

Image courtesy of Warner Bros. Pictures

## FILM

### *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows: Part II*

**GENRE:** Adventure Fantasy

**STARRING:** Daniel Radcliffe, Emma Watson & Rupert Grint

**DIRECTOR:** David Yates

**RATING:** PG-13

**RELEASE DATE:** July 15, 2011

**OUR TAKE:** <<<<<

By Brian Edmonds  
Contributing Writer

Wizardry is not for the faint of heart. This becomes evident in *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows: Part 2*, the final chapter of this generation's most popular series. While triumph almost certainly awaits Harry, even audiences familiar with the plot are not relieved of suspense and emotional attachment until the last spell has been cast. The result is a wildly entertaining and captivating 130 minutes.

Remaining mostly faithful to the book's storyline, the film

pairs satisfying payoff moments with stinging deaths of dear characters. No one is safe in this Hogwarts epic.

Director David Yates effectively casts dark shadows and terror over the wizardry world. While the spectacular special effects alone could have dominated the film, Yates allows the core characters, Harry, Ron and Hermione, to carry the plot. When the final showdown between good and evil does commence, *Hallows* does not hold back, treating audiences to vivid and fantastic displays of computer-generated magic. The fact that all the characters, minor and major alike, hold special places in our hearts makes the explosions and spells feel as real and deadly as technology allows.

Harry and the gang rarely smile, and why should they? A hauntingly sinister Lord Voldemort, played by Ralph Fiennes, slithers and sneers his way across the screen, upping the ante of evil at every turn. He is a fitting foil for the pure-of-heart Harry, portrayed yet again by Daniel Radcliffe. Radcliffe trades in the

boyish charm present in some of the earlier films for a clenched jaw and pair of white knuckles reminiscent of Clint Eastwood.

Perhaps the most appetizing moments of the film come not during violent clashing of good and evil, but in the satisfying recreation of J.K. Rowling's beautifully weaved plot. Audiences may clap at the demise of truly loathed villains, but seeing cherished minor characters rise to the occasion offers the biggest payoffs.

The first half of the movie is paced like a shot of wand-waving adrenaline, as the trio seems to sprint from scene to scene. When they do reach Hogwarts, they are no longer its students, but its defenders.

The climactic battle that ensues avoids over-dramatizing the death and destruction, a refreshing touch from the filmmakers who are presented with ample opportunity to do just so.

Finally, one must comment on the nicely wrapped epilogue to the series. It seems a bit corny at first, yet it remains a fitting conclusion to the beloved series.

## Balkans impress with self-titled debut

### MUSIC

**Balkans**  
*Balkans*

**LABEL:** Double Phantom Records

**GENRE:** Indie Rock

**TRACK PICKS:** "Edita V," "Dressed in Black" and "Black Swan"

**OUR TAKE:** <<<<<

By Matt Cohen  
Contributing Writer

In recent years, indie music has been experiencing a growing evolutionary shift toward some electronic utopia. The more simplistic guitar tones are being temporarily pushed aside by many artists to further the electronic pursuit. Loop pedals, delay, synthesizers and the numerous capabilities of digital signal processing are making a rise. Despite this growing trend, the band Balkans bypassed the electronically embellished frenzy for a more direct electric approach with their self-titled debut release.

Balkans, a local Atlanta band comprised of members currently attending Tech and Georgia State, combines elements of punk and garage rock to create driving, hook-filled indie music. The area of music that they have delved into with their first album is not entirely original; it has been attempted many times and has seen successes and failures. What gives the Balkans album any significance is the way that the band takes a known structure and skillfully remolds it into an entirely new creation. The result is a strong album from a young group, an album that excels musically and even overshadows many recent major releases.

Balkans could not stand alone with the individual pieces. The components do their part but can only fully excel as a whole. The swift, clanky electric guitars, the tight drums and the persistent

bass would not have nearly as much of an overall effect without the strained vocals from Frankie Broyles. The vocals mesh well with the intricate instrumentation and truly provide the album with its crucial, distinctive element.

The album's opening track, "Edita V," begins with a frantic, slightly discordant guitar part that, stylistically, is common throughout the album. As the band pushes through the song's verse and towards the chorus, which contains one of the strongest hooks of the album, Broyles' piercing yell, reminiscent of the resounding wail of the Walkmen's Hamilton Leithauser, adds melodic texture to the track.

"Dressed In Black" and "Black Swan," two of the album's catchier tracks, take more simplistic structural approaches with playful drumbeats, tuneful guitar riffs and melodic vocal runs. "Troubled and Done" features an Interpol-esque guitar run and a great interplay between the bass and guitar parts, with yet another soaring vocal part from Broyles.

One noteworthy characteristic of the album is the plethora of tempos presented and mastered by the band throughout the album. From "Flowers Everywhere," an angsty, harmonious mid-tempo track, the band accelerates into "Let You Have It," an exciting, thrash-filled punk number, then decelerates to a light walking pace with "Georganne." The changes in tempos throughout the album are effortless and highly effective, adding one of the more intricate elements to the overall delivery.

