

Review: Spielberg's "Lincoln" fascinating and entertaining

By AVA GRUCHACZ

Steven Spielberg's new film, *Lincoln*, was astonishing to say the least. The movie captured the 4-month time period before Abraham Lincoln's tragic death in 1865. Daniel Day Lewis' tall lanky figure, gray black hair and beard, and wrinkled face came together to form the perfect image of Abraham Lincoln.

The film begins shortly after Lincoln's reelection, with a scene showing him engaging with both white and black Union soldiers. At this time one can see the friendliness of Lincoln, a theme which remains throughout the film.

The majority of the movie takes place in Washington where the political battle

over the 13th Amendment was fought. Lincoln and his cabinet find members of the opposing party and attempt to convince them to vote for the amendment that will set the slaves free.

One of the triumphs of the film is the personal bond the viewer begins to form with Lincoln as the film progresses. Between seeing his relationship with his overly emotional and psychotic wife Mary (played by Sally Field) and his relationship with his two sons, viewers really begin to feel like they are getting to know Lincoln on a personal level.

Director Steven Spielberg does a phenomenal job of creating tension as the voting

day for the amendment approaches, miraculously creating a feeling of doubt, even though viewers already know what will happen. When the results are in and the news of the 13th amendment is announced, the happiness on Lincoln's face is genuine enough to make the viewer smile too.

As the film comes to an end, Lincoln leaves his late night meeting with his cabinet and is escorted to Ford's Theater where he meets his tragic fate, which is a heart wrenching ending to the film. The new historical film about Lincoln's battle over the 13th amendment is both fascinating and extremely entertaining.

4/5 stars



Movie poster for "Lincoln"

Courtesy of iMDB

Social Studies, Green Day, Ke\$ha release new albums

By MARCY PEDZWATER

In the past month, Social Studies, Green Day, and Ke\$ha have released new albums. On Nov. 13, 2012, Social Studies released its new album "Developer" and Green Day released its new album "¡Dos!" the second album in a three part series. On Dec. 4, 2012, Ke\$ha released her second studio album, "Warrior."

"Developer"

One of the most exciting things about writing music reviews is getting to sift through bands, trying to find lesser known bands to review. However, this month, I learned that there are good reasons why some bands aren't well known.

Social Studies is one of those bands. Their album, "Developer" does nothing to stand out among the thousands of other bands in the process of producing albums.

The lead vocals are impressive; Natalia Rogovin has a powerful voice with incredible range from low raspy vocals in songs like "Think of the Sea," and higher falsettos in songs like "Western Addition".

However, strong vocals just aren't enough. The music overpowers her voice, detracting from it instead of supporting it. The instrumentation is a little too heavy for the vocals; the songs use a lot of synthesizers and electronic sounds, which smother the vocals.

Each song blurs into the next with little distinction, making it even harder to find something to redeem the album. Social Studies has huge potential with its raw talents,

but to truly stand out as a band, they need to regroup and take a different direction.

3.5/5

"¡Dos!"

Green Day's new album ¡Dos! was, utterly unimpressive. There was something inherently annoying about this album.

It's hard to articulate exactly what it is, but it doesn't change the fact that my eye twitched a little bit as I listened to this album.

The theme of the album is fairly reminiscent of a pop music ode to partying, but what made this album so frustrating was the band's pretense of being above it all, while buying into it at the same time.

Other than this, the album just isn't spectacular. There's no song that clearly stands out as the triumph of the album.

Admittedly, the instrumentation is fun to listen to, there's some diversity in the guitar on the album and some great melodies and harmonies.

However, the drums in almost every song had the same swing pattern, making the songs seem more similar than they actually were. Ultimately, the album was distasteful and undistinguished.

2/5 stars

"Warrior"

Ke\$ha's new album accomplished what it set out to do and it actually surpassed my expectations in some regards. Of course, the album had plenty of the practically

mandatory catchy pop songs, perfect for playing at dances or jamming out to in the car.

The first song, "warrior" is particularly catchy, and it is practically impossible not to tap a foot along with it. However, the album was surprisingly versatile for a pop album. The song "Dirty Love" had a sort of rock anthem feel to it and was actually quite good.

The song "Wonderland" was probably as raw as Ke\$ha will ever get, which may not be saying much, but is still a nice change of pace.

The autotune, while still present, was not quite as prevalent as it is in most of her songs, and the song took a slower tempo than most of her



Courtesy of RCA

songs.

Another song similar to this was "Past Lives" which was also a slower song that stripped down a lot of the heavy instrumentation, giving the song a melancholy feel.

Even among the pop songs each of the tracks was distinguishable from the next. The album was pleasantly multifaceted, making it one of the better album releases of season.

4/5 stars

David Sedaris incites laughter through wit and eccentricity

By JORDAN HARRISON

David Sedaris, a humorist and writer hailing from Raleigh, North Carolina, performed some of his new work at the Durham Performing Arts Center on October 26.

He told stories about the ups and downs of getting a colonoscopy, finding human remains from the 1400s in a taxidermist's shop while attempting to buy a stuffed owl for his boyfriend, Hugh, and other eccentric encounters.

Sedaris made me laugh until my sides ached, although I would not advise bringing children to his shows—he includes a lot of language and adult content.

His humor can be rather crude, but his bizarre, unique experiences make him absolutely hilarious. Even when he's telling a story that could've happened to anyone, he makes little observations about how we interact with others that ring true.

For instance, never tell people that you're interested in something, such as owls, or else everyone you know will buy you owl-themed gifts for the rest of your life.

Sedaris is also a thoughtful performer. He took a few minutes out of his show to recommend a book by a fellow author, and came out to talk to the audience afterwards.

The only downside to the performance was that Sedaris's brother, Paul, played pranks on him as an introduction, which was somewhat out of place and confusing to people unfamiliar with Sedaris's work.

He also told a few stand-alone jokes, whereas I feel he is at his funniest when sharing anecdotes about his life.

Computer Science instructor John Morrison was also in attendance and has been a long-time Sedaris fan.

"His humor is scatological, somewhat tasteless, and very enjoyable," said Morrison. "I like his black humor about the dysfunctionality of his very bizarre family, and what gives it real bite is that his family really was dysfunctional—his father was a raging drunk... and it gives it a degree of genuineness."

Sedaris has written several books, including *Me Talk Pretty One Day*, *Dress Your Family in Corduroy and Denim*, and *When You Are Engulfed in Flames*.

He also appears frequently on National Public Radio's *This American Life*. I would highly recommend reading or listening to his earlier works, especially his "Santaland Diaries", in which he recounts the tale of working as a Macy's elf and muses about family, consumerism, and Christmas.

4/5 stars.