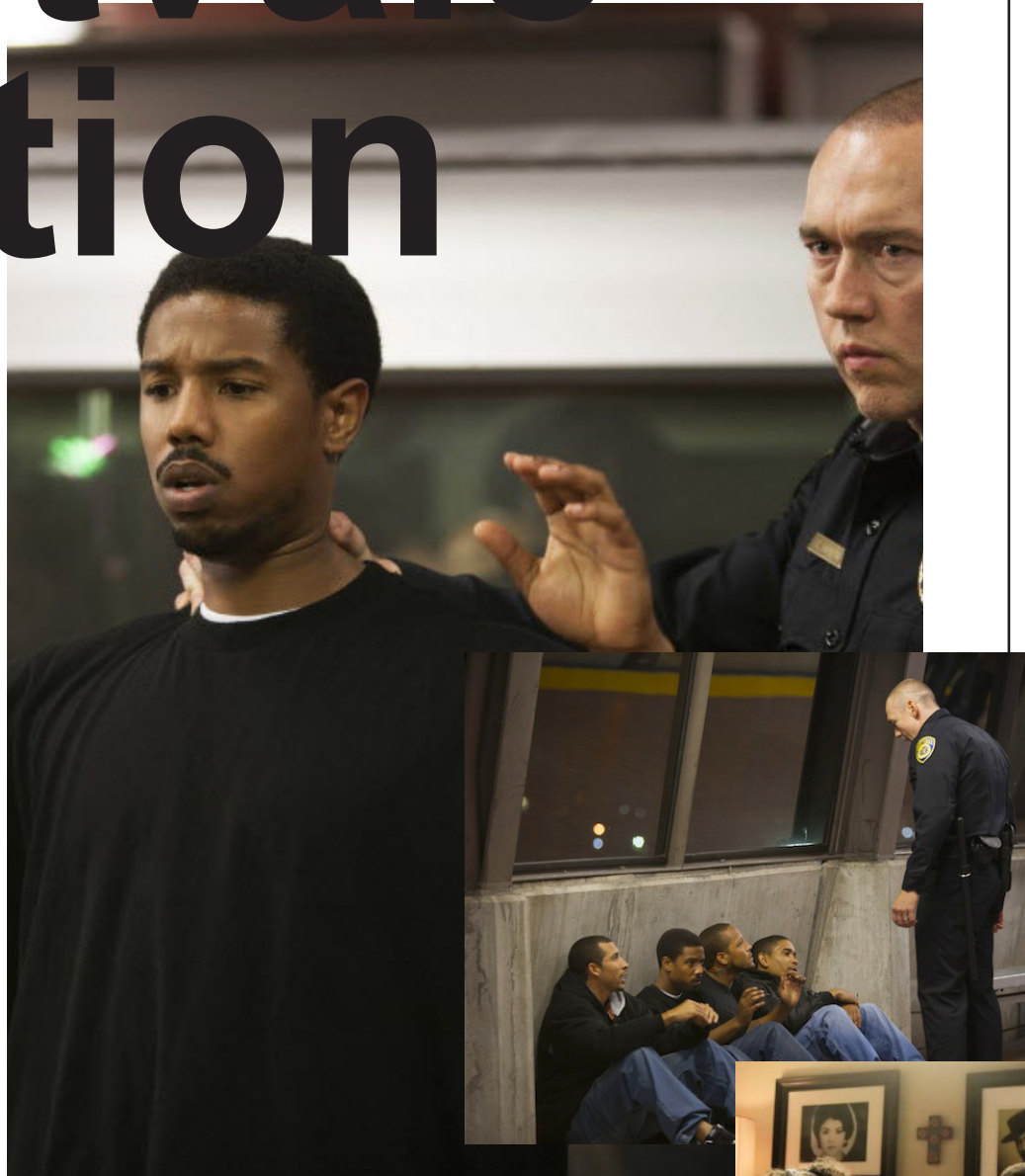
by Emily D'Emic, a sophomore who enjoys Reese's Peanut Butter Cups and crying to people about *Breaking Bad*.

Fruitvale Station, directed by Ryan Coogler and starring Michael B. Jordan, follows Oscar Grant, a 22-year-old man living in Bay Area in Oakland, California, through the day leading up to his tragic death on January 1, 2009. The film is based on the true story of Oscar Grant III, whose death sparked outrage and protests that shed light on police brutality and the prevalence of racial profiling in the police department. Grant was shot and killed by police officer Johannes Mehserle, who claimed to have mistaken his gun for a taser and was later found guilty of involuntary manslaughter. He was sentenced to two years in Los Angeles County Jail.

The film is carried by an all-star cast, with Michael B. Jordan successfully capturing the essence of a man who simply wanted to provide for his family. Melonie Diaz gives a realistically heartbreaking performance as Grant's girlfriend, while Octavia Spencer is sympathetic and inspiring as Grant's mother. The film is triumphant because, despite the fact that Grant's death is expected from the beginning, it manages to maintain a strong element of tension. Fruitvale Station depicts life as one would experience it; no dialogue is unrealistic. The film's sense of realism adds to the sense of loss at the close. Because these events actually occurred, we are forced as an audience to reconcile with the truth of a four-year-old girl losing her father, of a young life cut short as the result of senseless violence. Fruitvale Station holds a mirror to the struggles that many face in modern America, and leaves its audience with more questions than answers about the nature and extremity of racism and power in the world today.

