

## FILM REVIEW

# Avengers flies to new heights; could go farther

Joseph Shen  
Senior Reviewer

AVENGERS: AGE OF ULTRON IS THE NEXT FILM IN the new wave of Marvel Entertainment films released in the last few years, and is, once again, another adaptation of their comic book stories into action on the silver screen. It is sometimes funny and sometimes serious, but it manages to balance the two well to create an atmosphere that is both welcoming for newcomers while still satisfying the die-hard “stay-up-all-night-on-the-comment-threads” fans.

As someone who has seen most, but not all, of the related Marvel films but hasn't read the comics, *Age of Ultron* presents itself as somewhat of a multi-faceted movie. Its slapstick humor—sometimes inserted into the middle of intense battle scenes—helps keep the atmosphere light and fun, in stark contrast to many of the recent films produced by DC Comics universe. References to previous films and comics abound, though some characters are not specifically named. Occasionally, the dearth of context clues or explicit exposition left me wondering what was going on, especially as someone who is unfamiliar with the newer characters.

The film starts off in the woods of Slovakia, where the Avengers—still as we saw them in the last movie, which took place three years previous—are raiding a Hydra outpost to retrieve the scepter which Loki wielded in the previous *Avengers* film. It is during this fight that we are introduced to two new characters—Quicksilver and the Scarlet Witch, portrayed by Aaron Taylor-Johnson and Elizabeth Olsen, respectively, who start to give the Avengers trouble.

After they successfully retrieve the scepter, billionaire genius Tony Stark, again excellently portrayed by Robert Downey Jr., discovers and utilizes an artificial intelligence in the scepter to create his “Ultron” global defense initiative program.

Predictably, this goes wrong.

The team then must chase down and save the world from the rogue AI, Ultron, whose belief of the only way to evolve is to destroy humanity, and by extension, the Avengers. Their journey takes them from Seoul to South Africa and explores intrapersonal and internal conflicts that threaten to tear the team apart. James Spader delivers a distinguished performance as the voice of Ultron with his self-aggrandizing, villain-type dialogue.

The film's 141-minute runtime gives director Joss Whedon enough time to explore not just the main plot, but also the backstory of the lesser-known characters—helped along by some hallucinatory brain-meddling—as well as throwing in a sprinkling of romance.

This isn't to say *Avengers: Age of Ultron* is without its faults, however. To the end, Ultron's motivations remain unclear, other than “destroy-the-world-because-people-are-bad,” which, at this point, has become an overused trope. By extension, the



Courtesy of Marvel Studios

**AVENGERS: AGE OF ULTRON TAKES** place years after the previous movie. The Avengers must chase down and save the world from the rogue AI, Ultron, whose belief for evolution is to destroy humanity. Though there are faults in the movie, this movie is a fitting sequel to the previous film.

underlying premise of the movie becomes rather stale, when viewed from afar. The special effects, while mostly on-par with most films these days, is spotty at times, with fairly glaring usages of CGI pulling the viewer out of the film. The movie itself, without the context of the other Marvel films, would likely be difficult for non-fans to understand, and offers little closure, instead ending with “The Avengers will return.” In addition, the entire part where Thor, portrayed by Chris Hemsworth, journeys into a pool of water which somehow causes him to realize how to solve a number of issues had me confused.

Despite these faults, it is clear that public opinion remains strongly in favor of these movies. *Age of Ultron* grossed \$191.3 million in its opening weekend, just shy of the No. 1 \$207.4 million record set by its older brother, the original *Avengers* film, in 2012. On this movie, they aren't wrong; this film is definitely a good one—it manages to cater to both die-hard and new fans, as well as shucking the increasingly “grimdark” direction that Hollywood has been taking with its recent films.

In the end, *Avengers: Age of Ultron* is a fitting sequel to the previous film, and a good culmination and integration of all of the preceding films of the franchise. I know I will be looking forward to Whedon's next Marvel.

