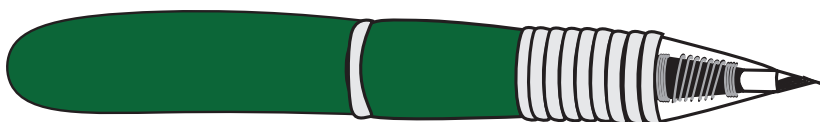
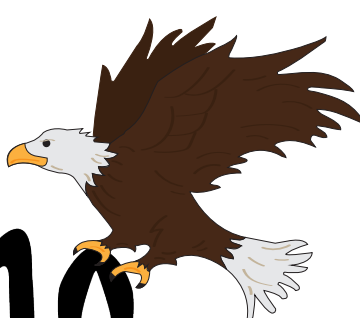




Check out more
breaking news at
easternecho.com

The Eastern Echo



Welcome back, Eagles

MONDAY, JANUARY 8, 2024 | VOLUME 140, ISSUE 01

● SERVING EMU AND YPSILANTI SINCE 1881



SPORTS:

Korey Hernandez issues apology for punching South Alabama player post bowl game



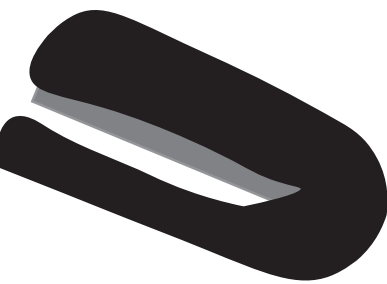
REVIEW:

'Aquaman and the Lost Kingdom' is an underwater trainwreck



REVIEW:

'Poor Things' is a pretty movie with room for improvement



Broadway star Jalen Harris reflects on newly released music and acting

VICTORIA SMITH
CONTENT EDITOR

Jalen Harris recalls himself as having been a creative person ever since childhood. Growing up in Memphis in a musical environment, with his siblings also being musicians, he was interested in the entertainment industry from as early as he can remember.



PHOTO CREDIT: JULIA RAE HARRIS

"It's like you eat, breathe, and sleep it in so many ways," Harris said.

It was around the time in which he competed on American Idol, around ages fourteen and fifteen, that Harris says his dreams began to take on a more "serious" tone. It was then that he knew he wanted to become a singer. He had the desire to create music and perform around the world.

Harris soon began to attend dance classes twice a week, partook in school musicals, and began to work with different coaches.

"I also had a mentor, which is so important, I feel like, when you're pursuing a life in a creative space and world," Harris said.

Now 28-years-old, Harris has gone on to star as Simba in Disney's touring production of "The Lion King," has appeared in HBO's "Lovecraft Country," and has portrayed Eddie Kendricks in the touring Broadway musical "Ain't Too Proud: The Life and Times of The Temptations" for the past two years.

In October, Harris released his debut EP "ManneKin The EP."

Harris began working on the project in February of this year. As he was still touring in "Ain't Too Proud: The Life and Times of The Temptations," he had to schedule his time in the studio.

With a touring schedule that consisted of around eight to 10 layoffs, Harris would finish a leg of the tour, travel to the studio on Monday, work in the studio from Tuesday to Sunday, and travel to the next touring city on the following Monday.

After four to four and a half months of recording, Harris then began working on visuals and other aspects of the album.

"The music that is on this EP is truly

me. It's truly the sounds I hear in my head, the sounds that make me move and make me feel a certain type of way," Harris said.

Harris notes that the creation of his earlier works were accompanied by a feeling of being "boxed in." With this EP, however, he was able to implement his input more.

"ManneKin The EP" aims to challenge listeners in how they not only view themselves, but also in how they view one another.

"I definitely want people to look deeper in themselves. It's an inner experience, I think, when you listen to the record and hear the different analogies and wordplay..." Harris said.

Alongside the release of his EP, Harris is still actively portraying Eddie Kendricks in "Ain't Too Proud: The Life and Times of The Temptations."