Fruitvale Station is currently showing at the Art Mission and Theatre, located right next to the train tracks at 61 Prospect Avenue in downtown Binghamton. Besides having two theatres in which independent and foreign

films are shown every weekend, the establishment showcases the multi-medium work of many local and regional artists. The 100-year-old building was once home to a railroad hotel, and houses new exhibitions every month. Non-profit programs at the Art Mission and Theatre are funded by the United Cultural Fund of the Broome County Arts Council, as well as members and volunteers. The theatre offers the town of Binghamton an opportunity to revitalize and expand its art community and provide otherwise unknown artists with some notoriety. In particular, the space allows students the chance to experience art and culture at a low price. For more information on exhibitions and showtimes, visit www.artmission.org.





Insidious (not): Chapter 2

by Stefan Grzybowski, a freshman with a predilection for horror movies and physics.

Insidious: Chapter 2, released September, Friday the 13th, seems to have acquired some bad luck of its own. While director James Wan hit it big with *Insidious* (2011), the first installment of the series, Chapter 2 falls decidedly short of expectations.

Picking up immediately where the first left off, young Dalton Lambert (Ty Simpkins) and his father Josh (Patrick Wilson) have returned from *The Further*, a mysterious and horrifying world between worlds where demonic entities and deceased spirits reside. While Dalton may have been saved by his father, Josh himself is not nearly as lucky. As the movie progresses, it is clear that his mind and body are occupied by a malevolent being, one bent on the destruction of his family.

The longer I watched *Insidious: Chapter 2*, the more apparent it became that it was missing a certain originality that the first possessed. This, however, is a problem plaguing the entire horror movie genre. Due to the fact that horror movies rely on shocking plot twists and overbearing feelings of the “unknown,” the only way that a

series will continue impressing viewers is if it provides these dramatic elements in a fresh way.

Unfortunately, the monotonous plot of this movie was unable to deliver. Its monotony appears to be a consequence of the writer (Leigh Whannell) attempting to pull off the same scares with substantially less original material – going to the extreme of using many of the same scenes exactly as they were shown in the first movie. A perfect example of this is the declaration that shocked the audience in the first *Insidious* series that unsurprisingly failed to have the same effect in the second: “It’s not the house that is haunted. It’s your son.” The overlap between the two movies seemed at times to lessen the feeling of dread that the first movie conveyed so easily. While it can be argued that Chapter 2 has a more complex plot, the heart of that plot revolves around unnecessary and cumbersome ideas resulting in the sense that the actors themselves were not at ease in their roles.

The scenes that did utilize new material, however, were often spoiled by the inclusion of cheesy

and excessive comic relief. Now, don’t get me wrong, comic relief does wonders to the nervous system after a particularly horrifying and intense scene, so long as it’s used sporadically with some welcome unpredictability. However, a character in Chapter 2 bursts through a door at an extremely inopportune time, undermining the preceding scene, causing the viewer to question whether the movie as a whole should be taken seriously or not. As for the positive: one aspect of *Insidious: Chapter 2* that I was happy to see, or rather hear, repeated was the score composed by Joseph Bishara. This musical composition arguably saved the movie as it was the cause of why many of the scares worked as the writer intended them to. The rapid crescendos and glissandos worked very well with the unearthly theme present throughout the series.

Although flawed, *Insidious: Chapter 2* is certainly scary, and while unable to live up to its predecessor, is at its heart a good sequel to an even better movie.



The Value of Celluloid Film

in the Age of Advanced Digital Technologies

BY RUCHI JAIN, WHO GOT TO 54 FOLLOWERS ON TWITTER WHILE REALLY TRYING -@RuchiJizzle

Produced and narrated by Keanu Reeves, *Side By Side* delves deep into the history of digital film and its impact on the film industry. Told through a series of interviews with famous film directors, such as Danny Boyle, James Cameron, and Christopher Nolan, as well as their lesser recognized counterparts: the cinematographers, themselves, the movie reveals that the history surrounding digital film is still being made. The movie fanatic is in for a treat as this documentary looks into the creativity permitted by the digital age from the perspective of these brilliant filmmakers, themselves.

Reeves asks every question and concern about celluloid versus digital film. Which one looks better? Will film still be around in ten or fifteen years? Will you as a director still use film? How will digital films be stored without decay? If everyone is a movie director, how do you tell which movies are actually good?

The drawbacks to photochemical film are obvious. "It doesn't have any snap. It's shaky, it's dirty," says Steven Soderbergh. "I hate it." The

first part of the documentary looks at the process of shooting a movie in celluloid, which involves the changing of magazines every ten minutes and waiting overnight to see the "dailies" the next day and making decisions on how to proceed (or go back to square one). Directors such as, George Lucas and James Cameron, obviously had something to gain from digital (*Star Wars Episode II: Attack of the Clones* was the first feature film to be shot completely in HiDef video) based on the depth, breadth, and scope of their movies (DBS). Traditional directors such as Martin Scorsese embraced it. And directors such as David Lynch and Danny Boyle claim there is no need for them to go back to photochemical. Nolan was a surprisingly aggressive opponent of digital film though seemingly he would benefit the most from high def technologies considering the DBS of his action flicks. The *Dark Knight* series was shot in 35 and 70mm in addition to IMAX cameras. It doesn't take a trained eye to notice the graininess, light imbalances, or ratio changes, of Nolan's movies when viewed on

the enormous IMAX screens, so why would he still stand behind film? Nolan and many other directors and cinematographers in *Side by Side* claim that the sacrifice of resolution and the overall look obtained through celluloid film (which is still unique in that respect), for the sake of convenience will never be worth it. But there's more to their story than that.