Geoffrey Rosenthal  
Senior Reviewer

I THINK FOR MANY, INCLUDING MYSELF, this film was a no brainer. It's the new Avengers film, it's going to be cool, it's going to be funny, it's going to be entertaining. I think people are very much used to the good in the Marvel movies, so I think I'll focus a little more on the bad of the film.

First, this movie felt CGI heavy to a level I was not accustomed to compared to the other films in the series. Going from Loki as a villain to the completely computer-made robot that is Ultron was a bit jarring, and when you see the set pieces as well, you'll understand why I feel the way I do. Going off of Ultron, his transition from good to bad was almost instantaneous, and I felt like a fair amount of the film was rushed to the detriment to the main characters. I felt as though Ultron and none of the main Avengers sans Hawkeye got significant screen time.

In contrast to this lack of screen time for main characters and the main villain, I thought the film was awfully nice to the new inclusions: Quicksilver, Scarlet Witch, and the Vision. While I feel like they were good inclusions and made for some awesome scenes, I feel

like most of these characters have been throwaway heroes that come in for their small spotlight in later films. Case in point; Warmachine and Falcon in this film. I don't mind a larger repertoire of heroes, but an Avengers B team kind of sucks when it is constantly being compared to the all-star original team. The only good character focus I enjoyed was establishing Hawkeye as a member of the Avengers. While Hawkeye has either been a cameo villain in Thor or an actual villain-turned-hero in the first Avengers, it was nice to see Hawkeye not only as the glue the team of gods needs to stick together, but also as the mentor for the new heroes.

I won't have to tell you how cool the movie is, or how awesome it was when Hulk/Thor/Scarlet Witch/Not Black Widow blew up a thing while doing a flip onto another thing, yadda yadda yadda. It's certainly entertaining, but extremely underwhelming. The entirety of the film feels like a one-off without anything really important happening. Even the post credits scene was disappointing, and everything just seems like a set up for the next wave of films before the next Avengers. This film feels like Marvel is slowly creeping in new heroes to distract the fans from how far they are trying to stretch out the Thanos arc, and while it's not bad now, I'm scared this will become a feature in the upcoming Marvel Cinematic Universe films.

Joseph's  
rating:  
7/10

Geoff's  
rating:  
7/10

## Concert: MSMR lights up night at ECAV Arena

From **Page 10**

artist of Bell's Roar, sang passionately and interacted with the crowd. Her remix of “Slow” moved the crowd and sounded much better with more people and a bigger venue; I enjoyed her act much more this time around.

The next act was Titanics, composed of duo keyboardist and vocalist Mark Lombardo and guitarist Derek Rogers. Titanics was a much more mellow act. If I were at the library, working on homework or relaxing in my room, they would probably be the band I'd listen to. However, when I go to concerts, I'm looking for high energy performances and music with an upbeat rhythm and full sound. As a result, Titanics's chillwave and dream rock influences did not appeal to me. However, the band did put on an interesting light show, displaying contrasting cool and warm colors during their performance.

MSMR. Wow. A stark contrast to the previous opening band, MSMR jumped on stage full of vigor. Immediately, all the attendees in the venue moved towards the band in response to the energy they discharged. Their latest single,

**“Monday is January, Friday is December.  
The calendar means nothing,  
when you can't remember who you are.”**

– “Painted” by MSMR

“Painted,” contains fast moving percussion and a catchy hook; as one of the first songs performed, it set the tone for the night. Vocalist Lizzy Plapinger demonstrated her brilliant voice and crazy dance moves. “Fantasy,” one of

the first two singles the duo released, riled the crowd, while one of other similarly paced popular songs, “Think of You,” was passionate and moving. Later on in the set, Plapinger danced with Max Hershenow, the other part of the MSMR duo, adding to the spirit of the show. The set ended with their most popular song, “Hurricane.”