With their self-titled debut release, Balkans have created one of the more fun, exciting and simply enjoyable albums of the first half of 2011. With great production quality, loads of hooks and a powerfully distinct and eccentric voice to elevate the melodies, Balkans have drawn major attention to themselves and have pulled people in with an eagerness to witness what more the band can materialize.

## Fox hosts critically acclaimed *Fiddler on the Roof*

### SHOWS

#### *Fiddler on the Roof*

**LOCATION:** Fox Theatre

**DATE:** July 19, 2011

**OUR TAKE:** <<<<<

By Chris Ernst  
Senior Staff Writer

The Fabulous Fox hosts *Fiddler on the Roof* for a week as it passes through Atlanta. The acclaimed show has a strong cast and a great venue. On the corner of Peachtree and Ponce, the Fox adds just a little more timelessness and magic to the show.

Tom Alan Robbins wonderfully plays Tevye with a great

supporting cast. With only a few opening night glitches, the show is off to a strong standing ovation start, due in part to Dave FM's Jimmy Baron's cameo as Russian Number Two.

With subject matter about the war between Tradition, with a capital T, and contemporary fashion, the backdrops were oddly cubist. They popped out from the background and clashed with the main sets, which were richly detailed and luscious to look at.

Without a doubt, the backdrops were distracting and did not match the rest of the production. Given that this is a musical after all, the cartoonish effect may have been intended; however, it was very distracting.

At the Fox, the sound system is provided by the touring production, which became obvious when the sound came in and out during the show.

Being the first night of the show in Atlanta, the technical difficulties of performing in such an old venue may not have been fully figured out yet. Hopefully, these opening night hiccups can be smoothed out quickly because the singing and one-liners are a great part of the show no one should miss.

All of the actors were fantastic. Especially charismatic is the lead, Tom Alan Robbins, who is a Broadway veteran with all kinds of experience at his disposal. He originated the role of Pumbaa in

*The Lion King* and was in the original cast of *Once Upon a Mattress* with Carol Burnett.

Robbins' performance was charming and conflicted between the love of his daughters and his faith. His torment moved the audience into spontaneous applause several times.

While the backdrops are kind of weird and confusing, the rest of the production was great. The lead actor was fantastic and the rest of the cast shined. The Russian dancing was only matched by the Jewish dancing.

The cast was absolutely amazing and the popular songs were all here, including "Matchmaker, Matchmaker" and "If I Were a Rich Man." Even with a few au-