The first video cameras and SD camcorders made filmmaking less costly, essentially overthrowing the wealthy producers' hegemony over the industry as shown by the rapid growth of independent movies and their award-winning creators. The idea is anyone and everyone can make a film now ("Fuck film school," says Lars Von Trier) and you can view it from anywhere. Indeed, when you open up the floor to everyone, you are likely to get plenty of amateurish productions, but we agree that masterpieces are also born amongst them. The way by which we internalize film will also change, creating a new and exciting way to share stories, which is after all the end result of every movie.



MGMT by MGMT

MGMT takes an unsurprising trippy turn with their new album

BY GRANT HERSON

It would certainly appear to the casual listener that MGMT had it all and threw it away. Back in 2008, their debut album *Oracular Spectacular* took not only the indie music scene by storm, but the music world in general as well. The album received massive radio play with tracks that still get plays to this day, such as “Kids,” “Time to Pretend,” and “Electric Feel.” The band even landed a Grammy nomination for Best New Artist. This naturally left fans wanting to see what the band would bring to the table next.

In the band’s 2009 follow-up album *Congratulations*, MGMT ditched the normal pop-oriented songs/structures that had filled *Oracular Spectacular*. They went instead with something that can be described as far more acid-based, new wave, Pet Sounds-esque surf rock. This dramatic change in sound left many “fans” confused and disappointed. Though personally, I prefer *Congratulations* to *Oracular Spectacular*. I feel like the album is much more cohesive and consistent than its predecessor. The album also demands you listen to it all the way through, which may have played a role in the disappointment amongst casual fans. But even though *Congratulations* was not an album everyone loved, there is still a decent amount of hype surrounding their third self-titled album.

On this third self-titled album, MGMT are diving in to even weirder and more experimental sides than ever before. Upon my first listen of the album, I felt how many fans had felt listening to *Congratulations* for the first time - confused

and a little underwhelmed. But there was something about it that kept me coming back for more listens, and I’m happy that I did because it is a pretty decent album and a step in the right direction.

One of the biggest downfalls of the album is that it feels pretty top heavy. Personally I feel that the first five songs (“Alien Days” through “Your Life Is a Lie”) are the best and by far the most interesting. The first five songs really have a spacey old-school psychedelic vibe to them, and flows nicely from track to track.

The standouts of the first five tracks may stand out as some of MGMT’s best work to date. Songs like “Alien Days,” “Cool Song No.2,” and “Introspection” definitely make the album worth a listen alone. The standout track for me would be “Cool Song No.2.” The song sounds like nothing MGMT has ever done before; it features almost tribal drums and bizarre/sporadic synth lines that echo Aphex Twin (which MGMT cited as one of their inspirations for this album). And the lyrics on this thing stand as some of their trippiest lyricism to date for the band. “Whenever scientists turn lead to birds, torment ignites essence; delights from the earth” is a far leap from “The youth is starting to change.”

“Your Life is a Lie” serves a great separator for the first half of the album from the back half. The song features enough quirky lyrics and cowbell to satisfy Bruce Dickinson. But from there on, MGMT ups the weird and experimental songwriting, and this is where the album kind of lost me. Songs

like “A Good Sadness,” “Astro-Mancy,” and “An Orphan of Fortune” just don’t really do it for me. Those songs feel really too experimental for their own good and are forgettable. That’s not saying the whole back half is as underwhelming as those three songs. Probably one of my favorite songs off the album (which will probably be most people’s least favorite) “I Love You Too, Death” plays out as almost spoken-word piece or beat poetry, which reminded me of a less explosive version of “Banshee-Beat” by Animal Collective. The song features many different layers of synths and loops that really gel well with the lyrics. The song “Plenty of Girls in the Sea” is another quirky noteworthy song in the same vein as “Your Life is Lie” or even “Some Girls are Bigger than Others” by The Smiths (in the lyrics). The problem is that the song is on the latter half and feels out of place compared to the other tracks that seem to take themselves more seriously.

With this latest release MGMT has yet again proved that they will not be defined by their “hits.” While the album as a whole is rather inconsistent in its overall sound, songwriting, and song placement, there are definitely enough tracks on here to make it worth your listen and serves as a step in the right direction for the band. The album is far more experimental than the previous two which will undoubtedly divided listeners, and may make it difficult for the casual listener to get into. But for those who are willing give this album a couple of listens may find it to be a quite rewarding grower.

Music You Should Be Listening to If You Aren't Already Listening to It

By Allison Drexler, a soulless Ginger Goth straight out of the plains of Bohemia. Also a junior studying Art History and Political Science, but whatever.