On Dec. 23, the cast completed its second Detroit leg of the tour.

Reflecting on being in Detroit, the city known as the origin of The Temptations, Harris says it is an emotional and thrilling experience to be back a second time.

"I feel like I have the same kind of butterflies in my stomach because I just know how much this music, how much The Temptations, and how much these men mean to this city," Harris said.

Harris also says he has learned much from Eddie Kendricks through his portrayal of him. He has garnered a sense of wisdom on how to speak up for himself and how to trust his gut instincts more.

Looking ahead, Harris hopes to one day open up for Lenny Kravitz on his tour while



also paying tribute to his heroes, such as Prince and Michael Jackson.

"I'm definitely looking forward to more things happening, especially now that I've branched more so into my music career," Harris said.

From sketching to sneakers, how EMU alumni Chris Kaufman co-founded StockX

AARON HUGHES
MANAGING EDITOR

Born with an obsession with design and improving processes, EMU alumni Chris Kaufman has been able to use his creativity to build one of the fastest-growing online marketplaces. Kaufman along with other co-founders Dan Gilbert, Josh Lubner, and Greg Schwartz created StockX, a Detroit-based online sneaker resale site worth \$3.8 billion.

Kaufman has always had a mind for entrepreneurship and design. At a young age he gained an interest in drawing and designing letterforms, and realized he could apply his talents to solving business problems. This is what led him to get his Bachelor's in design at Eastern.

"For me, graphic design was always this perfect intersection of art and business because largely graphic designers are solving problems that involve some kind of economic

model. Whether that is brand design or product design, websites, apps, things like that. I've always been really interested in both of those things," Kaufman said.

Kaufman largely credits the professors in the design program for giving him the knowledge he has today.

"The three professors that I had were Ryan Molloy, Leslie Atzmon, and Andy Maniotes. It was still the same three people running the program 20 years later. What they do is they bring unique perspectives to the table where they are thinking about these things," Kaufman said. "I think the program at EMU has a history of doing a really good job at that. That was my experience and I know that continues to be the experience of the program."



PHOTO CREDIT: CHRIS KAUFMAN

Following his graduation, Kaufman found himself interning at Quicken Loans, now known as Rocket Mortgage. There he worked on marketing user interface and experience projects which is where he met the founder, Dan Gilbert.

"He was super interested in design. I got to know him pretty well and I got to sit in a lot of meetings with him and talk about design and how that impacted business," Kaufman said. "I moved within the company, was promoted to interactive design director, started a company internally in marketing called Quizzle with a couple other people that we spun off into its own company."

Kaufman was involved in multiple startups in his early career which is also where he met Schwartz. At one point when business started to plateau, Schwartz and Kaufman received an offer from Yahoo to acquire the company and leave Detroit for Silicon Valley. However, thanks to the support of Gilbert they decided to stay home.

"Dan basically said, hey, you are Detroit guys. You have always told me you want to be a part of revitalizing the city by building businesses, creating jobs, being a part of what we are doing down here. And I've been thinking about this job and I do not like the idea of you guys moving to California, not being able to do that anymore," Kaufman said.

Though the idea of turning down this deal was scary, Kaufman felt relieved at being able to stay where it all started. The next Monday, Kaufman, Gilbert, and Schwartz put their brains together and came up with the idea of using stock market ideas and applying them to retail. Later focusing on sneakers they brought in Lubner who had already created the "Kelley Blue Book" of shoes called Campless.

Eleven months later in February of 2016, they officially launched. In the early stages they used a 10x10 janitor closet as a sneaker authentication room and used to

carry hundreds of sneakers up and down an elevator. Now seven years later, StockX has a host of facilities around the world in New Jersey, Mexico City, London, Hong Kong, and more.

Today StockX is one of the premier shoe reselling site. Allowing thousands of individuals to anonymously sell and buy verified clothes, electronics and accessories.