Though the opening acts had a different style than MSMR, the concert as a whole was entertaining. Additionally, the Arena as a musical venue was also odd, but it's due to a lack of attendance, which I am disappointed about. However, that's mostly due to its restriction to RPI and Russell Sage students. MSMR put on a lively and energetic show that I hadn't seen from a band in some time, and I feel sorry for those that missed. I had a surprisingly entertaining time by the end; I'll definitely be on the lookout for future shows. For more information regarding future shows, visit <http://concerts.union.rpi.edu/>.

# Features

Wednesday, May 6, 2015

## SHOW REVIEW

# Acts surprise many with impressive show

Chris Leong  
Senior Reviewer

ON THURSDAY, APRIL 30, UPAC CONCERTS and the Rensselaer Union 125th Anniversary hosted their MSMR concert at East Campus Athletic Village, in the East Campus Athletic Village Arena, featuring MSMR and special guests Bell's Roar and Titanics. The doors opened at 7 pm and the concert started at 8 pm. Tickets were sold at the door and also had been sold in the Rensselaer Union the previous three weeks by UPAC Concerts.

In high school, I regularly went to concerts, seeing bands like AFI, Dragonforce, and music festivals, such as Bamboozle, Mayhem Festival, and Warped Tour. So I'm used to packed venues and areas so crowded it takes 10 minutes to just get to the nearest porta-potty, let alone wait in line. When I walked into the ECAV Arena, you can imagine my surprise when I saw only a quarter of the floor filled with people, with people sitting on the pulled out bleachers. It was then that I found out that the concert was exclusive to RPI and Russell Sage College students and not the greater Troy area. RPI has about 7,000 undergraduate and graduate students combined; we are not as big as a state university or institution that has 20,000–70,000 students. Had it been bigger, I believe that the atmosphere would have been more vibrant and at least as big as the Matt and Kim and Passion Pit UPAC concert.

Bell's Roar was the first act, taking the stage at around 8 pm. As I stated in my past review of Bell's Roar and Mirk, Bell's Roar is an experimental sound. Though the acoustics in the arena were much less than desired, it was a straight upgrade from Mother's Wine Emporium, in the Rensselaer Union. Sean Desiree, the solo See CONCERT, **Page 9**



Jack Wellhofer/The Polytechnic

LIZZY PLAPINGER PERFORMS as one half of the duo MSMR at the ECAV Arena on April 30. The band, brought to RPI by UPAC Concerts, was the headlining act of the night, and had one of the best sets of the night, albeit a short one.