King Krule – 6 Feet Beneath the Moon

I. Love. This. Album. I cannot stress how great this album is. King Krule, AKA Archy Marshall is a tall, scrawny 19-year old from England with more soul than most old dudes could ever dream of having. People always say that people with red hair don't have soul and that's because this red headed darkwave god took it all. His songs are dark, raw, and slightly depressing, so if that's your type of jam, then this is for you. TRACKS TO JAM TO: Easy Easy, Neptunes Estate, Out Getting Ribs

Arcade Fire – Reflektor

IT'S ARCADE FIRE. ARCADE. FIRE. If you aren't already familiar with Arcade Fire then you should drop everything you're doing and listen to them. Their new album, Reflektor, isn't even out yet, but their first single off the album, Reflektor, IS AMAZING AND LISTEN TO IT NOW. Two words: David. Bowie. DAVID BOWIE IS ON THIS SONG. If a new Arcade Fire single wasn't enticing enough, then David Bowie should be reason enough to get grooving to this jam. This song is probably one of my favorite Arcade Fire releases to date, so I've got high hopes for this album. Considering it's Arcade Fire, I don't expect to be disappointed.

Majical Cloudz – Impersonator

Majical Cloudz are a Canadian duo with a strong penchant for being super depressing, but it's okay because it sounds pretty. The emotions are strong on this one, with really meaningful and straight up beautiful songs. The singer, Devon Welsh sounds like he is pouring everything he has into his voice, and his synth man Matthew Otto, AKA second guy in Majical Cloudz really knows how to compliment his voice. TRACKS TO JAM TO: Childhood's End, Turns Turns Turns, Bugs Don't Buzz

Earl Sweatshirt – Doris

I'm just going to put this out there now and say that Earl Sweatshirt is the best thing out of Odd Future. Like this kid is super talented and I love this album. He's like King Krule in the fact they are both 19 and great lyricists but otherwise there is nothing in common there at all. Just listen to this album. All of it. Like stop whatever you are doing right now, it's probably not important anyway and listen to it. It's good, I swear on Ezra Koenig. TRACKS TO JAM TO: Sunday, Hive, Chum

Mount Kimbie – Cold Spring Fault Less Youth

Mount Kimbie consists of two fellas straight out of England. Guys, this album is super great. You can groove to it at a party or listen to it while studying. It's good vibes for all occasions. It also features King Krule on two tracks, you know, the dude I mentioned like 5 times in this article already. Every song on this album is great. I enjoy all the beats. TRACKS TO JAM TO: You Took Your Time, Made To Stray, Meter, Pale, Tone

Arctic Monkeys – AM

This album is really good, so good in fact, that I'm not annoyed by the fact that out of the twelve songs on this album, three songs are questions. Do I Wanna Know?, R U Mine?, and Why'd You Only Call Me When You're High? are all questions that the album never answers but it's okay because the songs are just so good. Like really good. Like super good. Do I Wanna Know? has surely become my favorite Arctic Monkeys song and there are a lot of Arctic Monkeys songs. That's how good this album is. Listen to it and you might just suck it and see that this is a great album. TRACKS TO JAM TO: Do I Wanna Know?, R U Mine?, Fireside, Why'd You Only Call Me When You're High?

gasland 2

Gasland II broadens the perspective the first introduced on hydrofracking, an issue presently crucial to Binghamton.

BY NICHOLAS SCHAFRAN, A BOY WITH A NEW HAIRCUT

This past summer I went down to Binghamton's West Middle School for a screening of Gasland II. Josh Fox had been screening the documentary in towns where hydrofracking is a prominent issue, including Binghamton, before the film aired on HBO (it was also first premiered in the Tribeca Film Festival). This was actually the second time director Josh Fox came to town - the first being for the original's release in 2010. The event began with all associated organizations - Citizen Action of NY, Save the Southern Tier, NYPIRG, and many more - acknowledged. After the two hour documentary was shown, a very emotionally charged Q & A session went on for 90 minutes, with a surprisingly large amount of dissenting opinions aired.

The film itself summarized many of the points made in the first documentary quickly, while primarily serving as an appraisal of the state of the fight against hydrofracking. Interestingly enough, it seemed as if the movie had taken on a more global sense of the issue than its predecessor. While the first Gasland focused more on the actual phenomena - lighting tap water on fire, encroaching oil companies, contaminated water - this time, the issues behind the phenomena are addressed more thoroughly, as are solutions.

One of the main issues explored in the first movie, the exclusion of hydrofracking from Safe Drinking Water Act, is revisited with a heavy focus. As we follow Fox through his investigations and hearings, it becomes increasingly evident that this is the key bit of legislation that, by creating a loophole that allows oil companies to not disclose what chemicals they are putting in the ground, inhibits residents from knowing what toxins they might be exposed to until after they are exposed. People in the movie are shown to have bloody noses, animals are reported dead, the ever present flammable tap water is displayed - and only after these problems is the cause exposed. An issue yet unresolved, this is one of Fox's main points.

Naturally, the first place to look for a solution is the agency established to be protect against environmental harms. The EPA is once again looked at from a complicated angle in this documentary series. Repeatedly pointed to is a report of their which revealed that up to 1/20 fracking wells in some areas were prone to giving in at the concrete, and exposing hydrofracking

fluids to the water supply. While Gasland II does not villainize the workers in the EPA or the organization itself, the agency's shortcomings and false promises are highlighted. At one point, a representative from the EPA tells Fox that they are going to fight for change. The narrative of the movie then explored how they've publicly told residents of Pennsylvania towns that their water is safe, and then lower level employees inform residents "off record" that they should continue to not drink the water.

