

Romero's fifth 'Dead' movie just part of zombie horde

BY BRYAN REED
DIVERSIONS EDITOR

In 1968, George A. Romero turned zombies from ambling, carnivorous corpses into vehicles for sharp social commentary with the classic "Night of the Living Dead."

He did it again 10 years later with the critical hit, "Dawn of the Dead" (not to be confused with Zack Snyder's dumbed-down remake).

And throughout the resurrections of his "Dead" series (now in its fifth installment with "Diary of the Dead"), Romero's eye on society has never been far from the foreground.

But as he's gotten older, Romero's knack for subtlety has waned — not that a zombie movie is ever really subtle, what with all the gut-munching ghouls and the splattered brains and such.

The largely first-person "Diary of the Dead" finds the father of the undead taking stabs at media saturation and the social voyeurism made possible by the Internet.

But all he really has to say is that the mainstream media is generally up to no good, and (as per usual) humanity is doomed.

Worse yet, the comments are so surface-level and so obvious that they fail to make much of an impression.

Romero's more subtle remarks, such as those targeted at American xenophobia — the first zombies we see are an immigrant family, and as such "foreigners" are blamed for the plague — are expertly weaved into the storyline. The writer/director

MOVIE REVIEW
DIARY OF THE DEAD



ator at his finest.

And the central characters show a range of emotions and reactions to the catastrophe, allowing the film to make ample explorations of people's responses to chaos.

Really, the zombies take a backseat in "Diary," and the film is better for it.

And that's not to say the audience that typically enjoys zombie flicks won't be satisfied, either.

There's plenty of undead carnage, and Romero's still got a twisted imagination when it comes to killing off the walking corpses — let's just say medieval weaponry comes into play.

But for all its virtues, "Diary" is still heavy-handed where it counts. Romero's still mad, and his vision of humanity is as bleak as ever, but the movie suffers for his unwillingness to let the viewers make their own interpretations.

It's just sad to know that for all its superficial awesomeness, "Diary" is just one more piece of evidence that Romero will never make another "Dawn of the Dead."

For his whole career, he's been asking "Are we really worth saving?" It didn't need to actually be written into the dialogue.

Contact the Diversions Editor at dive@unc.edu.

Bon Iver: Sound of wonderful solitude

BY JAMIE WILLIAMS
ASSISTANT DIVERSIONS EDITOR

Winter is an introspective season. So it makes sense that the nine songs collected on Justin Vernon's debut as Bon Iver, *For Emma, Forever Ago*, were recorded during a four-month period alone in his hunting cabin in the cold Wisconsin winter.

The desolation is evident, the solitude palpable. Lyrical meditation gives way to ambience, inspiring as much emotion as any couplet ever could.

But the lyrics that are present convey the sense of loneliness that permeates the record, grabbing your heart and lighting a fire to warm your cold hands.

The effect is immediate when he sings, "Go find another lover to bring a ... to string along."

Vernon uses his lonely guitar to stitch up his own heart, torn and broken by years of memories.

For Emma, Forever Ago is what happens when a man is left alone to think, to remember all he left behind and to muse on his regrets.

Combining natural imagery with enough hints of the world Vernon left, Bon Iver is able to mold a sense of longing and regret — all while remaining hopeful.

There is beauty in his wordplay, catharsis in his minimalism and joy in the moments on the record where he expands, putting emphasis in all the right

MUSIC REVIEW

BON IVER
FOR EMMA, FOREVER AGO
FOLK



See The Show

Time: 9:30 p.m., Monday
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places, letting you know where you stand.

Nowhere is this more evident than on the record's standout, "Skinny Love."

It's as if he builds everything to this point before letting loose all he has left on the chorus, seemingly directed at a lost love.

"I told you to be balanced/I told you to be kind/Now all your love is wasted?/Then who the hell was I?"

It's these lines that sum up the record — a beautiful reflection of lonely self-discovery, an emotional meditation that wraps its arms around you on the first listen, serving as a blanket to warm you in the cold and shelter you from life's harshest winters.

Contact the Diversions Editor at dive@unc.edu.

Monochrome memoir brings story dimension

BY CATHERINE WILLIAMS
STAFF WRITER

If the comic book is the new direction for the adult novel, then "Persepolis" is surely the new direction for the animated feature.

The film is based on co-director Marjane Satrapi's celebrated graphic novel, her illustrated memoir about growing up in Iran at the time of the Islamic Revolution.

The film adaptation already has racked up quite a bit of recognition, beginning with a Jury Prize at Cannes and now an Academy Award nomination for best animated film.

Marji — voiced by Chiara Mastroianni and Gabrielle Lopes — first witnesses revolution through her surroundings in chaotic Tehran and through the stories told by her family and neighbors.

She and her family attempt to lead mostly normal lives, even as turmoil and censorship invade every aspect of their lives.

When war reaches her doorstep, her parents (Catherine Deneuve and Simon Abkarian) send her to live in Austria.

Marji's story is told in fragmented vignettes, as it is in the book, but solid transitions and a notable soundtrack form a strong foundation that binds the anecdotes together.

The animation technique is unusual, contributing greatly to

MOVIE REVIEW
PERSEPOLIS



the film's poignancy.

Black-and-white drawings move across the screen, mimicking Satrapi's illustrations and bringing a sense of daydream or make-believe, working well alongside long-standing images of animation and comics as juvenile genres.

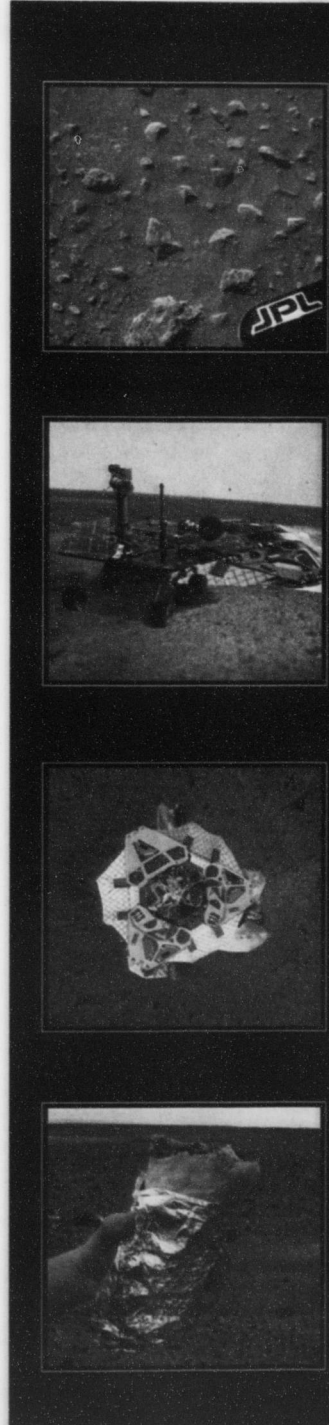
The figures appear almost as paper cutouts, moving like political cartoons-turned-puppets. And the grayscale palette provides a diorama effect that makes the film as theatrical as it is cinematic.

Satrapi and co-director Vincent Paronnaud succeed in making the film a culturally and historically rich experience for an adult audience. Following in the graphic novel tradition, the film's silhouettes allow for the treatment of difficult topics.

Beneath the political and international history of "Persepolis" is a strong personal and family story, one that is portrayed brilliantly through Satrapi's storytelling and through the film's unique animation.

Contact the Diversions Editor at dive@unc.edu.

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- Lewis Black

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