

## “Mickey 17” is a beautiful mess

ELIJAH TEMPLETON

LIFE EDITOR

“Mickey 17” is Bong Joon-ho’s newest film and it is a complete mess in the absolute best way possible.

The film is set primarily in the year 2054 after humans have developed the technology to traverse the galaxy. The plot follows Mickey Barnes (Robert Pattinson) who is a somewhat

slow but goodhearted fella who gets in over his head after taking a sizable loan from a loan shark to open a bakery.

After the bakery goes under, Mickey and his bad influence friend Timo (Steven Yeun) are on the hook to the loan shark who threatens to kill them if he doesn’t get his money.

Fresh out of ideas and with the Earth in severe turmoil due to climate change, the pair take to the stars for

a fresh start on the planet Niflheim on an expedition led by failed congressmen turned billionaire megalomaniacal cult leader Kenneth Marshall (Mark Ruffalo).

Timo is able to charm his way into a job as a shuttle pilot while Mickey, who lacks any actual skills that would be needed on such a journey, is forced to sign up as an ‘expendable’ without reading the fine print.

An ‘expendable’ is someone whose job is to die and die often.

Using future technology that is banned on Earth to clone Mickey and restore his memories, Mickey is treated as disposable, given lethal assignments and regenerated after death over and over again.

This effectively makes Mickey a real life lab rat, sent into all manner of dangerous situations to ensure the new planet is hospitable for a future colony.

The movie really starts with Mickey number 17 who has found love with crew mate Nasha (Naomi Ackie) and

really has something to live for when Mickey 18 is printed out while Mickey 17 is believed dead on an aforementioned lethal assignment.

To this point, death has been like a nap for Mickey. A quick rest before waking up back on the ship he calls home. Now there are two Mickey’s and if Mickey 17 dies, that’s it, for good.

As the native inhabitants of Niflheim and Marshall’s goons inch closer to all-out war, Mickey must find a way to fight for the only life he has left.

I won’t say more because this is a movie that demands to be watched on the big screen. It’s a hilariously over the top mess in all the right ways and will leave you smiling from ear to ear.

Robert Pattinson is the man and really elevates this movie from mediocre to great with his mere presence and I shan’t say more, just go watch this movie!

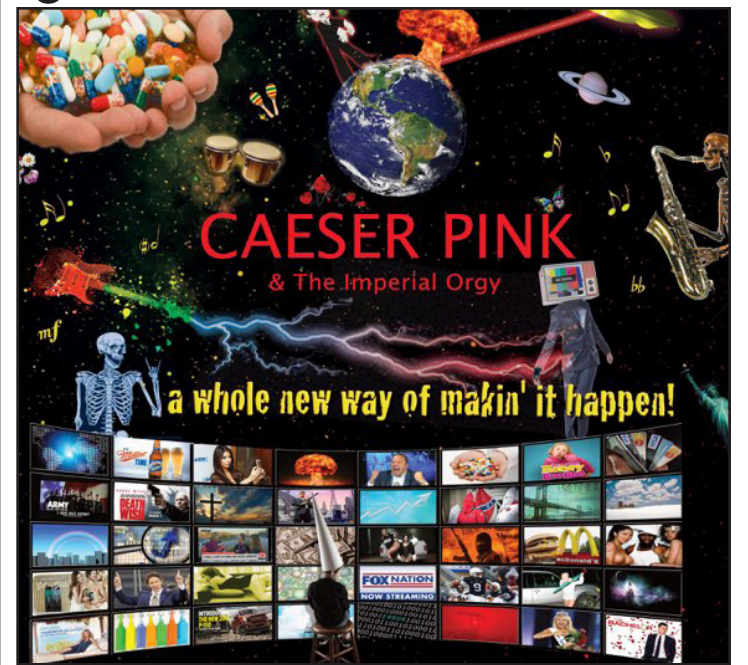
Official Score: 8/10



COURTESY OF IMDB

Pattinson as Mickey 18 (left) and Mickey 17 in “Mickey 17.”

## Caeser Pink, send a good album next time



WILL LIVINGSTON

SPORTS EDITOR

A couple of weeks ago, an album was mailed to this office, with the clear intention for The Herald to review the album. I attempted to listen to this with an open mind, which was difficult because the band also sent us a list of previous reviews from other college newspapers that were overwhelmingly negative.

Clearly this band wants me to give them a bad review, so congratulations to them: their plan worked.