My personal favorite part of the movie (and a favorite of the audience as a whole at the screening - a lasting applause followed) was when a man whom Fox was interviewing put forth the idea that hydrofracking is just one part of the arena of new unchecked corporate power. All the after effects of what are essentially neo-liberal policies have brought about great harms to the lower class, and changed society. However, in the issue of corporate interests vs. the environment, upper middle class people (privileged, comfortable, but not near the 1%) are only now feeling the effects at an equal weight as are the working poor and other groups commonly disproportionately affected by corporate power. This is a real turning point in the narrative, and something that really piqued my interest in the mission of the movie. Connecting this one issue to a decades-long tradition of corporate powers consuming a democratic interest is something that is often overlooked. The widespread activism and rallying around this issue is great, but it is not a standalone issue, but rather tied to a whole host of corporate interests affecting different portions of society. Perhaps for good reason, as there is plenty of science that needs to be looked into further, but to me, this is practically the most important point made in the film. Fox, in his Q&A remarks, made reference to the idea that science isn't determined by policy or the White House, and yet that is how we seem to legislate. This issue is a big indicator of that sad truth.

That's not to say we weren't reacquainted with our friends in the places visited in the first movie. However, we again watch them be faced with predictable lack of success in the face of big oil and corporate interests; as in Dish, Texas, where even the Mayor is moving out because of hydrofracking.

After the movie, I watched a Q&A session

unlike any I had ever seen at a documentary screening. A man claiming to be from Dimock, PA (one of the focal points of the film) loudly expressed his opinion that the flammable, contaminated drinking water exposed in the film was not the case for "95% of people" in Dimmock. Shouting down the host and Mr. Fox, the man faced a strong backlash from the crowd as he angrily expressed his view. Fox's response was a metaphor which made use of the EPA's 1/20 figure, likening it to an insurance company protecting you from a 1/20 odds of death from standing on a trafficked road. Not particularly liking this answer, the man stormed back to his seat, where he was met by a very eager reporter.

Another dissenting opinion was brought forth by a man who appeared to be both blaming the

"[...] this time, the issues behind the phenomena are addressed more thoroughly, as are solutions."

crowd for their lack of widespread solar and wind usage, but also claiming it would not be a feasible alternative. He too, got heated, and Fox's response was to point to a startup he was working with to help build communal solar panels to feed energy to community and not just individuals, as well as wind energy along coasts. On this latter point, he made a reasonable proposition, that these wind solutions would help offset the harms caused by hurricanes like Sandy on the Jersey coast.

All in all, it was a pretty interesting event, and welcomed recognition of Binghamton by such a large project. There was a big turnout of both unaffiliated citizens and grassroots style organizations (as well as not so grassroots organizations - the Sierra Club was even represented) handing out fliers and calling you to rallies. Whatever your opinion on the matter, the movie is at the very least a good jump-off to discussions on this very important issue.

For the past 5 years or so, MGMT has been almost inescapable to those paying attention to popular music. The duo has been in the headlines for breakthrough pop singles, music video antics, sporadic live performances, perceived genre shifts, and generally for acting weird. Now they're back, releasing their third major label album, MGMT, on September 17th. Thusly, they are back on the music websites, and the same tired tropes about major labels, experimental vs. accessible music, and other tired generalizations are coming out. My introduction to the group was, as was with many, hearing "Time to Pretend" on the radio. They quickly became the sort of group that could clearly be filed under 'radio-friendly' or accessible, but still had something of an 'alternative' aura around them (sort of how the major labels and music industry are trying to convince you bands like Foster the People and Passion Pit are now). The difference between those groups and MGMT is that, at least for me, MGMT actually did have something about them that suggested something beyond the surface, something that shows they were obsessive music fans, and not just your standard fare major-label holdings.

I first heard their second album when it came out in 2010, a gift from a relative who had been told that I was a Weezer fan who had recently inherited his father's turntable. The Limited Edition double LP release had a scratch off cover and a special coin to do the job with. That cover, along with Sonic Boom's (of Spaceman 3, and Congratulations producer) offbeat liner notes, set the stage for an equally strange yet melodic album. Duration times swung between 2 minutes and over 10, with electronic sitars and layers and layers of reverb, obscure references, and the time honored tradition of musicians who don't surf, but write about surfing.

A few months later, I got the opportunity to go to SNL on the day they were on. Later in the year, I got the chance to see them perform live at a music festival. I suspect that their heavy touring of the festival circuit created the same situation for many concertgoers – an almost unintentional following of the group.

Records like Weezer's Pinkerton and Radiohead's Kid A were seen as bands using their new leeway from a major label following a

smash hit to let loose in the studio, and create a more adventurous album, maybe even a response to their overwhelming success. These clichés make it easy for music journalists to write the same thing over and over again. Everyone rushed to apply that tired cliché to MGMT. However, looking back now, it doesn't seem like such a paint-by-numbers situation (if that even ever existed).

A recent Pitchfork review of MGMT's latest seems to suggest that they are, in actuality, pop singles musicians trying their hardest to convince you that they are actually weird, and thus, interesting. Really, I think that's farthest from the truth. Benjamin Goldwasser and Andrew VanWyngarden don't really seem to be trying to be anything that they aren't; interviews with the duo have revealed that the group abandoned the type of songwriting exemplified by Oracular Spectacular's singles in their teenage days, and everything they've released since shows a logical progression for a band who listen to Aphex Twin, Brian Eno, and Television Personalities.

