

The icons pop music left behind

ELIJAH TEMPLETON

LIFE EDITOR

Katy Perry and Nelly Furtado, two iconic pop stars, both attempted comebacks to the mainstream with new album releases last week and after listening, I think their best music is behind them.

I'll say it, Katy Perry is never gonna be 'that girl' again. This album was extremely mediocre and even bad in spots. Her inclusion of several rap artists, like 21 Savage, JID and DoeChii is a half-hearted attempt to include some variety in the album's sound but it was not nearly enough to cover up for the incredibly repetitive and seemingly flippant song-writing and production in every track of the album.

As I am sure this album was supposed to be a glorious return for Perry, it is almost impressive how uninspired and surface-level the songs seem to be. Surface level is not always a bad thing, pop music has never been hailed as a genre full of deep and thought-provoking lyrics, but it is at least supposed to be enjoyable. "143" is not an attempt to bring back the sound and vibe of her early 2010's work that propelled

her into superstardom. Nor is it an entirely fresh direction that leaves no signs of the artist she used to be. It somehow strikes a happy medium of both that leaves you feeling not much of anything at all.

A few tracks like "ALL THE LOVE" and "WONDER" are enjoyable and do their best to lift up the rest of the tracklist but the good moments are too few and far between to make much of an impact. The production is boring and doesn't take any chances. The lyrics are more of a mad-lib where the only category is words that relate to love. To take such a firm stance on making love and relationships the key themes of the project, there is not a deeply emotional or striking lyric to be found on the entire record.

The album is not entirely without value as I am sure a future movie will need a cheap copyrighted song to score their 'first high school party' scene and this album can do that just fine.

I was expecting more from this record and hoped that Perry would come with anthems for the newer generations that she provided so consistently early in her

career, but it seems that Perry is more a product of her time than an icon who defined it.

Nelly Furtado returned to music with her seventh studio album, "7" which is also her first album in seven years. It seemed that the stars had aligned for this record and we would be treated to some new hits to rival her mid 2000's anthems like "Maneater" and "Promiscuous," but sadly, this was not the case. Instead we were treated to

surface-level dance-pop and a few piano ballads that neither delight nor surprise. "7" is no doubt better than "143" and firmly establishes Furtado as a more interesting and consistent pop-star than Perry but this album leaves a lot to be desired.

"Ready For Myself" sounds like a pop song that is stuck in the past and highlights a key issue with the project as a whole; there is no risk. There is no single track or moment that made me stop

and rewind to hear it again. It is a 'safe' album for lack of a better term. The harmonies, melodies and choruses can be fun and catchy but it ultimately makes the project forgettable, which is the last thing any musician wants to be.

I would rather the songs have been poorly done attempts to innovate than reliable and formulaic pop songs that don't make you feel a thing.

I can confidently say that I will never seek out this album

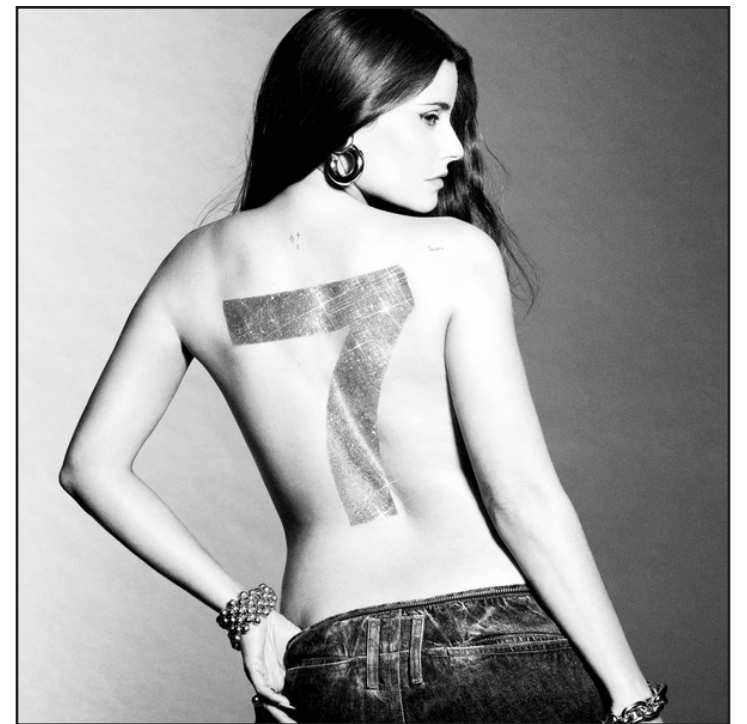
again and if I do ever happen to hear it in the future, it will be by accident or against my will.

Ultimately, Furtado and Perry both are perhaps stars of yesterday that have no place in the current pop landscape now firmly occupied by new stars like Billie Eilish, Sabrina Carpenter and Chappell Roan.

