

ALBUM REVIEW



Are you Feeling It Still?

NUHAN B. ABID

Portugal. The Man's latest album, *Woodstock*, is a bit of a mixed bag. On one hand, it's a perfect remedy for your EDM-infused indie dance-pop needs, a far departure from their usual alt-indie rock style, but the same tune is a huge cry of "sell-out" to a lot of fans. It's not a bad thing by any means, for the outside fan. Danger Mouse's second tenure as producer of the album with the band makes for a fantastic album for dancefloor tunes with an indie sound to it.

Album opener "Number One" actually takes samples from Ritchie Havens' performance of "Freedom" from the titular Woodstock concert, and then turns it into a hip-hop and blues inspired song, building on the spiritual undertones of Havens' song to deliver its message about heartache. While this brilliant mashup starts off the album really well, the next song is fairly forgettable, a dance anthem trying to preach about teenage youth. Despite this loss in momentum, it's still a good segue into the next two songs, which are two of the best in the album and some of the best in the entire Portugal. The Man catalogue.

"Live in the Moment", a song FIFA 18 players will recognise well, is brilliant and shows a lot more groove and makes great use of the musical style they went for this album to deliver a song about adolescence and growing up. And then there's "Feel It Still", the breakout song of this album, easily their most mainstream success to date, breaking into the top of multiple charts thus becoming one of their most

recognisable songs and one of the most popular songs of 2017 in general, winning a Grammy for Best Pop Duo/Group Performance earlier this year. And it's hard to not enjoy that song, with Gourley's pitchy vocals going "Ooh woo, I'm a rebel just for kicks, now/I been feeling it since 1966, now" giving the catchiest hook in the entire album that shows well how the band hit a stride with their new dance-infused style.

"Rich Friends" and "Keep On" are a lot closer to their standard more rock-esque sound, with strong riffs carrying on from the previous dancefloor bash. "So Young" is heavily rhythmic, accentuated by the great vocals of Zoe Manville. "Mr. Lonely" is a heartbreaking song about '77 New York and possibly the strongest overall lyrically in the album. "Tidal Wave" is a lot more subdued compared to the other dance tracks, but still groovy and enjoyable. The final track, "Noise Pollution" is the result of their hip-hop inspiration from working with Beastie Boys' founder Mike D, featuring vocals from Mary Elizabeth Winstead as well, and a great closer to the album and its messages.

Overall, it's enjoyable, but fans of their last albums won't find it as enjoyable as the bands goes in a new direction musically. It's a respectable effort, but perhaps a little lost on those who came to enjoy indie rock and got some dance pop.

Nuhan B. Abid is someone who actually thinks puns and sarcasm are top class forms of humour. Tell him that 'sar-chasm' is TOTALLY the best thing ever at nuhanbabid@hotmail.com

MOVIE REVIEW

Ant-Man and the Wasp

Bigger things are yet to come

KAZI SABITA EHSAN

For us Marvel fans still reeling from the pain in our hearts and the bitter feeling left in our stomachs by the emotional roller coaster that was *Avengers: Infinity War*, "Ant-Man and the Wasp" is a welcome respite. I walked into the theatre hoping to see our fun-loving superhero's antics and wondering what Dr. Hank Pym (Michael Douglas) and his daughter had done with the unfinished Wasp Suit from the first instalment.

Honestly, I got much more than I was expecting. Full of good vibes and jokes, the movie featuring our favourite shrinking superheroes and their mentor keeps it light-hearted and quite engaging.

Set after *Captain America: Civil War*, the movie leads up to the events of *Avengers: Infinity War*. We see Scott Lang (Paul Rudd) dealing with the repercussions of his actions in Germany where he fought alongside Captain America. Meanwhile, new enemies loop up. The quantum realm is delved into more than ever before and what follows is interesting to say the least.

What I found commendable about this particular movie is that unlike many Marvel movies where key villains threaten entire planets or the universe, antagonists in Ant-Man and the Wasp keep it pretty focused and close to home. No, they are not going after universal detonation or any cosmic calamity. Instead, the problem arises primarily due to conflicts of interest between the main parties. The antagonists have their own history that make us see from their perspective, which leads to us somewhat sympathising with them at times. No character is completely black or white, but grey, which makes it a refreshing watch.

They emphasise on the humour in this movie and we see Ant-Man's goofy side –

not taking himself very seriously and making us laugh our hearts out.

The emotional touch given to the story really is one of the best things about the movie. We see several relationships being explored deeply throughout the movie. Be it Hope Pym's (Evangeline Lilly) quest to find her long-lost mother, Hank's determination to rescue his wife or the father-daughter equation of Lang-Cassie and Hank-Hope, the heartfelt story arcs built around these relationships give the movie a touch of emotion and seriousness that is "just right."

Like any Marvel movie, the action hits fast and creates chaos on screen. Although it does seem to drag at times and the action sequences leave room for improvement, it's a definite upgrade from the first Ant-Man movie. The Wasp, who we always knew to be stronger and more experienced than Ant-Man, is a delight to watch and undoubtedly establishes her ground as a major character within the MCU.

Ant-Man movies have never shared the same ambition or intensity of other MCU flicks such as *Infinity War* or *Black Panther*, but its modest and simple storytelling with stories that run smoothly on screen seems to work for them perfectly, and this sequel is no exception. With all its simplicity and mostly "down-to-earth" setting, the movie provides just what the audience needs from Marvel right now.

All in all, Kevin Feige has done it again. Is this movie a must watch? I would say "yes". Also, for those who are wondering exactly where Ant-Man is and what his role in the war against the mad Titan will be, stick to your seats for the post-credit scenes. Trust me, you will not be disappointed.

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