If Pitchfork (or anyone brushing MGMT off as the band that made "Electric Feel") had been told "I Love You Too, Death" was created by someone on the Not Not Fun roster, there would've been an instant recognition of their "sonic experiments."

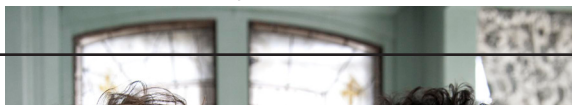
MGMT is not one of my favorite bands, and I am not usually the type to defend the band that's aping the catalogues of my favorite small labels on Columbia, but I think Benjamin Goldwasser and Andrew VanWyngarden aren't the typical major label tripe pushed out in front of the masses with almost no relationship to a real movement left, but can have the same place on Columbia that a Van Dyke Parks had on Warner Brothers.



MGMT: not the band you're supposed to think they are

09

by *Nicholas Schafran*



Professor Louie & The Crowmatrix will be headlining at the Cyber Café West on October 4.

This five time Grammy-nominated, Woodstock-based, Americana band has roots in blues, rock, and folk that come together to form a sound highly reminiscent the famed Canadian classic rock group The Band. This is no surprise however, as they first got together when preparing songs for Aaron "Professor Louie" Hurwitz's studio productions for The Band. Since 2001, the group has been recording and touring extensively across the globe, and has acted as the backing band for famed recording artists such as Rick Danko and Garth Hudson, both former members of the Band, as well as Michael Falzarano, of New Riders of the Purple Sage fame. As inductees of the South Canadian Blues Society Hall of Fame, as well as the International Blues Hall of Fame, the group is sure to lay down a solid groove that will delight any fans of The Last Waltz.

The group is named for front man Aaron "Professor Louie" Hurwitz, a skilled organist, keyboardist, accordionist, and vocalist with a

prolific career as a producer that first brought the band together. Professor Louie's haunting vocals and crisply hit notes tie the sound of the band together, notably in the eponymous single from their quintuple Grammy nominated album Whispering Pines. These vocals would not be nearly as powerful, however, without the harmonizing of Marie "Miss Marie" Spinosa, who is also a vocalist, pianist, and percussionist. Though less of an "in your face" stage presence, Miss Marie contributes greatly to the multi-layered sound the band is known for, in addition to her co-writing of many of the songs.

Much of the band's power comes from the "less is more" attitude embodied by drummer Gary Burke. Burke's long and storied career has taken him from the Radio City Music Hall Orchestra, to over a decade spent working on countless gold, platinum, and Grammy award winning records with Joe Jackson, in addition to working with artists such as Bob Dylan and Graham Parker. Burke's 30+ years of experience help center the group, with his laid back drumming allowing the other instruments to shine whilst presenting

the perfect counterpoint. Rounding out the veteran rhythm section is bassist Frank Campbell, whose experience playing with former members of The Band, Rick Danko, and Levon Helm throughout the 70's and early 80's has given him over three decades to perfect his sound for the style of music performed by Professor Louie & The Crowmatrix.

The least experienced member of the band is guitarist Josh Colow, yet given his status as a globally touring musician, both with his 90's band TiPiCal and as a solo act, this says more about the experience about his fellow band members than it does about him. Having spent the past 20 years working with famous Blues artists such as Livingston Taylor, Artie Traum, and Muddy Waters has clearly influenced his style of guitar playing that can effortlessly go from crisp, clean chords to distorted guitar licks.

Professor Louie & The Crowmatrix will be performing at the Cyber Café West, located at 176 Main Street in Binghamton, on October 4 at 9PM.

BY BRIAN KERINS



Professor Louie and the Crowmatrix

Brings the "Spirit of Woodstock" to Binghamton

Wild Nothing



AT BINGHAMTONU

BY MELISSA NEIRA

After a fun filled day of rides, snacks, and getting to know campus clubs and organizations, Binghamton's 20th University Fest came to a close at the fountain with a live indie performance. Sponsored by Binghamton Underground Music Presents (BUMP), Wild Nothing was set to perform on stage at 6:00pm. Student band Strange Appeal opened for Wild Nothing and gathered a crowd around the stage and fountain. After a few technical difficulties, Wild Nothing came on stage sans keyboard. The band's front man, Jack Tatum, explained that they had left a vital cable at home and therefore were not going to be able to use the keyboard that evening. Despite the setback, the band brought out their energy and opened with the song "Shadow" off of their most recent album, Nocturne.

The sun started to set behind the stage and backlit the band in the most wonderful way. The band moved on to "Confirmation," a track off of their debut album, Gemini. More students gathered around the stage to watch the band perform.

In between playing songs off of their many EPs and albums, the band stopped to thank everyone who was there and to apologize again for their missing keyboard. Tatum expressed his frustration at the lack of keyboard throughout the evening, but honestly, I don't think anyone would have noticed had they not said anything. I've been a fan of Wild Nothing for years and I did not notice a big difference between their performance and their recorded material.

