

The American Dream might be killing me, but this album is not

RACHEL RUDD
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Green Day's newest album "Saviors" is a return to form, akin to their classic albums such as "American Idiot" and "Dookie," while taking a critical look at today's society.

My only exposure to this album was when the band played "Dilemma" live on Dick Clark's New Year's Rockin' Eve. I remember liking the song, but I didn't go into this with many expectations.

I was knocked out of the park with the leading track "The American Dream is Killing Me" with its fun guitar riffs and catchy vocals. The next few tracks keep this energy and it isn't until "Goodnight Adeline" that the album slows down and takes a breather for a bit, before picking up the pace again as the album closes out.

Despite its overall fun sound, "Saviors" is a bleak album. While Green Day's subject matter tends to be on the darker side, this album has depressing song after depressing song with little reprieve. It tackles topics such as substance abuse, homelessness, social media addiction and overall despair about the state of the world.

"Living in the '20s" leads with "Another shooting in a supermarket / I spent my money on a bloody, soft target," and "Coma City" discusses living with gun violence and climate change in a society that doesn't seem to care about it. Instead, people shut out what's happening and remain blissfully ignorant.

"Strange Days Are Here to Stay" might be the darkest song on the album, with lines such as "Grandma's on the fentanyl now," "Jesus gonna quit his job," and "Well, this is how the world will end / when superheroes play pretend." It is a song about how the world seems to be collapsing all around us, yet our most pressing concerns are our Uber drivers running late and losing our sense of humor.

The album does have its moments of hope, with "Bobby Sox" being a song about embracing yourself for who you are and "Father to a Son" being about a father discussing both his fear and excitement regarding fatherhood. It is a sweet, intimate song, having one of my favorite lines of the album: "I never knew a love / could be scarier than anger."

Despite the hopelessness of "Saviors," it still finds ways to



PHOTO COURTESY OF PITCHFORK
(From left to right) Tré Cool, Billie Joe Armstrong and Mike Dirnt, members of Green Day

insert cheeky references and have a bit of fun where it can. The line "I got a buzz like a murder hornet" got a chuckle out of me the first time I heard it and the song "Look Ma, No Brains!" uses self-deprecating humor to the fullest, where the protagonist sings about how much of a loser they are.

That being said, many of the songs have rather repetitive lyrics. This is most noticeable in "Bobby Sox" where lead singer Billie Joe Armstrong keeps singing "Do you want to be my girlfriend? / Do you want to be my boyfriend?" as the vocals become increasingly fried. I love fried vocals, but this gets old without any lyrical variety.

Additionally, the entire album sounds a bit too similar,

so much so that on my first listen I became fatigued with the sound when approaching the back half of the track listings. It has a few standouts, with "Corvette Summer" sounding more like what I would call "dad rock," but a little more variety besides adding in a few slower songs here and there would have helped dramatically.

However, this is still an excellently produced album. Rob Cavallo worked as the producer for "Saviors" as well as Green Day's platinum-selling albums "Dookie," "Insomniac," "Nimrod," "American Idiot," and "Bullet in a Bible," giving it the sound of Green Day at their peak.

Every time a sick guitar

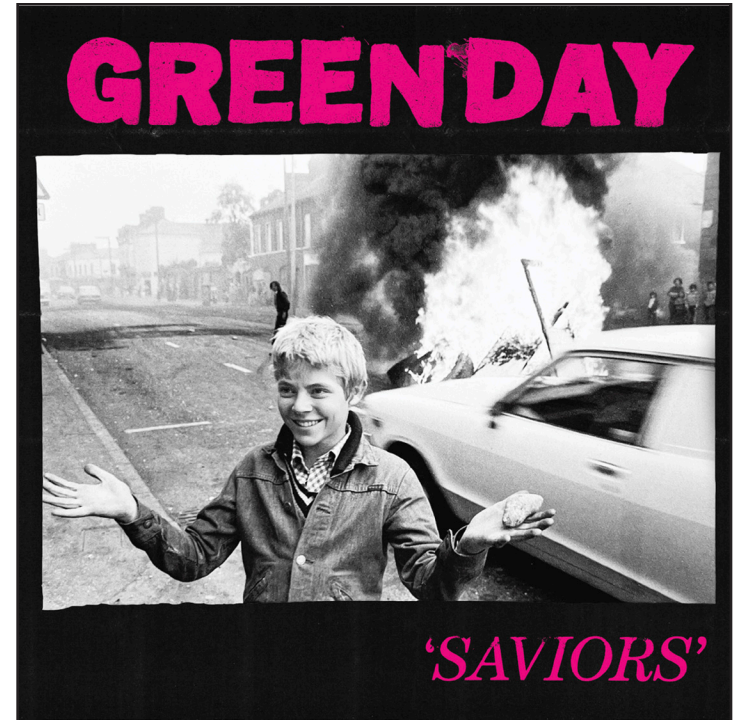


PHOTO COURTESY OF GENIUS
Album cover for "Saviors" by Green Day

solo comes in, it sounds clean and unique. The drums aren't faded into the background and the vocals, while clear, don't overpower the instrumentals.