The music industry has changed and also stayed the same in many ways, but it has without a doubt left Furtado and Perry behind.



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"Almost, Maine" show preview

ELIJAH TEMPLETON

LIFE EDITOR

The Department of Theatre is returning to the stage for their first show of the season; "Almost, Maine."

"Almost, Maine" is a romantic comedy written by John Cariani, set in the fictional town of Almost, Maine. The show is divided into a collection of vignettes, with each vignette exploring different aspects of love and relationships between the town's residents in a single magical night underneath the Northern Lights.

DayDay Robinson, assistant professor of theater, is the overall director of the production, fully directing the show's prologue, interlude and epilogue.

Robinson said that the scenes are all unique, but all happening at the same time underneath the magic of the Northern Lights.

"People are falling in love, out of love, there's always at least two people that have some type of relationship with each other, whether they're happy or going through issues or trying to break up but they just don't know how to do it and because of the Northern Lights, the things that happen to them are quirky," Robinson said.

Emily Provence, a senior theatre major from Searcy, is the stage manager for the show. Provence said that "Almost,

Maine" is a unique show for the Theatre Department.

"We have a very different structure for this particular show. We have four student directors who are working with two scenes that each have two different actors. So we have actors playing multiple characters in multiple scenes throughout the night," Provence said.

Zane Brewer, a junior theater major from Conway, Arkansas, is directing the scenes "They Fell" and "Sad and Glad."

Brewer said the production of this show's set is different compared to others the department has done.

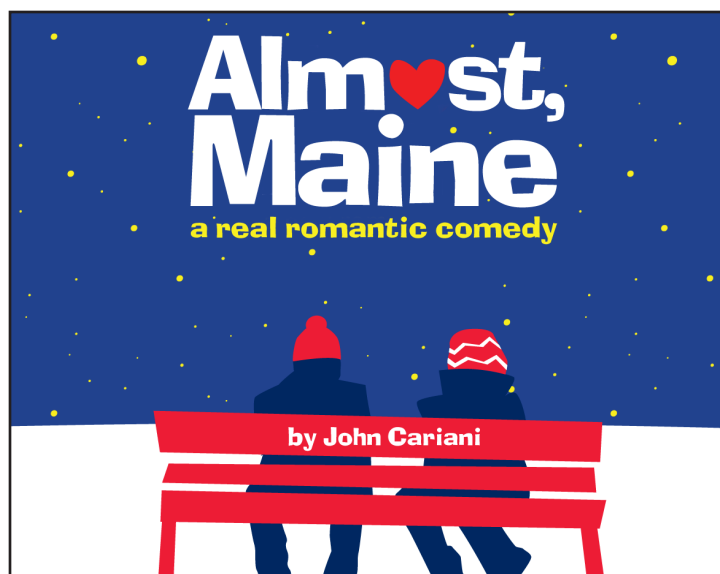
"We're in one little corner of the black box and our little corner of the stage," Brewer

said, "I think audiences will be in for a treat due to how intimate it is. They really feel like they're part of the story."

Brewer said that "Almost, Maine" is very human and deals with a variety of emotions.

"There's something for everybody, there's so many lessons that can be learned from this show," Brewer said. "I think each audience member can come in and find something about themselves from this show."

Performances will be held at 7:30 p.m. Friday, Saturday and Oct. 4 and at 2:30 p.m. Sunday and Oct. 6 in the Simpson Theatre at the Fowler Center. Arkansas State University students can get in free with their A-State student ID.



GRAPHIC COURTESY OF ALMOSTMAINE.COM

Alternate poster of "Almost, Maine."

THIS WEEK'S POP PICK

ELIJAH TEMPLETON | LIFE EDITOR

"THE PENGUIN"



POSTER COURTESY OF IMDB

The first episode of the DC miniseries "The Penguin" premiered last Thursday on MAX and it's terrific.

Starring Colin Farrell as Oswald "Oz" Cobb, the series follows Oz on his journey to the top of Gotham's criminal underworld. After only one episode, Farrell captivated me with his performance, showing us a man whose ambition is only overshadowed by his humanity.

Set a week after the events of Matt Reeves' "The Batman," Oz finds himself in a power vacuum created in the aftermath of the death of Gotham's top crime boss, Carmine Falcone.

You don't need to have seen "The Batman" to start watching this show as they use a news clip montage in the opening scene to explain relevant

information. I would argue it may be better to go in blind, so that you can see Oz with a clean slate and allow Farrell to build the nuance of the character as you go.

If the show being based on comic book characters gives you pause, I assure you that "The Penguin" is more like "The Sopranos" than another comic book show. "The Penguin" is a mob story with comic book characters, not a comic book show about mobsters.

The show is grounded and tense, with Oz's current position in the criminal hierarchy on full display in every scene opposite a character with real power. The cinematography is superb, with seemingly every shot worthy of hanging on your wall, and Colin Farrell is just the best, creating a character that is somehow deplorable but also frustratingly likable.