With that being said, I definitely have some thoughts (mostly negative ones) about “A Whole New Way of Makin’ It Happen” by Caeser Pink and the Imperial Orgy.

To put things mildly, this album made me upset that God didn’t make me deaf. Everything that could have made this album good is noticeably absent. The Imperial Orgy has clearly made their music with the intent of being the most anti-pop, counterculture music around, but forgot to make the music good to balance it all out.

It all started with the opening track “The Invitation,” which is your standard album intro. Nothing really to say there but the next track, “Tropics of Capricorn”

PHOTO COURTESY OF APPLE MUSIC is completely out of time.

I kid you not, not one of the instruments or vocals is following any sort of tempo. And it’s not in some art-rock way where “it’s supposed to sound like that bro, you just don’t understand music bro,” way either. Caeser Pink genuinely just could not find the beat.

The next few songs weren’t much better, although I’ll admit there were a couple of songs that showed some promise.

The third track, “Backwoods Soulshaker,” was a decent rock song. However, I’m willing to bet \$10 that there’s some members of Caeser Pink that are big fans of The Jon Spencer Blues Explosion, because this song and some of the others sound like the Temu versions of that band.

This album is also affected by the near constant presence of someone just spamming every sound on the soundboard that they could find. It’s incredibly distracting from the actual music and detracts from the listening experience immensely.

Is there anything good about this album? Well, all I have to say is that Caeser Pink and the Imperial Orgy is a pretty dope band name. They can have one point for that.

Official Score: 1/10

## “The Bends” turns 30

ELIJAH TEMPLETON

LIFE EDITOR

I am relatively new to the Radiohead hype train, having only just started listening to them in 2025. Newcomer or not, “The Bends” is not just one of the best albums in the band’s discography, I would argue it is one of the best albums of all time.

Now of course music is subjective and everyone’s all time rankings would likely look very different apart from a few universal spots for generation defining artists.

I think Radiohead belongs in that category.

True revolutionaries of a genre that produced some of the best albums in history all within a few year window.

“OK Computer” is universally heralded as an all time classic. They followed that up with “Kid A,” another all timer. This is even failing to mention the reason for this article, “The Bends” which

turns 30 years old tomorrow and still sounds as great as ever.

“The Bends” was released at a time when Radiohead was still trying to properly capitalize on the world wide phenomenon that was their debut single “Creep” that took the industry by storm when first released in 1992.

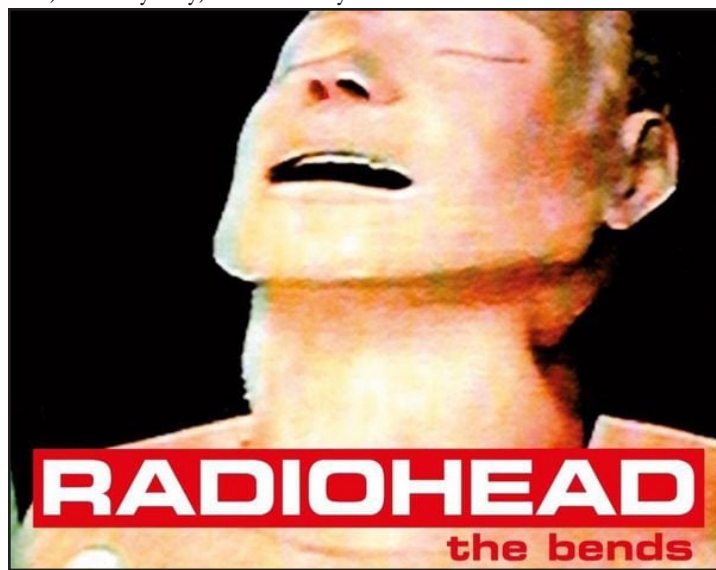
“My Iron Lung,” a track on this album was actually written about the pressure the band felt to do just that, drawing comparisons between the single as being the sole reason the band was staying alive.

This album definitively cemented Radiohead as mainstays in the industry and removed any worries that they would go down as another dreaded “one hit wonder” band.

With singles like “High and Dry” and “Fake Plastic Trees,” Radiohead began the upward trajectory that would eventually culminate with them becoming the single

biggest band in the world for a time, an honor that precious few groups have ever had.

“Fake Plastic Trees” was actually originally recorded in a lower vocal register but after seeing Jeff Buckley live, lead singer Thom Yorke decided to re-record the song in a falsetto register and the rest, as they say, was history.