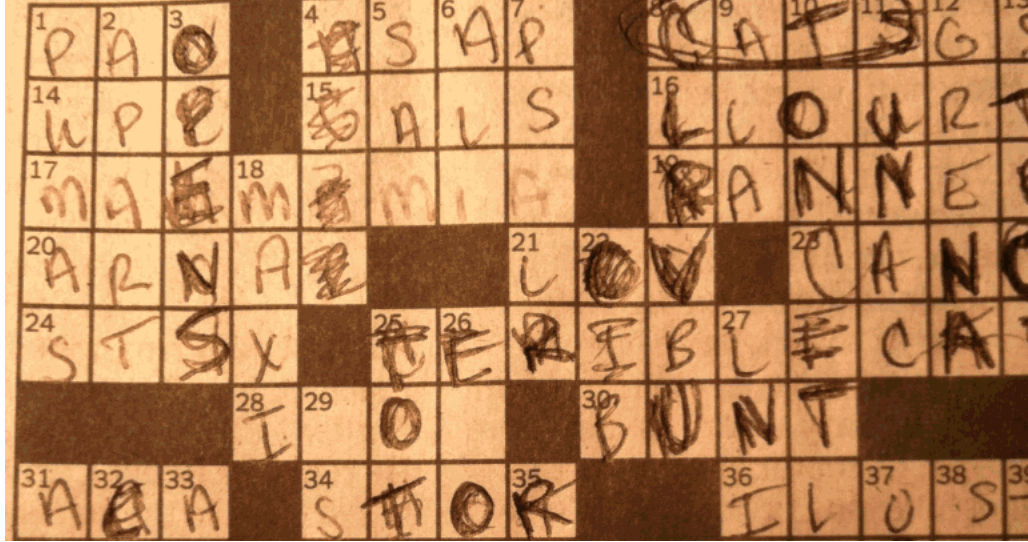
Wild Nothing's set consisted mostly of songs off their most recent album, including tracks like "Only Heather," "Nocturne," "Paradise," "This Chain Won't Break," "Counting Days," and "Rheya." Other standout songs that were preformed were "Live in Dreams," "Summer Holiday," and "Gemini."

The set closed with one of Wild Nothing's newest songs, "Ride," off of their new EP, Empty Estate. The band poured all of their vigor into the last song and the crowd definitely responded in a positive manner. It still was not enough because although Wild Nothing's performance

was great by all means, front man Jack Tatum announced that they were going to have to cut their performance short because the band felt they could not do their music justice without a keyboard.

So off they went, cutting their set in half—leaving the crowd in confusion and disappointment. I can understand the frustration of not having your music sound perfect, but it did not justify ending so early. There were many things that Wild Nothing could have done instead of ending early, they could have covered other artists' songs, interacted with the audience, or just jammed on stage. I'm sure these things could have easily been done to fulfill the contract signed with the school.

Wild Nothing put on a great show, but their reluctance to continue their set really left me unsatisfied. I will continue to enjoy Wild Nothing's music, but I will think twice if I get the chance to see them live again.



arbitrary arguments

the case for crosswords

COLLEEN STAPLETON

Fitting words together can only be likened to godliness. People who don't like crosswords are **WRONG**. As your nostrils flare in desperation, a clue catches your eye; the stars twinkle overhead as you scream, "Aha! **ANDRE** Agassi!"

Crosswords can be found in the **NEWSPAPER**. One can find current art-news bites next to that beloved **NET** of blank spaces and black holes. This is a good thing. Being informed is good. Your source for **CROSSWORDS** on campus are none other than **SODEXO DINING HALLS**. Dining halls are bad. More on this at a later date.

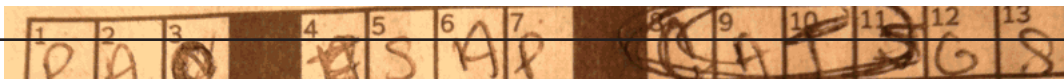
The New York Times newspaper on campus is **FREE**. This is an asset. Get ready to introduce yourself to **MR(S). CROSSWORD LADY-MAN**, your new friend at 10 a.m., 3 p.m., most definitely 11 p.m., and sometimes even 1 a.m. Which days of the week are best for crosswords, you ask? Mondays are by far the **EASIEST**

days to complete our beloved task. If **Tuesdays** are looking a little empty for you, and you enjoy eating **CORNDOGS**, this may be the correct day. **Wednesday** may find you rummaging for **BISCOTTI** in your closet; crosswords can only ease your **BURDEN**. I would recommend **AVOIDING** Thursdays all together, as crosswords become rancid and melty on this particular day. If you're going to be tasting wine or devouring **QUINOA** on Friday, by all means put on your **FISHERMAN'S SWEATER** and get right down to it (on the floor).

Bach, **MIDNIGHT MOOD**, and **Belle and Sebastian** are all industrious choices for the ears while scribbling away at that flimsy old newspaper lying across your lap. One could also listen to **WHRW**, Binghamton's one and only **FREE FORMAT RADIO**. Freedom is good. Many individuals prefer crossword puzzles to many other things. My grandmother

loves completing crosswords on a **DAILY BASIS**. **Cameron Diaz** and **Uma Thurman** complete crosswords **SOMETIMES**. **Diaz** and **Thurman** were unavailable for comment during the writing of this segment. An anonymous source, the author's beloved roommate **KATEY**, has offered this grade-A evidence of the benefits inevitably associated with crosswords: "I don't do them a lot, but I think they're **GOOD FOR YOUR BRAIN**".