I would highly recommend this show to any fans of crime dramas and anyone who wants to be in the know before next year's award season, as I am sure this show will win quite a few. New episodes will air every Sunday at 8 p.m. starting Sept. 29 until Nov. 10.

Official Score: 10/10

First yoga class held at BAM

AVERI BESANCON
SPECIAL TO THE HERALD

Bradbury Art Museum hosted the first of many yoga classes on Sept. 20, inspiring members of the community to stay active through the practice of mindfulness and meditation.

Nikki Arnell, an associate professor of graphic design, said she began conducting yoga classes to engage the students of the Arkansas State University and members of the Jonesboro community. Certified in yoga since 2013, she said she aims to teach the practice without pressure while focusing on subtle movements and awareness.

“Yoga is not about winning or achieving perfection, it’s about teaching patience

and strength,” Arnell said.

When teaching the class, Arnell reminded the students to focus on breathing instead of their performance. She said her main goal is even if students find yoga too challenging, they can still benefit from stretching and taking a break from school or work.

“If yoga is too much for people, just think about it like you’re gonna stretch, take a break and calm down,” Arnell said.

Arnell said her teaching style focuses on the movements, verbal cues and minimal physical touch. In this event, she teaches balance, strength and awareness through moving meditation.

“It’s all about balance and strength and awareness and all of this is a moving meditation,” Arnell said.

Kaitlynn Everroad, a graphic design major from Oakland, Arkansas, said she recommends the class for those who are interested in fun and social interactions.

“I enjoy the calming influence of Professor Nikki, who ensures proper yoga techniques while encouraging students to listen to their bodies,” Everroad said.

AnnElise Jarrett, a senior graphic design major from Paragould, said she recommends students join and participate in the yoga classes because it could open doors to discovering new hobbies.

“This was my first time ever doing yoga,” Jarrett said. “Nikki was really professional and did really good leading us.”

The next class will take place on Oct. 4 at 9:30 a.m. in BAM.



Participants at Friday’s yoga class.

Photo by Averı Besancon | Special to the Herald

HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH EVENTS

SEPT. 15

Beginning of Hispanic Heritage Month

SEPT. 28

Deadline for SIA para raffle entry

SEPT. 29

SIA para raffle winner announced: 9 a.m.
Voice Studios Recital in Fine Arts Center: 5 p.m.

SEPT. 30

Deadline for SIA taco presale

OCT. 10

Pickup for SIA tacos in front of Humanities building: 11 a.m. - 1 p.m.

OCT. 11

Deadline for SIA mini churro presale: 4 churros for \$6

OCT. 15

Pickup for SIA churros in front of Humanities building: 11 a.m. - 1 p.m.

Graphic by Elijah Templeton | Life Editor

Student Speak: What is the meaning of your lock screen?



Photo by Shelby Russom | Photo Editor

Heidi Bulbarela-Hernández is a senior graphic design major from Stuttgart, Arkansas.

Heidy said:

“This is just a little purple and green gradient. I just like simple things, it helps me read the screen a little better.”

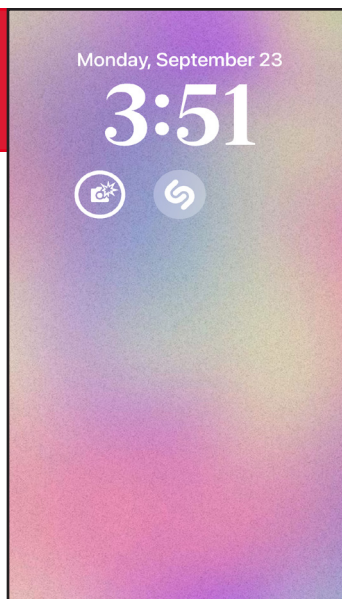


Photo Courtesy of Lari Norwood | Special to The Herald

Cara Nelson is a junior vocal music education major from Searcy, Arkansas.

Cara said:

“My Lock Screen is a little canva picture clip art thing and I just added in photos of people that are closest to me, so like my best friend and then people in my fraternity as well. Then there’s my girlfriend, so it’s just cute photos of me being happy.”



Photo by Shelby Russom | Photo Editor

Lari Norwood is a senior music performance major from Paragould.

Lari said:

“It’s a school mascot from a school in Minnesota. It’s called Grand Meadow High School. The mascot is the Super Larks and I thought it was really silly. Every summer I do this activity called drum core and this is a school I’ve stayed at like every year and it’s a monolithic dome school, so all of the buildings are domes.”



Photo by Shelby Russom | Photo Editor

Isaiah Wallis is a first year theatre major from Harrison, Arkansas.

Isaiah said:

“Right now, it’s less about meaning and more about just the vibe it gets off. So, like right now it’s a picture of a forest and I don’t know it reminds me to look at nature and just respect it more.”