COURTESY OF GENIUS

As if we needed anymore reason to love Jeff Buckley.

Basically, if you haven’t listened to this album, drop everything and listen to it now. It clocks in at just under 50 minutes of pure alternative rock goodness and will no doubt leave its mark on you, for better or worse.

## “Picture This” is a step in the right direction

LAILA CASIANO

OPINION EDITOR

I’ve come to realize that rom-coms are not my forte, with the recent release of “Picture This” confirming it.

The reason this movie even made it on my radar is because of Simone Ashley, the film’s executive producer and romantic lead. Known for her roles in Netflix’s “Sex Education” and “Bridgerton,” Ashley has spoken passionately about the importance of opening doors for women of color, particularly South Asian women, to play the lead in romantic stories.

Despite this sentiment, we still see so few South Asian women on the big screen playing lead roles in this genre. That’s what makes “Picture This” so special.

A British remake of Australia’s “Five Blind Dates,” the movie follows Pia (Ashley), as she attends her sister’s engagement party where a guru tells her that the love of her life will be one of the next five dates she has. But Pia is an independent woman who doesn’t want marriage.

Instead, she’s determined to make her portrait studio flourish — even if it’s failing and she risks eviction—while

resisting the heavy martial expectations of her semi-conservative Indian family.

Here’s the catch: When her family shows her the jewelry she’ll receive upon her marriage, she allows each family member (and friend) to set her up on blind dates. You can imagine how well that goes. Especially when her ex-boyfriend (Hero Fiennes Tiffin), forces her to confront the fact she’s never really gotten over him.

The film was fun, but there were moments that had me rolling my eyes. The writing felt weak, with some “comedic” moments coming across as juvenile. It really did feel

like an Emily Henry novel adapted for the screen, and I’m still trying to figure out if that is a good thing or not.

My biggest issue with the movie is that while the real core of this film is about promoting more roles for women of color in romantic comedies, that does not extend to the male love interest. I’m so tired of seeing romantic comedies pairing a non-white person with a white love interest.

I’m not hating on Tiffin’s performance — I actually quite enjoyed it, especially considering the only other work I’ve seen him in was the atrocious “After,”

which is essentially a Harry Styles Wattpad fan fiction adapted to the screen.

But casting directors just can’t seem to bring themselves to not cast a white actor in a rom-com. “Picture This” is really a film

about family, sisterhood and breaking cultural boundaries and traditions. It will always be refreshing to see a South Asian woman take the lead in a rom-com, but this ultimately reminds us that the genre still has plenty of room for improvement.



COURTESY OF IMDB

Simone Ashley and Hero Fiennes Tiffin in “Picture This.”

# RAMADAN @ A-STATE

## A time for reflection, growth and connection

LAILA CASIANO

OPINION EDITOR

Ramadan, the ninth month of the Islamic calendar, is a time when Muslims worldwide observe fasting (sawm), prayer (salah), reflection and community connection. This year, the holy month began Feb. 28, marking a period for spirituality and self-discipline for those who observe it.

For members of the Muslim Student Association (MSA), Ramadan is more than just fasting—it's an opportunity for personal and spiritual growth.

"It's 30-days of self-improvement—being more generous, praying more, purifying your intention and making sure you're doing things for the right reasons," Salma Abdel-Karim, MSA president, said.

For Aaliyah Mahmoud, a sophomore information system and business analytics major from Jonesboro and MSA's vice president, Ramadan is a time to "purify intentions, give charity and practice self-control."

Additionally, she said this is a time for her to get closer to faith in Allah.

"Since we're holding back from food and water, we can apply that self-control to other parts of our lives, whatever they may be," Mahmoud said.

During Ramadan, those observing can only eat and drink after sunset (Iftar)

and until sunrise (Suhoor), meaning they can not eat or drink during daylight hours.

Mahmoud said she balances her fasting with academic responsibilities by focusing on her time management. She said she recommends other Muslim students to fill their days with activities, as it helps time pass more quickly.

"Planning my day and writing down what I need to do really helps me stay on top of my academic work while fasting," Mahmoud said.

However, she said the biggest challenge has been not being able to snack during the day, as her semester schedule relied on snacks to get through her Monday, Wednesday and Friday classes.

Abdel-Karim, a junior double biology and chemistry major from Jonesboro, said the MSA hosts an annual Iftar event for students, faculty and staff to help support those who observe Ramadan.

