

AM drops into controversial popularity 2 years later

Cam Voller
Illustration Artist

North English grunge rockers Arctic Monkeys dropped their most highly-anticipated album, *AM*, in mid-2013; needless to say, most fans were extremely pleased with the record, which appeared on CD, vinyl, and download platforms worldwide. Several songs on the album were revered as "absolute bests" within days of the release, most notably "Do I Wanna Know", "R U Mine?", and "Why'd You Only Call Me When You're High?". These choices are all understandable, as they're fast, well-recorded, and smooth listening.

Not long after the release of *AM*, controversy struck over the group's reputation. Considered to be mem-

bers of the grunge genre since their sophomore album, *Favourite Worst Nightmare*, they've definitely changed their sound. The true controversy comes with the claims that the 2013 release is, in fact, "their worst album so far": an opinion which has been called into question time and again by hundreds of thousands all over the world.

Having listened to all 12 tracks over and over since the release, my experience has been nothing but extremely pleasurable and expectation-shattering. I see no reason to give hate and disregard toward the album, and can find nothing but some of the best writing and production I've ever heard within the album. Tenor vocalist Alex Turner, (also serving as alternating lead and rhythm guitarist on all tracks), has a voice as smooth as silk, and

more impressive than most vocalists dream, who just as well has a falsetto voice that leaves jaws dropping. There are very few vocalists in the modern era that can hope to reach the skill and reputation of Turner.

With the calm-as-can-be Matt Holders playing drums with the lightest touch, (but also an entertaining tendency to play harder than most), offering backing vocals and beats to hum, whistle, or tap a foot along with, songs like "Arabella" are worth listening to time and time again.

Also offering a killer set of skills is bassist Nick O'Malley, who can take a four-string, 26-fret bass make notes as fast and powerful as any guitar solo. His skills are particularly noticeable in track two, "R U Mine?", as the song features his instrument most prominently.

The final group member, Jamie

Cook, has fingers-on-frets fast enough to cause one's head to spin, and offers rhythmic tendencies to leave a sort of "dramatic pause" within a track. Cook most often trades guitarist positions with Turner, but the change is a seamless one.

The Arctic Monkeys have absolutely set themselves apart from the most popular grunge artists of our time, definitely trumping over bands such as La Dispute, or Being As An Ocean; both of the latter groups are considered grunge, but tend to take on a more spoken-word rhythm-and-poetry sort of style.

Along with albums such as *AM*, *Favourite Worst Nightmare*, and *Humburg*, the South Yorkshire grunge rockers are the latest group to watch for, but also to have a proverbial throwback with, with their older works considered by most to be the

best yet. You can find the group on *YouTube*, *Spotify*, *iHeart Radio*, and most music apps on your smartphone or other devices.

I rate *AM* a solid three paws out of four, mainly because it is a very well-done piece of recording, but it is not their best work, with *Favourite Worst Nightmare* taking my vote as best; the band does have further work planned, though, so keep your eyes open, as *AM* has left a bit of room for some work. So if you're ever looking for a great tune during an awesome book, or just a relaxing sound you can sing to as you drift into sleep, the Arctic Monkeys are definitely one to be considered.



Senior Isaac Smith takes a selfie.

Photo by Alec Hannan

Snapchat climbing to hottest app on Iphone and Android market

Alec Hannan
Staff Reporter

The relatively new, and one of the hottest apps on the market in 2015, Snapchat. It is an app that you can instant message with a twist; the messages you send are actually pictures with a timer you can set to let someone view it for a certain amount of time.

Created by Evan Spiegel in September, 2011, the app started out very unpopular and unknown until iPhone users all over discovered it on their app store. Up until October 22, 2012, Snapchat had not made any revenue whatsoever but between that date and February 2013, it had made over \$13.5 million. The app is a great way to connect more personally with friends than if you were texting them.

The app has gone through so many different updates with bug fixes and new, fun ways to use the app. They added best friends so everyone can see who everyone Snapchats the most, but so many users didn't like that feature and claimed it was a violation of privacy so a new update made it so only you can see your best friends on your Snapchat. They've made it more user friendly by instead of tapping and holding a Snapchat to view it, you can now just tap, let go and tap again to close the Snapchat.

A relatively new feature to Snapchat is Snapcash which is a feature where you can send money from a credit card to someone else over a message. Snapcash can be used to quickly pay someone back or split a restaurant bill.

The Snapchat story feature has innovated Snapchat by making it more like the other social media out there, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram etc. You can post Snapchats you take to everyone on your friends

list. Although users complain about there not being a time limit on the length of a Snapchat story, it remains as one of its most notable features.

Recently, a new update came out for Snapchat where you can transform your face to do and look like animals, barfing rainbows, heart eyes and many more. Snapchat is always making new effects like these everyday so you can constantly be entertained and entertain your friends. The update also includes your very own profile where you have a unique bar code that friends can add you with.

The downside to Snapchat is that if you have a limited data plan on your phone and you're not on WIFI, it swallows up your data within a couple days. You will see your battery life plummet to zero if you are constantly taking Snapchats.

When you take a picture on the app, you can slide on the screen in order to edit the color and add a filter. If you were to keep sliding passed the filter, a *Geotag* with an interesting graphic relating to where you are in the world. For example, you can scroll on your picture until you find the Brighton geotag which is orange lettering with a football on top of the writing.