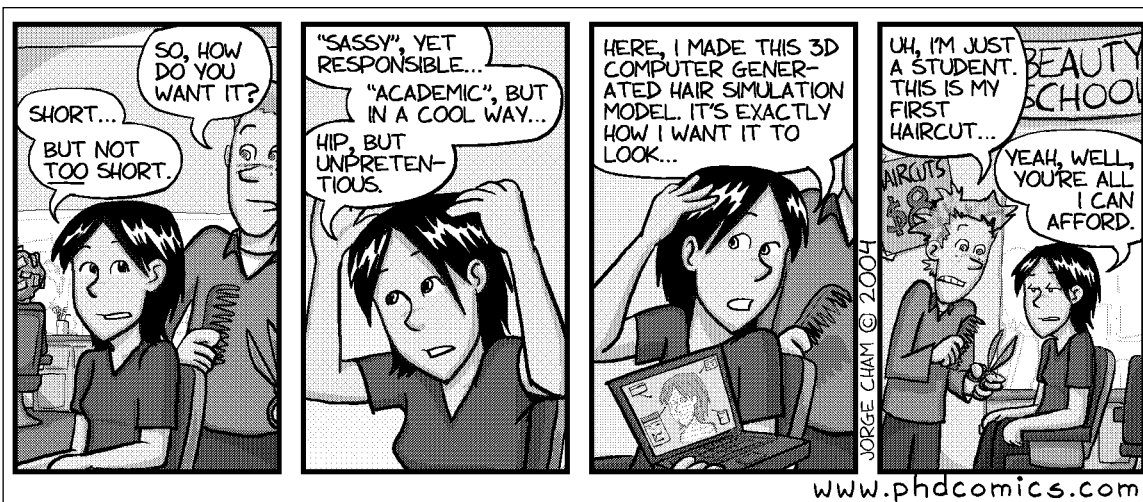
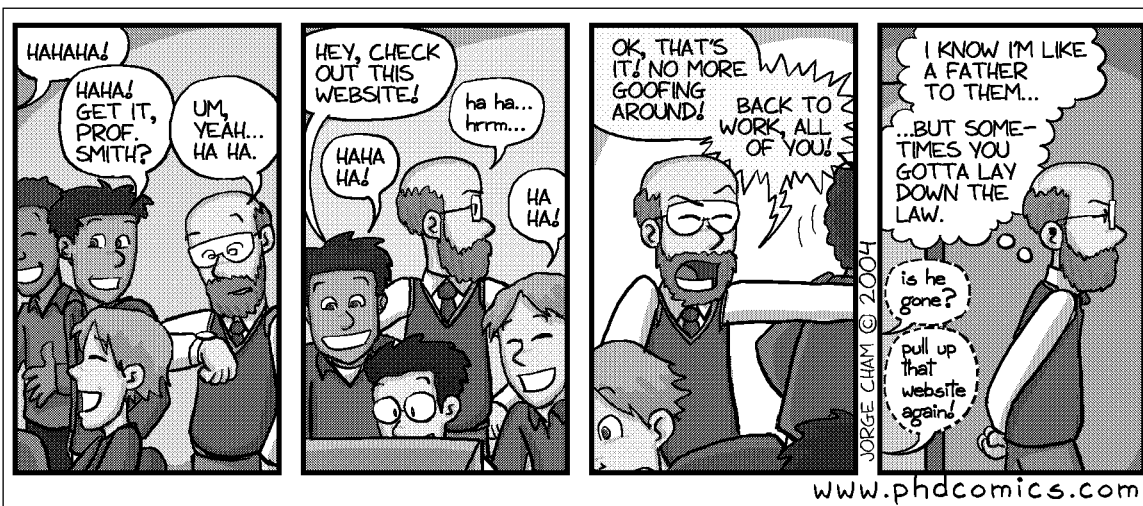
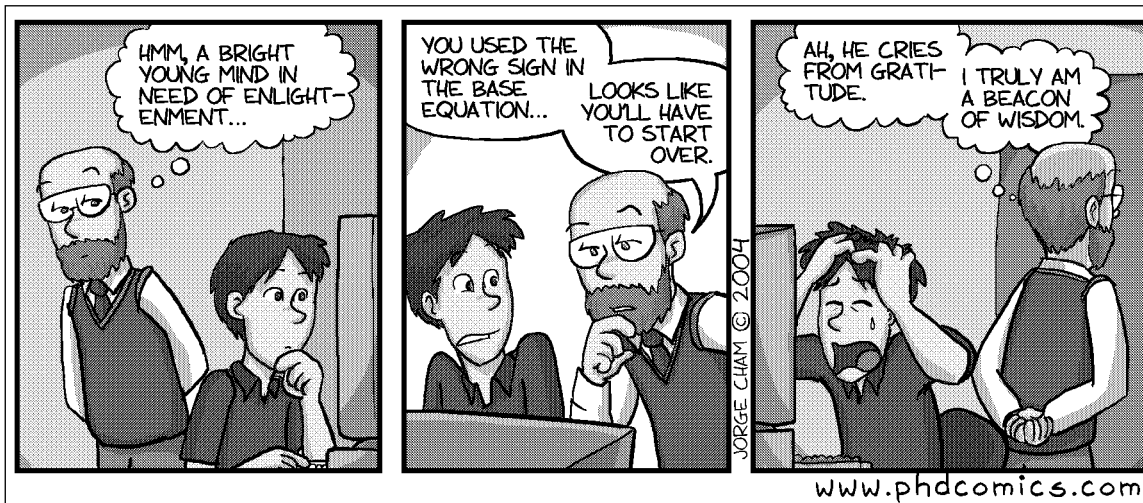
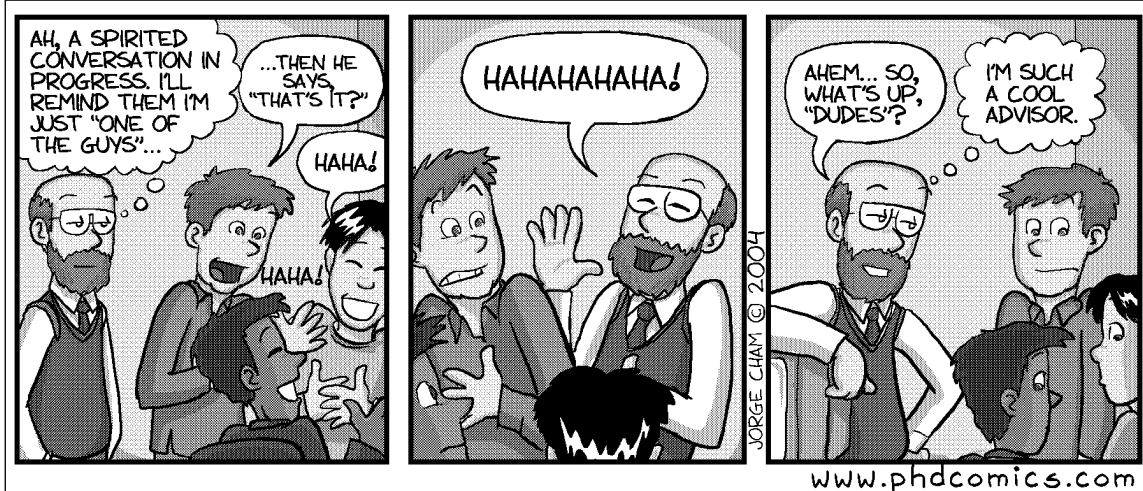


Image courtesy of Hale Centre Theatre in Utah

ral misfires, the show succeeded for over two hours. You can't go wrong with a timeless production in a timeless theater.



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