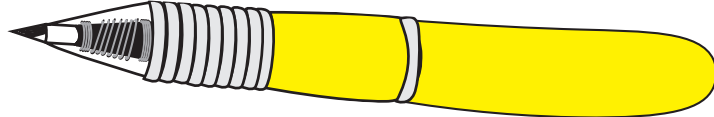
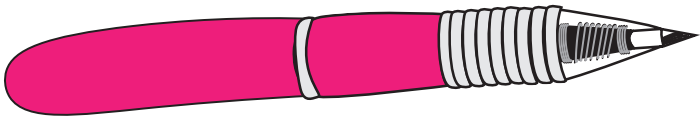
Kaufman still takes time to come back to Eastern and find ways to interact with the community. From visiting design classes, working with Dr. Chowdhury on management strategy and innovation, and working as an advisor for the Entrepreneurship Certificate and Graduate Certificate program.

"I think the university gave me a lot and I feel like I'm very fortunate to be in the position that I'm in. The least I can do is to provide some time and resources to be able to give back and hopefully afford people some opportunities," Kaufman said.

As many students celebrate graduating this time of year and move onto the next steps of their career, Kaufman offered some advice to the graduates.

"The power of your network cannot be underestimated. Making connections, reaching out to people, asking for help, asking for advice. I think you will be surprised how many people say yes. Some people will not respond to that, that's okay. But there are more people that will respond and will be more than happy to talk and tell you about things from their perspective, because we've all failed at some point," Kaufman said.

"The biggest thing for me is really just focus on the people. Businesses are about the people and if you are going to start a business, the most important thing you will do is building your team and backing your partners and that's absolutely critical. If you're going to go work for somebody else, the boss you work for is going to make or break that experience. So choose wisely and carefully, and it will make all the difference."



Instagram @EASTERNECHOOFFICIAL



TikTok @THEEASTERNECHO



Facebook @THEEASTERNECHO

EASTERNECHO.COM

What's
The Move?
Jan. 8 - 14

MADISON CANTRELL
LEAD PHOTOGRAPHER

Art Cart Pop-Up Series - Jan. 8
Feeling creative? Campus Life's Art Cart Pop-Up Series opens on Jan. 8 from 3 - 5 p.m. with picture frame painting. The Art Cart will be located on the first floor of the Student Center almost every Monday from January through April with rotating crafts. All events are free and supplies are limited.

Open Basketball - Jan. 9 & 11
Looking for a place to play basketball? This week, attend open basketball at the REC/IM. The REC/IM basketball courts will be open to all from 5 - 9 p.m. on Jan. 9 and 11.

One Hit Wonders Trivia - Jan. 9
Jam out to your favorite One Hit Wonders at Keystone Bar & Arcade on Jan. 9 at 7:30 p.m. with two rounds of One Hit Wonders Trivia. Trivia is free to play and gift card prizes will be awarded to the winning teams.

Depot Town Comedy Open Mic - Jan. 10
Looking for a good laugh? Join local Ypsi comic and host Lisa Green at the Depot Town Comedy Open Mic, a weekly event, on Dec. 13 from 7:30 - 10:30 p.m. located at 734 Brewing Company. This comedy show is free and welcomes all to the inclusive comedy space.

Visualize to Thrive - Jan. 11
Join Campus Life and the Holman Success Center for Visualize to Thrive for a night to organize and prep for the new semester. On Jan. 11 from 7 - 9 p.m., create a vision board, get free school supplies, enjoy snacks, and more at the Eagle Study Tables on the first floor of Halle Library. The event is LBC approved.

Karaoke - Jan. 11 & 12
Like to sing? Keystone Bar & Arcade hosts karaoke every Thursday and Friday from 8 p.m. to 12 a.m. Doors open at 6 p.m. and sign-ups begin at 6:30 p.m.