Should crosswords be completed in **PEN** or in **PENCIL**? This question is an existential puzzle in itself. Are you willing to support the permanence of your legacy? Is your being affirmed with the risk inherent in the **EDUCATED GUESS**? Is time erasable?? Pens are the only answer. Pens are good. Permanence is good. **CROSSWORDS ARE GOOD**.



the vital calendar

by Malt Whitman, who has fallen into the river one too many times.

Night

Restaurant Week: This goes first on the list because it's the most time-sensitive! And just so wonderful! Binghamton RW is now! And ends on the 26th! Go now! While you can! You will not regret it! Oh god, I'm salivating just thinking about it now. Go to binghamtonrestaurantweek.com for menus and more info. And pictures. Oh god the pictures.

First Friday: The first Friday of every month, the Gorgeous Washing Street Association brings us big art in a little city. Eat too much cheese and drink too much wine as you gallery hop, as entry to every place is free! So be sure to check out as many galleries you can, as each has a different vibe, from loud places with blasting music to classy affairs where string quartets play as you peruse. And if you don't feel like walking from gallery to gallery? Take the free First Friday Trolley Tour!

Cyber Café West: This place has food, beer, and good vibes. Drop by on Monday nights and grab a drink to go with your burger as you play Monday Night Trivia with your pals against some of Binghamton's brightest. But be prepared to lose if I'm there!

Belmar: This divey bar has some of the cheapest drinks you will find in Binghamton, and one of the best stocked jukeboxes I've ever encountered. Dance to Nina Simone and Jack White as I drink my \$2 PBR? Yes, please! And yes, they have good drinks too. And come on Tuesday nights for Taco Tuesdays, where tacos are 50 cents! And they have vegetarian tacos too!

Galaxy Brewing Co. & Water Street Brewing Co.: Both of these places opened relatively recently. Water Street has been extremely popular this past year, and Galaxy opened up a few weeks ago by a local father and son brewing team who rebuilt and revitalized a former flood-wrecked building! You can get some sizes of craft beers for \$5, which is great for nights you want to sit back and relax with good drinks and good friends.

Broadway Sunday at Tranquil: Every Sunday night, this French bistro converts into a fabulous 'theatre' in which Broadway fans sing and dance along to their favorite musicals with fruity cocktails.

The Rocky Horror Picture Show: The last Saturday of every month, the Vestal Violators act out RHPS in front of the film at the Cinema Saver! Audience participation is strongly encouraged! Be prepared to have a bizarre, but undoubtedly fun, night.

Music

BUMP: Dear God, thank you for giving us Binghamton Underground Music Present. They are literally the greatest thing. Because of them, amazing acts like Atlas Sound, Real Estate, Titus Andronicus, and other great live shows have come to our town. Friend them on Facebook to find out about their events! I hear Sad Vaginas of Death may be playing in the near future.

Cyber Café West: Every night, other than Trivia Mondays, you can find both local bands and bands traveling through playing at Cyber. Drop by to hear small acts, you may discover your favorite local band!

State Theatre of Ithaca: Big artists generally don't come through to Binghamton, unless it's at the university. But luckily for us, the State Theatre of Ithaca is less than an hour away! I even got to see one of my favorites, Jeff Mangum, perform there! Acts that are coming through soon are Built to Spill, Michael Franti & Spearhead, Phillip Glass, and Ladysmith Black Mambazo (Mean Girls, anyone?).

Small venues/galleries: So these places can have artists you will not find elsewhere. I'm talking small-town and experimental. You may ask, where is this place? Well, it varies! Warehouses, basements, these shows can be anywhere. You may ask, how will I know about them? Impact will post about them as we learn about them in our calendars, both in our issues and on our website.

Day

Art Mission: As described in further detail in Emily's article, the Art Mission features some of the best current indie and foreign films, and its lobby also serves as a showcase for local art. Make it a night with their Food & Film Series, in which they present a food tasting from a great local restaurant, a professor lecturer introducing the film, and of course a film that has impacted the industry in a major way.

Cinema Saver: For when you want to watch a cheap movie, there is literally no better place than the Cinema Saver. Watch movies a month after their original release date, only for \$2! They also have all of the standard movie concessions at very reasonable prices.

Carousels: Binghamton is the Carousel Capital of the World! Local businessman and benefactor George Johnson donated six antique wood-carved carousels to the greater Binghamton area at the beginning of the twentieth century. His condition? That they be free to ride for everyone! Ride all six and get a "I Rode the Carousel Circuit" pin!

Ross Park Zoo: There's a real live bearcat! And other cute pals as well. One of the famous Binghamton carousels are also located here. All they ask is that you throw out a piece of litter to ride.

State Parks: Binghamton is near some of the most beautiful parks. Chenango Valley, Ostiningo State Park, IBM Glen, Buttermilk Falls. Open a map and just go.

Museums: Our local museums hold really cool events that you would not have normally been able to experience. The Bundy Museum, for example, is holding a Rod Serling Symposium, a Drum Circle, a Victorian Tea Party, and many other events these next several months. The Roberson Museum is holding a Mad Men Soiree, an Outdoor Film Series, and Nights Under the Stars in the upcoming months. Some of these events are free!

Restaurant Week: Seriously. Go.

humans of binghamton



**“Patriotism, it’s
pretty cool.” -**

**Anthony
DeGelorm**

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