Other than a few minor issues with Snapchat, it is a great way to see your friends everyday even if it's not in person. Minimal complaints and high popularity makes a great app that can stay at the top of the charts for months and maybe even years to come.



Destiny, The Taken King shines light into gaming darkness

Justin Bennett
Staff Reporter

One year ago Bungie, the masterminds behind Halo, and Activision, the publishers of Call of Duty, teamed up to bring us *Destiny*, a firstperson shooter MMO hybrid which was severely overhyped at release. It didn't even come close to meeting expectations. With less backstory than the Halo Combat Evolved instruction manual and a plot that makes even less sense than *Transformers: Age of Extinction*, we all just assumed this game would die out after a year or two. But Bungie seems determined to prove us wrong, and *Destiny, The Taken King* blows those expectations of failure right out of the water. With an actually interesting story and more fleshedout characters, *The Taken King* is finally giving us what we wanted from *Destiny*.

With a \$40 price tag *The Taken King* may seem like a robbery, but with over a dozen new story missions, a new raid, a new area to explore, two new multiplayer modes, 3 new subclasses, and a whole lot

of new gear to collect, this already has more content than the two previous DLC, *The Dark Below* and *The House of Wolves*. It also has a better story than the original game. After killing Crota in *The Dark Below*, his father, Oryx, who's considered a god to his people, comes for revenge. To survive his wrath, you need to unlock longlost powers, disable a megaweapon aboard Oryx's dreadnought, fight off his army of abominations, and then finally kill the Hive god himself.

Bungie got the story right with this DLC, but they didn't stop there; they also fleshed out the character roles and personalities in the story. Your AI companion Ghost returns after his absence from the previous two DLCs, this time with new voice actor Nolan North taking the reins, doing a much better job than previous voice actor Peter Dinklage. Your commanding Zavala, Cayde, and Ikora, also take larger roles in *The Taken King*, helping guide you through missions and coordinating with your ghost. Eris Morn, your guide in *The Dark Below* DLC, also takes on a larger role in the story

offices this time, helping guide you through Hive puzzles and even "lending" you her ship to sneak aboard Oryx's dreadnought.

Destiny, The Taken King was Bungie's last lifeline for this game, and they didn't waste it. This time around they were able to make a gripping story with plot twists and were able to breathe some life into the characters. My only complaint with this is that it

still doesn't give us any more backstory into the *Destiny* universe, where these alien races came from, how humanity was put on the verge of extinction, or why our enemy's waited so long to attack us again. This is something I hope will get addressed in a future DLC, because the story can only go on so far before explanation of the backstory is needed. Right now however, *The Taken King* renews faith that Bungie can still make a great story, and it deserves all 4 of its paws.



Ridley Scott and Matt Damon make The Martian out of this world

Bryce Salerno
Sports Editor

Director Ridley Scott is best known for his 1979 scientific fiction horror film, *Alien*. It was the perfect blend of great writing, compelling story development, and unique sci-fi elements. Scott's most recent film, *The Martian*, is no exception to the extremely high standard that fans from Scott's work have come to expect. From the opening scene of *The Martian*, you will be amazed with what Scott has created. The landscape of Mars appears incredibly bare and lonely, a perfect setting for Scott's newest science fiction survival film.

Based on Andy Weir's novel of the same name, Matt Damon plays the NASA astronaut, Mark Watney, who during a mission to Mars, is accidentally left on the deserted planet during a windstorm while his crewmates are forced to make an emergency takeoff. With nothing left but the gear the crew left behind and his tenacious attitude, Watney must learn to survive indefinitely on a lifeless planet as well as needing to figure out how to contact Earth so they can send a rescue mission to return him back to his home planet.

Damon offers a masterful performance as Watney, providing comedy, despair, as well as insights on lessons that he had learned during his seven months on Mars. The Damon takes the viewer through Watney's emotional highs and lows, allowing us to relate to the main character even in the completely foreign situation. A few of the best scenes in *The Martian* are when Damon is recording his video logs. These allow Damon to explain what is happening without causing the audience to feel that there are forced scenes with a purpose of only progressing the story. The logs also add scenes that do not have a sense of redundancy, and the scenes feel of something that a scientist such as Watney would do.

If there is one problem with *The Martian*, it is the supporting characters. There are many characters required to advance the story, such as Watney's crew and the NASA scientists working tirelessly to get him home. All these characters are developed well, but it is the time required to develop these characters that take away from the main focus of the movie- Watney's struggle to survive on the desolate planet.

In addition to sometimes over-

developed supporting characters, there is also an attempt to add a "villain" to the movie in the form of Teddy Sanders, the director of NASA who believes that it is not worth the time, money, and effort it would require to retrieve Watney. It makes sense that there needs to be an antagonist, however this feels shoehorned in and his motivation never becomes clear. Him and his lesser employees have long scenes where they argue about a mission to rescue Watney and these drag on far too long. Later in the film he suddenly switches to trying to help get Watney off which doesn't make a perfect sense in the context of the story. The real conflict in the film is not the NASA employees trying to convince Sanders to help Watney, but Watney going against the hostile Mars environment.

Overall, *The Martian* is a fun, interesting movie that blends comedy, science fiction, and survival into one fantastic film.