The previously mentioned vocal fry, while overdone on "Bobby Sox" is masterfully used throughout the rest of the album, with it being the most powerful on "Dilemma" where Armstrong uses it on the line "I don't wanna be a dead man

walking," about wanting to overcome alcohol addiction.

"Saviors" is a must-listen for both new and old Green Day fans and will bring something to the table anyone can enjoy. Whether you want to listen to a critique of today's society, or just want to rock out for 45 minutes, "Saviors" will deliver both and leave the listener wanting more.

Official Score: 8/10

Herald editors pick their favorite Oscar nominees

Elijah Templeton: Cillian Murphy



The Academy Award for "Best Actor" was a given for me as soon as I left the theater after watching Cillian Murphy portray J. Robert Oppenheimer in "Oppenheimer."

He expertly communicates Oppenheimer's brilliance and also his humanity as he grapples with

the harsh reality that his theories have forever altered the world.

Murphy is on screen for nearly two hours of the film's three-hour run time and manages to steal every scene he is in.

Murphy is one of the best actors working today and he has no finer performance in his catalog than the mad genius who changed warfare forever.



Nominated for Best Actor

Laila Casiano: "The Holdovers"



The Academy Awards' 'holdover' students who hidden gem, "The Holdovers," directed by Alexander Payne, tells a beautiful story about family, grief, and friendships.

The film follows a grumpy and tough professor at a New England boarding school who is forced to monitor the

cannot make it home over Christmas break.

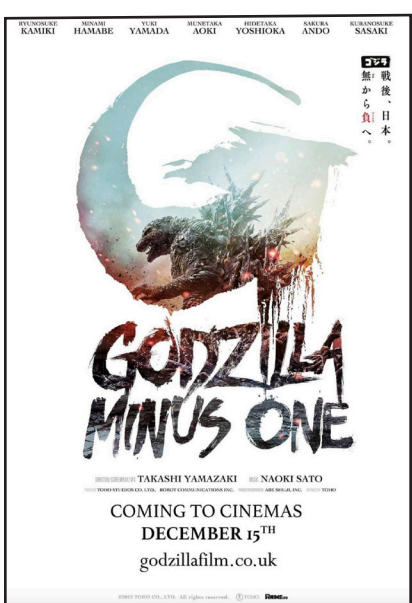
This film fully immerses the viewer in the '70s aesthetic. The film's writing shines with its comical, sincere, and emotional moments.

"The Holdovers" is so special because it's more quiet and moving. It masterfully handles both the loneliness and the longing for human



Nominated for Best Picture

Jack Douglas: "Godzilla Minus One"



On its relatively low the film managed to impressive CGI work

From the design Monsters himself he causes, Godzilla effects never feel despite being Director Takashi Studios team seem to to preserve everything original Godzilla translated it the digital age.

\$10 million budget, deliver some of the most in recent memory. of the King Of The to the destruction Minus One's visual fake or disingenuous almost entirely CGI. Yamazaki and his Toho have taken loving care that brought the films to life and beautifully into



Nominated for Best Visual Effects

Rachel Rudd: "Spider-Man: Across the Spider-Verse"

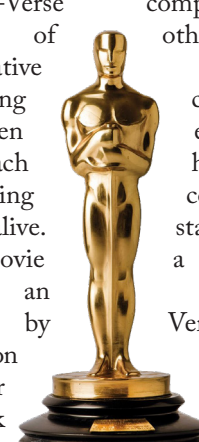


"Spider-Man: Across the Spider-Verse" features some of the most creative and inspiring animation I've seen in years, with each dimension feeling rich and alive.

This movie features both an original score by Daniel Pemberton and a stellar soundtrack

by Metro Boomin', each complimenting each other beautifully.

The story and characters are entertaining and hilarious, both continuously raising the stakes for what is to be a jaw-dropping sequel. "Across the Spider-Verse" annihilates every other best animated feature. I look forward to its win.



Nominated for Best Animated Feature Film

Alpha Psi Omega sponsors A-State's first gender-affirming closet

LAILA CASIANO

SOCIAL MEDIA EDITOR

The national theatre honor society, Alpha Psi Omega (APO), opened the first gender-affirming closet at Arkansas State University as a resource dedicated to helping people who struggle to express their gender identity outwardly.

The closet opened in the fall semester of 2023, allowing students to trade one article of unwanted clothing for two items from the gender-affirming closet or take three to five articles of clothing with no charge.

"I hope to bring that ease to others as they embark on their journeys toward gender expression that aligns with their self-image," Michael Joseph, president of APO, said.

Joseph, a senior theatre arts major from Sikeston, Missouri, started the project after hearing about a similar organization at Illinois State University.

Joseph said the experience of struggling to reorganize their wardrobe and figure out their gender identity motivated them to propose a project where students can experiment with their gender expression.

Joseph was previously the secretary and communicated to the former president of APO, Kori Denison, about creating the gender-affirming closet. Joseph said they saw this as a need and wanted students to experiment safely, getting the clothes they need without worrying about cost or fees.