She said this event allows MSA members to come together and share a meal, especially since many active members are international students who feel homesick or lonely during Ramadan.

"We can't sponsor dinner every night, but we make this event a priority," Abdel-Karim said. "This is also a chance for non-Muslims to learn more about Ramadan and experience it with us."

Mahmoud said the MSA strives to bring people together during Ramadan by providing resources and support, such as ensuring the prayer room is readily available. However, Abdel-Karim said the university could do more with helping the MSA promote important events and expand outreach efforts.

"It's important for people to understand that Muslims students are just like everyone else, with similar routines but with a few differences," Abdel-Karim said. "So helping with events like Islamic Awareness Week would be incredibly helpful — showcasing and normalizing our presence and giving us a chance to connect with others."

Abdel-Karim and Mahmoud said they are fortunate to observe Ramadan with their families but recognize the challenges faced by Muslim international students experiencing it alone for the first time.

Saba Jamshed, a mass communication graduate student from Pakistan and the MSA's social media coordinator, is observing Ramadan in the U.S. for the first time.

She said Ramadan in the U.S. feels different than in Pakistan. And while she said she misses the communal experience with her family, observing in the U.S. has strengthened her spirituality.

"Being away from home means there are fewer distractions so it's a chance to focus solely on your spiritual growth," Jamshed said. "But here, in my own space, I've realized that it's a great time to have that personal relationship with Allah."

As a child, Jamshed said she looked forward to the end of Ramadan to celebrate Eid al-Fitr — the festival marking the breaking of fast. Now, as she has grown older, she said her relationship with Ramadan has deepened.

"I cherish each day during Ramadan as an opportunity to further my relationship with Allah and grow spiritually," Jamshed said. "My perspective has changed from celebrating the end to embracing the whole month as a time for personal growth."

Jamshed's Ramadan routine includes scheduling prayer times and reading the Quran to better understand its message.

"My goal is to strengthen my relationship with Allah and that's what I prioritize during Ramadan and throughout the year," Jamshed said.

MSA's executive board members said they encourage the A-State's non-Muslim students to be open minded and curious about Islamic culture and traditions.

Mahmoud and Abdel-Karim said they appreciate when people ask questions, as it helps tackle misconceptions and educate others about their faith.

"Feel free to ask," Abdel-Karim said. "It's better to ask than to guess and possibly be wrong."

Jamshed said she wants people to better understand

that observing Ramadan is not about suffering.

"People often assume that fasting during Ramadan is a difficult and oppressive task, but that's not true," Jamshed said. "Ramadan is about self-discipline, devotion and spiritual growth."

Additionally, she said Islam is a religion of peace, and fasting is a spiritual act, not an act of oppression.

"You can't force anyone into Islam and you can't force anyone to fast," Jamshed said. "It's all about personal faith, choice and devotion. So, I want people to know that Islam is a beautiful and misunderstood religion—not about oppression but spiritual growth."

The MSA will host a Ramadan Iftar event Saturday, March 15 at the Pavilion at 7 p.m.



Photo Courtesy of Salma Abdel-Karim | Special to The Herald  
MSA members at the Pavilion for the 2024 Ramadan Iftar event.

## Student Speaks:

"Did you have an

imaginary friend growing up?"



Photo by Allie Carson | Staff Writer  
Beau Thomas, junior agriculture business and accounting double major from Marmaduke, Arkansas.

"I would say I was probably five or six and we'd play with lightsabers all the time. My sister had one growing up too and he was British. The name changed by the week."



Photo by Allie Carson | Staff Writer  
Shye Fischer, senior psychology major from Mountain Home, Arkansas.

"My imaginary friend was Plankton from Spongebob. I think it was his evil mastermind, that personality that I enjoyed and always wanted to be around."



Photo by Allie Carson | Staff Writer  
Tristina Wilkins, first-year nursing major from Lake City, Arkansas.

"I watched a TV show 'Opal' as a kid and she literally just has her own set of imaginary friends. I made my own friend based on her friend. The friend didn't talk. So when I made her personality for myself, I was a kid that liked to talk so I would just talk to her and she never had anything else to say."



Photo by Allie Carson | Staff Writer  
Aidan Canard, senior economics pre-law major from Tuckerman, Arkansas.

"When I was growing up, I had an imaginary friend. I called him Wood Chopper. He was a lumberjack and me and him would go on adventures, killing dinosaurs and going on wolf hunts."