

“Stuck on the Train to Nowhere” is a masterpiece

ALLIE CARSON
STAFF WRITER

Arkansas State theatre’s devised play, “Imagination Unleashed: Stuck on a Train to Nowhere” is an all-around creative masterpiece. From the script to the cast and crew, it’s worth getting on the train.

With this play being a devised theatre piece, this is a brand new, never-before-seen script. Members of the devised theatre class created the entire play during the fall semester, but from how hilarious and developed the story is, it’s easy to forget this isn’t a published play that’s been around for years.

The plot of the show centers around passengers on a train they are unable to get off of until they’ve confronted moments of their lives that have caused them to feel stuck. The play does a fantastic job making the audience think about their lives and ask what’s holding them back from going forward in life.

The Conductor, played by Jace Hahn, starts the show off, truly inviting the audience into the experience as the opening monologue seems directed not just at the actors on the train, but the audience as well, bringing everyone onto the train and making everyone ponder their lives.

“Stuck on a Train to Nowhere” is Hahn’s A-State

theatre acting debut. Usually behind the scenes during shows, he’s a natural in this role, causing the audience to laugh at his dialogue and conduct the rest of the passengers through their traumas they have to rehash.

From the A-State theatre veterans to the first-years in the show, every actor is phenomenal and shines in their roles. It’s easy to see their relationships grow with the other characters throughout the show because of how talented all of the actors are.

All of the passengers on the train had to take on multiple roles as both their main character and someone from another passenger’s experience, causing every actor on that stage to take on different personalities throughout the show.

During the show, I felt myself holding my breath during some of the scenes

because of how serious the moments truly felt for the characters. Even without knowing much backstory on the passengers, it was easy to feel protective almost towards them from the beginning since they all had to relive moments they couldn’t let go of.

Be prepared to laugh, question your life and maybe even cry when you go see this show. Be warned, however, of the mature themes depicted in the play: strong language, physical and emotional abuse, grief, loss and substance abuse.

The show continues this weekend, so if you haven’t had a chance to get stuck with the conductor and other passengers, you still have a chance on Friday and Saturday at 7:30 p.m. and Sunday at 2:30 in the Simpson theatre. Students can get a free ticket by showing their student ID.



GRAPHIC COURTESY OF ASTATETHEATRE INSTAGRAM

“Shutter Island” turns 15

JUSTIN COATS

SPECIAL TO THE HERALD

From the insane minds of Paramount Pictures and directed by Martin Scorsese, “Shutter Island” celebrates its 15th anniversary today.

Never having been a Scorsese fan, I didn’t know what to expect going into this movie other than a basic overview of the plot and the common opinion that ‘by Scorsese standards, it’s just average.’

That being said, after watching “Shutter Island” twice over, I definitely think I need to catch up on Scorsese’s catalog.

The film stars Leonardo DiCaprio and Mark Ruffalo—already an amazing casting choice—as detective Edward “Teddy” Daniels and his partner Chuck Aule. The pair are tasked with investigating the disappearance of Rachel Solando, a mental patient of Ashecliffe Hospital, a mental hospital located on Shutter Island.

From the get-go, the movie establishes an air of grime and uncertainty.

I’ve always been a fan of stories where the narrator and/or supporting characters are unreliable in their recounting of events or purveying of information. It keeps me wondering and guessing where the plot will go next. For those like me, this movie will absolutely not disappoint.

An excellent set-up to this premise and subtle detail at the very beginning of the movie comes from the detective duo. Teddy is presented as an excellent detective, one utterly incapable of making a mistake or forgetting little details. However, one of his first lines is an acknowledgment that he forgot his cigarettes and he has to ask his partner Chuck for one.

Little details like this are spread throughout the movie; tiny cracks in not just Teddy or Chuck’s facade, but for every character of the movie, subtle enough that most cannot be discerned on first viewing.

Yet, no one detail is damning enough to give everything away, save that not everything is as it seems.



COURTESY OF IMDB

That being said, you receive all the pieces you need to stitch together an alternative narrative to the one spoon-fed to you by the film’s presentation. For me, it was a fun puzzle trying to fit together seemingly unrelated or disconnected plot points in a way that was coherent.

Flashbacks are prevalent throughout the film and offer insight to some characters, though whether or not these flashbacks are to be trusted is left up to the viewer, at least until the end.

Without getting into it, the movie ends in a way that resolves most plot threads, at least to the degree that the viewer is not left with too many unanswered questions.

This is one of those movies that leaves the viewer wanting more, despite having all of its questions answered by the end. This film has inspired me to look into more Scorsese films, of which I will probably watch “The Wolf of Wall Street” next.

