

One K-Pop Album You Don't Want to Miss

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BTS (Bangtan Sonyeondan/Bulletproof Boys) is one of the popular boy bands of K-Pop, consisting of 7 members – Jin, Suga, J-hope, Rap Monster, Jimin, V and Jungkook. Last October, they released their second full album called “Wings”, an album where one flies through art and history, and ride a rollercoaster of one's hidden emotions. By this album, they have achieved an “all-kill” on South Korean music charts, and numerous (emphasis on numerous) achievements internationally.

Wings contains 15 tracks, of which 7 are soulful solos of individual members, a bold Cypher track with the 3 rappers of the group, a soothing song with the 4 vocalists, the intro and interlude, and the rest being with all 7 members. The physical albums are sold in 4 versions – W, I, N and G, each having of a different photobook, but the CD is the same in all versions, and they all have one random member's photocard.

This album is very different from how K-Pop is stereotyped, and also from other K-Pop albums, as its theme has been taken from the book “Demian: The Story of Emil Sinclair's Youth” by Hermann Hesse, with references from The Bible itself. The album explores more themes from the members' solo songs, consisting of things the youth can feel and relate to – guilt, self-loathe, despair,



love, failure, etc. They also have songs which are positive and uplifting. Even one of them, titled “21st Century Girls”, is about girl power.

They have had 7 short films released before this album was released – a feat never seen before. The shorts successfully pull off their theme from the book, giving it a thriller movie feel which touches the peak of a curious mind. The storyline from the trailers finally reaches a debatable conclusion in the music video of the title song “Blood, Sweat & Tears”, which is beautifully set in a museum-like production design with the use of paintings and statues. The storyline is, of course, related to all these artefacts and Hesse's book. It keeps the fans in awe, turning them into mystery solvers who then share many theories on the internet of what has happened.

It should be mentioned that this story started from their previous mini albums from last year – The Most Beautiful Moment in Life Trilogy. However, there is an ongoing debate that it might have started from their first album ever. All these mind-boggling settings by the albums create theories which keep the fans in anticipation and interested on this one-of-a-kind album.

For me, Wings is a 10/10 album – one of the most unique and distinct albums in the world of K-Pop. It is enriched in art and emotion, and has done justice to the themes they have used.

A space adventure not out of this world

KAZI AKIB BIN ASAD

What happened when Star-Lord found Katniss Everdeen in a ship destined to go far, far away in outer space? He couldn't “let her go” – and that's pretty much the story of *Passengers*.

Passengers is what the internet and other people are calling a science-fiction adventure film. Released on December 21, 2016, it is directed by Morten Tyldum – the same guy who brought you *The Imitation Game* a couple years ago. Since then, he has learned the art of imitation pretty well.

Now, don't get me wrong if you think I'm bad-mouthing the movie. I've been very excited since the release of the movie's trailer. However, my experience at the theatre forced me to speak out about the flick in a very duplicitous manner: I really liked it, but then I really disliked it too.

The movie takes place in a space voyage: the starship Avalon is carrying people to a far-off planet called Homestead II, to colonise it. It is a journey that will take 120 years (not light years) and our hero super-mechanic Jim Preston (Chris Pratt) has woken from his hibernation – 90 years too soon. Alone and sad, his only “friend” is a robot bartender played by Michael Sheen.

Yes, bartender, because this spaceship has all the amenities that Hollywood can offer: gym, basketball court, restaurants serving authentic French cuisine and of course, an infinity pool looking out into the stars. I squinted a lot behind my 3D glasses but the crew was in hibernation so I got no answers to my questions.

As it happens, Jim finds a pretty writer named Aurora Lane (Jennifer Lawrence) and wants to wake her up because he's lonely. He fights himself and his compulsion but gives in eventually, duh. Now we have two lonely characters with less than a quarter of the journey complete; Aurora doesn't know it was Jim who manually woke her up from hibernation. Jim and Aurora bond over time and space, finding love and a gargantuan shopping mall of a spaceship all to themselves.

Till now, the movie was great. I loved the build-up of the characters, the raw emotions, futuristic set design and cool features, and little bouts of humour. Then came the downfall.

In five short sentences/phrases followed by a reaction,



this is what happens in the second half of the movie: Aurora finds out— ouch. The spaceship needs repairs – uh-oh. Someone else wakes up to cameo – huh. Jim needs medical attention – s***. They're back together again – ugh.

That's it, folks. The movie used up so much of its energy in the first half that there was none left for the second. The director, albeit competent in creating complex storylines and characters, failed to deliver in the important moments. The movie imitates elements from *Forrest Gump*, *Guardians of the Galaxy*, *Gravity*, *Joy*, and

many more. Pratt and J-Law gave equally memorable performances in the movie and throughout press campaigns across the globe; they're all over YouTube.

Passengers was a rocket that took off well but blew to pieces right under the stratosphere. Although a lacklustre show that I'll soon forget, I'd recommend it but do exit the halls for good during the interval.

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