Claire Abernathy, associate professor of theatre and faculty representative for APO, supported the proposal from the students.

"On a personal level, it was exciting to me because our students saw it as a need," Abernathy said. "Finding a way of being able to support students and say, 'we see you, we want to help you on this journey, we want you to be who you are and we want to celebrate that.'"

APO collected items from a clothing drive they began in the spring semester of 2023. After washing and sorting them, the gender-affirming closet opened for A-State students who needed the resource to come and choose the items they needed.

Eret Ledbetter, a junior non-binary history major from Stuttgart, Arkansas, never attended the newly

opened gender-affirming closet but praised its work.

Ledbetter said proper clothing makes a world of difference for transgender people, so having a resource like the gender-affirming closet is incredibly important for those who never had access to explore their gender expression and style as they transition.

"I remember being closeted in high school and the genuine misery that comes with being required to wear dresses or skirts to certain events because it was not my choice," Ledbetter said. "It's not just a simple piece of cloth that brings discomfort or happiness, but what wearing the specific thing means and how you choose to do it."

The theatre department's faculty helpers and members of APO help donate and wash clothes for the gender-affirming closet, as well as staffing for the rounds when the closet opens.

"I remember how gender dysphoria was a source of anxiety to me and how lucky I was to have friends that supported me and gave me their hand-me-downs when I needed them," Joseph said. "That's what I want this closet to be, just a little



Photo illustration by Rachel Rudd | Editor-in-Chief

Michael Joseph folding clothing at the gender-affirming closet. The closet is located in the Grand Hall of the Fowler Center from 1 p.m. to 2 p.m. on the first and third Friday of every month.

store for hand-me-downs. The gender-affirming closet opens on the first and third Friday of each month at 1 p.m. to 2 p.m. in the Grand Hall of the Fowler Center, in front of Riceland Hall.

Club Spotlight: Arkansas State Magic: The Gathering Club

On Your Turn:

Begin:

- Turn your cards upright
- Draw a card

Main Phase:

- Play a land (only 1 per turn)
- Cast creatures and other spells

Combat:

- Declare attackers
- Opponent declares blockers

Main Phase (again):

- Play land (if you haven't already)
- Cast creatures and other spells

End:

- Creatures heal
- Pass the turn

Graphic by Rachel Rudd | Editor-in-Chief



PHOTO COURTESY OF INSTAGRAM

Members of the Arkansas State Magic: The Gathering Club playing the game. The club alternates between meeting Tuesdays and Fridays at 6 p.m. in the White River of the Student Union.

SHAILEY WOOLDRIDGE

COPY EDITOR

A club created last semester brings together the campus and community to enjoy the Magic: The Gathering card game.

Austin Crouse and Chase Gallentine created this club after looking for a Magic: The Gathering club to join on campus and finding out it didn't exist.

"Our first meeting was me, him, his roommate, another person from our hall and another person on campus," said Crouse, president and cofounder of the club.

Magic: The Gathering is a Wizards of the Coast card game that gained popularity in the '90s. Every player has a unique deck of cards filled with fantasy elements, with players playing their decks against each other.

"You can have a fish deck.

You can have a deck just filled with gorillas. Or you can have a deck that's just filled with spells," said club member Logan Eidt, a 19-year-old from Wynne, Arkansas.

Crouse, a first-year music education major from Benton, Arkansas, said he started playing Magic: The Gathering in 2019 over video call to connect with family members who lived far away.

"It really got me closer to people who I consider brothers now," Crouse said. "I just fell in love with it ever since. It's a lot of fun."

Gallentine, a first-year music major from Hoxie, Arkansas, said he didn't think the club would grow as fast as it did.

"There's a lot more people than I realize that are interested in Magic," Gallentine said. The club has grown since that first meeting

and is open to community members and students.

"We always enjoy having new faces and teaching people how to play. We're very open to outsiders. It's not something where if you come one night just to come and see what's up, that you're going to feel like an outcast," Crouse said. "We have a lot of people from a lot of different backgrounds who will make you feel included."

Juli Buxbaum, assistant professor of horn and faculty adviser for the club, said students are searching for the social component of something that isn't class or work-related.

"I think that doesn't exist in the adult world as easily when you graduate," Buxbaum said.

Eidt said Magic: The Gathering is a big community, but it can be hard to bring people together in that sense to play.

"This A-State club is a really

good way of doing that because it opens people up about a topic that others might look down upon," Eidt said. "It's just a nice, safe space for everybody just to hang out and meet new people."

Crouse said the club is planning a tutorial night for Jan. 30. at 6 p.m. in the White River Room of the Reng Student Union to introduce the game to people who have never played.

"We're looking at having several of our club members who are more experienced come in and teach people how to play the game because it's so complicated," said Crouse. "It's hard to watch a tutorial video online. A real way to learn how to play is by playing the game. You'll learn a lot faster."

The club alternates between meeting Tuesdays and Fridays at 6 p.m. in the White River of the Student Union. The next meeting will take place Friday.