I encourage all that might be interesting in the film, be it because DiCaprio stars in it, the fact that Scorsese directed it or even if they just heard of it from a friend, to give the movie a shot.

Which would be worse—to live having watched this movie, or to die having never given it a chance?

Official Score: 10/10

The Lumineers’ new album is an “Automatic” hit!

LAILA CASIANO
OPINION EDITOR

The Lumineers’ fifth album, “Automatic,” is out and it was an automatic joy!

Now, my experience with these Denver folk-rockers is limited, with their hit “Ophelia” being the only track I regularly revisit. But, I’ve gravitated toward alternative/indie and folk genres recently, so listening to a full-fledged album from them was an easy transition.

Their 11-track album runs a bit short at 33 minutes. I will say that some tracks sound quite similar in the beginning. Their melodies resembled each other and often made me feel like listening to the same songs at times. But, midway through, tracks like “Automatic,” “You’re All I Got,” and “Plasticine” made an impression of me — especially the latter (an instant favorite).

The more I listened, the more I enjoyed the songs I initially thought blended together. This was an album that required more than one listen to fully appreciate.

As I mentioned, I don’t have knowledge of their discography, but this album helped me better understand their sound both sonically and lyrically.

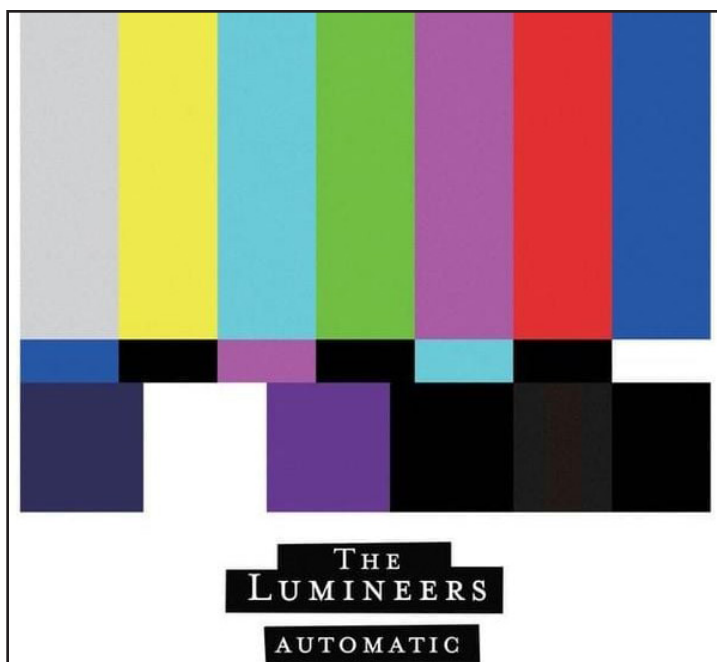
Their songwriting is visceral, with vivid lyrics that paint a picture behind your eyelids as you take in the almost-ballad-like musings.

The mixing is stripped down — unlike “Ophelia,” it’s more intimate and clear. I enjoyed it, especially in combination with lyrics that explore the fine line between reality and illusion.

Wesley Schultz, guitarist and lead vocalist, said the album was 20 years in the making, a culmination of songwriting between him and Jeremiah

Fraites, co-founder of The Lumineers and songwriter. He described it as an exploration of “some of the absurdities of the modern world” and “the variety of ways we numb ourselves while trying to combat both boredom and overstimulation.”

Tracks like “Automatic,” “Sunflowers” and “Same Old Song” exemplify that theme. This album was a joy to hear (despite the slow start) and I can’t wait to explore more of their sound from their earlier projects.



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THIS WEEK’S POP PICK

ELIJAH TEMPLETON | LIFE EDITOR

“CAPTAIN AMERICA: BRAVE NEW WORLD”



COURTESY OF IMDB

The Marvel Cinematic Universe (MCU) has not quite hit rock bottom with this film, but it is not far off.

“Captain America: Brave New World” is not an entirely flawed film, though its flaws do far outweigh the positive aspects by quite a wide margin. For one, the plot is quite formulaic, almost a one-for-one rehash of “Captain America: The Winter Soldier” that was released over a decade ago and was much better to boot.

The performances are fine, nothing special or memorable is given by any member of the cast but I place most of the blame for this fact as well as the entirety of the movie’s failures on one thing: the writing.

The writing in this film is atrocious. The characters spend every scene reciting lines at each other that someone has clearly written for them and it is impossible to not notice this fact. Every word that could fit into a monologue is used. There is no flow, no natural cadence, no occasional pause to collect one’s thoughts, nothing.