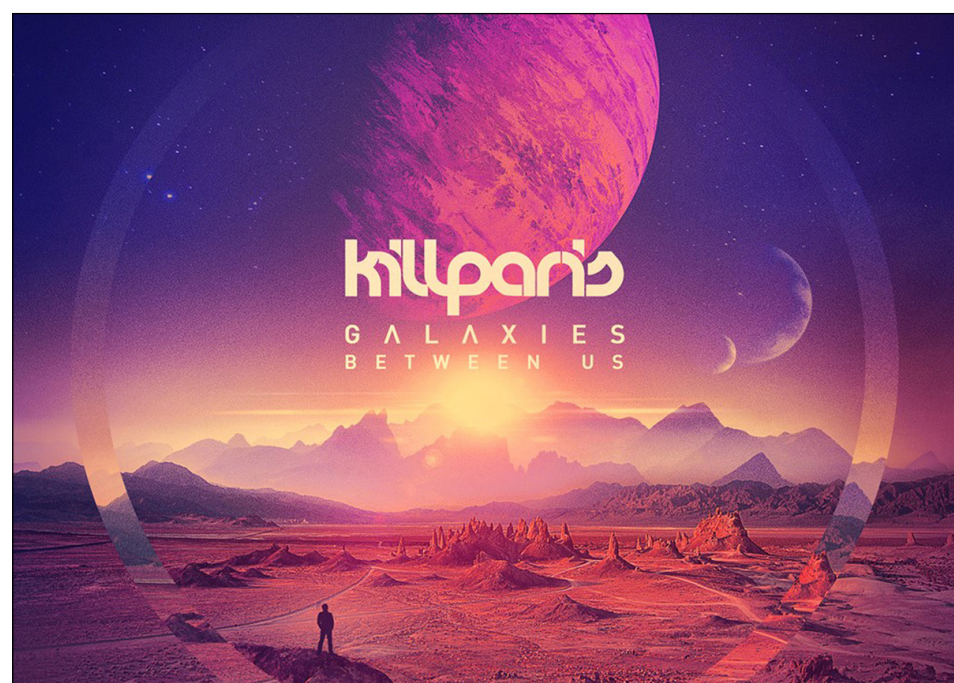
## ALBUM REVIEW

# Longtime EDM artist releases killer full album

Shane O'Brien  
Senior Reviewer

IN AN AGE WHERE MUSIC ARTISTS ARE BURDENED WITH THE PRESSURES OF MAKING SONGS ENTIRELY for the radio and mainstream success, there are still some producers and musicians who can find a way to shine with their unique talents and abilities. Kill Paris, one of these gifted musicians, solidifies his own identity in the funk electronic genre with his newest release *Galaxies Between Us*, which came out on April 14. With solid bass lines and outstanding guitar riffs, the album gives off a feel good vibe that is easy and satisfying to groove to.

Kill Paris, despite being around the music scene for the better part of a decade, has somehow eluded a full LP release until just last month. Countless originals and remixes



Courtesy of Kill Paris

KILL PARIS RELEASED their first full-length album, *Galaxies Between Us*, on April 14.

flooded dancefloors and various music forums online, but this marks his first full length project. To this reviewer's excitement, Kill Paris does not disappoint in his debut LP. From the very first song to the conclusion, the relaxation and groovy vibes don't stop.

The first song on the 10-track album, "Arrival," opens the album perfectly. The mysterious and atmospheric opening to the song brings the listener right into the feel of the album. Then, halfway through the song, Kill Paris hits us with his fantastic synths and melodies that draw the listener into the upbeat mood. The following two songs, "Gonna Get High" and "Summer Daze," are some of my favorites on the album. They feature amazing sound production and melodies that will get stuck in your head for days. After my first listen, I was almost powerless to go about my day without humming the melodies to myself.

The fourth song on the album, "Operate," is undoubtedly the best song on the LP. Featuring on the track is singer Royal, who provides absolutely fantastic vocals that fit the production almost perfectly. The drop is light but delightful, and the sounds incorporated into the song are unique and memorable. If I were to recommend just one song for the average listener to give a chance, it would be "Operate." In this masterpiece, Kill Paris's unique songmaking abilities combine with outstanding vocals to make one of the best electronic songs this year.

The following two songs take a step back in terms of quality and feel. "Space Forest" and "What I'm Feelin'" are both really relaxed songs that bring us down from the upbeat tune of "Operate." Despite the fact that they both still feature great production value and interesting chopped-up vocals, I regret to say that *Galaxies Between Us* reaches a bit of a lull at this point. In the LP's seventh song, Kill Paris picks up the slack. He reunites with his old friend Marty Rod to create the roaring tune "Blame It All On Your Way." Marty Rod featured on Kill Paris's hit song from 2013 "Falling In Love Again," and he returns here for an amazing part. Although the production is a bit forgettable, the lyrics and chorus make the song a hit.

Concluding the album are the songs "Interlude," "You Don't Love Me No More," and "Tropical Dinosaur." Although not nearly as memorable as some of the other songs on this release, they all feature phat bass lines and amazingly formulated riffs and melodies that complete the vibe of the album.

At the conclusion of the final song, the listener has just completed a true musical journey. Some electronic music albums struggle to establish a consistent feel while still having the individual songs maintain their own unique touches. Kill Paris' *Galaxies Between Us*, however, allows the listener to relax, groove a little bit, and just truly enjoy an easily flowing album for around 45 minutes. This musical journey is available for free through his label Sexy Electric, and I highly recommend checking it out.