Every character reiterates details of the plot that have previously happened to, I suppose, remind the audience of what they have already seen, even if the thing they are reiterating has happened in real time just minutes before.

There is no faith put in the audience to keep up with the story. Every plot point is re-stated and refocused over and over again. The audience is consistently beaten over the head with this movie and reminded that Sam Wilson is not Steve Rogers and he is a new Captain America and these movies used to be good and now they suck and on and on it goes.

I did like the Red Hulk fight scene, despite the hilariously bad CGI background that made it appear more as a Super Bowl commercial than a big budget blockbuster.

This movie is like the majority of Marvel projects post “Avengers: Endgame,” entirely forgettable and formulaic.

Official Score: 4/10

Life

Campus fosters romance, two students announce engagement

LAILA CASIANO

OPINION EDITOR

On Feb. 6, two students' lives were changed forever — one question, a well-planned surprise and the support of Arkansas State University that made it all possible.

With the help of A-State and the Dean B. Ellis Library, Chris Finney created an unforgettable marriage proposal for his girlfriend, Madisin Rouse, by incorporating special campus landmarks and a personalized scavenger hunt.

"This idea was welcomed with open arms that created both a unique opportunity for myself, and an opportunity for the university to showcase what an amazing institution it is, and how they view their students: the core of A-State," Chris Finney said.

Finney, a business administration graduate student from Lansing, Kansas, said he had been planning the proposal for a month, but wanted to propose to Rouse since the first day they began dating a year ago.

"I knew from the moment we met that she was the one for me," Finney said. "It was just a matter of time."

He began the proposal with a scavenger hunt, leading Rouse, his now-fiancée, through locations significant to their relationship. The final stop was the parking garage, where she saw the bell tower lit in a special color, followed by First Bank National Arena.

"I was so eager to ask the magical question, but I was also sure to embrace every moment for what it

was and how important it is to me," Finney said.

The Dean B. Ellis Library Bell Tower played a crucial role in the proposal, as it was a favorite spot for the couple. Initially, Finney said he hoped to have a special song play from the tower, but due to maintenance, he instead requested the tower be illuminated light blue — Rouse's favorite color—and dark blue for his.

"Experiencing the tower light color I had chosen that night and driving into the stadium and walking down to the field, my heart just pounded with excitement, ready for what comes next, but still embracing each moment," Finney said.

Jeff Bailey, library dean, said Finney emailed the library on Jan. 21 about the special request. Bailey said Finney mentioned a previous article in The Herald regarding the inner workings of the bell tower.

Bailey referred Finney to Todd Clark, the chief marketing and communication officer, who oversaw the campus unit responsible for lighting the bell tower.

He said both he and Clark supported the idea of special lighting to celebrate the occasion.

"I think it is great that the university was able to help this student create a special environment for his marriage proposal, and I was happy to play a small role in making it happen," Bailey said.

Finney said he had no idea

where to begin when planning the proposal, but through guidance and correspondence with the right people, he connected with A-State's social media team, who were "all in and eager to help."

Rachel Anderson, A-State's director of social media, said Finney reached out to different groups on campus to help with his proposal before she got involved.

"I am a sucker for a sweet love story, so I was on board from day one!" Anderson said.

She said the university's marketing and communications department developed the plan to set the proposal on the field and had a dozen A-State employees help.

"It was definitely a team effort and we are all so excited for Chris and Madisin," Anderson said.

Finney said A-State's support and help with his proposal was indescribable.

"Words cannot accurately explain what this means to be welcomed with open arms and have the highest level of support from not only A-State, but also much further than the NEA region," Finney said.

Rouse, a senior social work major from Paragould, said she had no idea the proposal was coming.

"I thought there wasn't any possible way it would happen that night. I was wrong. While I had literal clues in the format of a scavenger hunt, I didn't actually know what was going to happen," Rouse said. "I don't

think I truly knew what was happening until he got down on one knee in front of me."

She said when she first saw the special lighting of the bell tower, she was "beyond happy and giddy" when Finney told her he had arranged it for her.

"Blue is my favorite color and he put a lot of thought into getting into contact with someone to get it to be changed," Rouse said. "I just really couldn't believe it was lit up blue just for me."

She said she was shocked when Finney got down on one knee and was impressed he had not given anything away beforehand.

"I could not speak at first. I had to shake my head yes at least twice before the 'yes' could come out," Rouse said. "I have never been speechless in my life before like I was in that moment. Him asking me to marry him was the best moment in my life."

She said she is "eternally grateful" to everyone who played a role in the proposal.

"A-State is so important to me and I think my appreciation has grown tenfold knowing that they are willing to invest in the lives of their students even outside of their studies," Rouse said. "It is a nice feeling to know that I belong to a college that truly cares about me."

To watch the special moment, visit A-State's official Instagram page, @arkansasstate, to view the reel posted for Valentine's Day.



PHOTO COURTESY OF CHRIS FINNEY

Rouse and Finney at Centennial Bank Stadium on the night of the proposal.

How To: Register for classes

LAILA CASIANO

OPINION EDITOR

The portal to register for classes is now open and you may have already met with your adviser to plan for the fall 2025 semester. As a graduating senior, I've had my share of stress with class registration, so here's a simple guide to help you enroll!

First, please talk to your adviser! This is not just to plan out your schedule but also to check for any holds on your account. A hold will prevent you from registering, so it's best to address it quickly and get it removed.

Second, log into Banner9 Self-Service on my.AState.edu. Once you're signed in, look for the "Registration and Planning" tab and from there select "register for classes."

Then, choose Fall 2025 as your term.

Now, if you already know your course numbers, you can enter them directly, but if not, use the subject search bar to browse classes related to your major, minor or elective interests. For example, as a multimedia journalism major with a political science minor, I would search for "MDIA" and "POSC."

You will then see a list of available courses and

information including who is teaching the class and meeting times. If looking for a specific course level, check the first number of the course number — sophomore-level classes typically start with the number two, junior classes with the number three and seniors with four.

If you see a class you're interested in or the class you were planning to enroll in, click add which is located at the bottom right side of the website. Once you've built your schedule for the fall, a summary tab will appear — showing your selected courses, meeting times and credit hours.

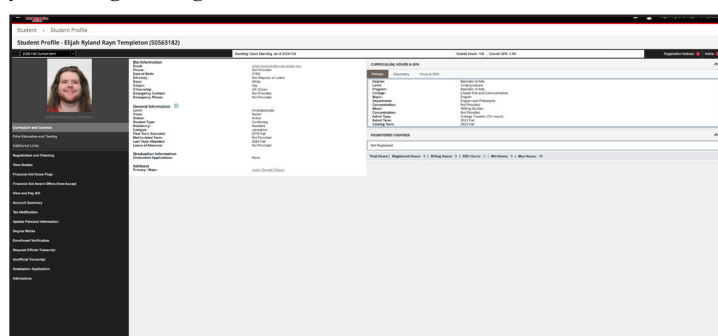
Keep adding classes until you have met your required hours for the semester and then hit submit. That's it, quick and simple!

Additionally, here are a few things to keep in mind while you're registering: Watch out

for online-only or hybrid (online and in-person) courses, especially if you prefer in-person classes. Next, make sure the classes are on the Jonesboro campus and not already at capacity (there will be a bolded "C" in the tab which will tell you the remaining seats for students to enroll in a course). Double-check that your classes don't overlap, if you need to make changes, you can always drop or swap a course. Banner9 is good at letting you know when classes overlap, oftentimes not even letting you add the course to your schedule).

Lastly, if you are unsure about your choices or are still confused, never be afraid to ask your adviser for more help or guidance.

It may seem stressful and daunting at first, but registering for classes is a simple process. Good luck registering!



Screenshot By Elijah Templeton | Life Editor

Screenshot of Banner9 Self-Service student profile page.

Horoscopes

shailey wooldridge | mystic correspondent

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|  <p>Aries Impulsivity could lead to regrets, especially on Sunday.</p> |  <p>Taurus This is a great week for introspection and creative pursuits.</p> |  <p>Gemini Thursday will highlight if you are giving too much or too little.</p> |
|  <p>Cancer You will gain momentum in your personal projects this week.</p> |  <p>Leo The last quarter moon asks you to invest your energy wisely.</p> |  <p>Virgo Relationships take center stage but communication could be murky.</p> |
|  <p>Libra You may feel more intuitive but also more distracted.</p> |  <p>Scorpio Emotions are heightened and hidden truths may reveal themselves.</p> |  <p>Sagittarius Reflect on personal beliefs and patterns, shed what doesn't serve you.</p> |
|  <p>Capricorn The moon enters your sign Saturday bringing clarity and focus.</p> |  <p>Aquarius Be careful with impulse financial decisions or spending.</p> |  <p>Pisces Consider and reassess long term goals to avoid squeezing into what no longer fits.</p> |

Graphic by Jerry Don Burton | Editor-in-Chief