Ypsi Friday Movies At The Museum - Jan. 12
The film "The Year of Living Dangerously" will be shown on Jan. 12 at the Ypsilanti Historical Museum's basement theater. The event is hosted by James Mann, a local historian and film lover, and the movie will begin at 7 p.m. Free admission and popcorn!

EMU football's Korey Hernandez issues apology for punching South Alabama player post bowl game

BLAKE MQUEARY
SPORTS EDITOR

After the University of South Alabama football program captured its first ever bowl game victory against Eastern Michigan University at the 68 Ventures Bowl, 59-10, a punch from EMU's senior defensive back Korey Hernandez ignited a post-game brawl at Hancock Whitney Stadium.

While South Alabama was celebrating and singing its anthem with fans, Hernandez ran up from behind Jaguars' cornerback Jamarrien Burt and struck him, which then caused the brawl.

It is not confirmed why Hernandez displayed the action, but some speculate that it was due to a facemask call in the second quarter, while others believe something that was said by Burt caused Hernandez to lash out.

Hernandez did indeed take to X, formerly known as Twitter, after the incident and issued an apology to Burt, South Alabama head coach Kane Wommack, and the EMU community:

"I must first apologize for the embarrassment that I have caused for my family, my team, and the Mid-American Conference by my actions [last night] ... I understand how my decision impacted so many others, and I am fully accountable in this matter. I will not allow this incident to define my character or my path moving forward as a leader, an athlete, an Eagle, and a father," Hernandez wrote in the statement.

Eastern Michigan Vice President and Director of Athletics Scott Wetherbee also issued a statement pointing out that the school strongly condemned the situation:

"We strongly condemn the actions of some of the student-athletes on the EMU football team in the ugly incident that took place following the 68 Ventures Bowl. We are deeply upset and embarrassed by what happened," Wetherbee said in the statement.

South Alabama Athletics Director Joel Erdman expressed his gratitude towards EMU for reaching out and apologizing about the situation:

"We are grateful to the leadership at Eastern Michigan University for taking ownership of the incident and reaching



PHOTO CREDIT: JAYLA FORD
out to our leadership here at South Alabama to apologize and ensure us they will fully investigate the matter," Erdman said in the statement.

Eastern Michigan men's basketball team beats defending Mid-American Conference champions Kent State University

BLAKE MCQUEARY
SPORTS EDITOR

It was a nail-biting finish inside the George Gervin GameAbove Center as the Eastern Michigan University men's basketball team defeated the defending Mid-American Conference champions Kent State University after a game-winning floater from Orlando Lovejoy gave the Eagles the 71-69 win at the buzzer.

"He's battled injuries all offseason, and he's not even at full strength right now," EMU Head Coach Stan Heath said. "The hardness of that kid, the toughness, he's a special guy and I'm glad he's on our side. He sets the tone for us defensively and for us to have success, we have to be a good defensive team, and he leads that charge."

An old friend of EMU head coach Stan Heath is the Kent State men's basketball team, as Heath served as the Golden Flashes head coach during the 2001-02 season. During his time, Heath led Kent State to the NCAA Tournament Elite Eight.

"If it's not Eastern Michigan, I'm one of Kent's biggest cheerleaders," Heath said. "Those are some of my closest friends, they accelerated my career, but obviously this [EMU] is my alma mater so I have love here."

Things would go the Eagles' way in the first couple of minutes of play as redshirt junior Connor Serven (Prairie City, Ill.) threw down a slam dunk to give EMU an 8-6 lead with 15:53 left to play in the first half.

The Golden Flashes would answer back as they built a 23-17 lead, but junior forward Jalin Billingsley (Cleveland, Ohio) would

euro-step his way for a bucket to cut the Eagles' deficit, 23-21, with 5:28 left in the first half.

The rest of the half would be all Kent State as the Golden Flashes went on a 10-0

Eagles would go on a 7-0 run highlighted by a three-pointer from freshman Arne Osojnik (Ljubljana, Slovenia) to cut the deficit to 49-39 with 12:09 to play.

The Eagles came soaring back as an 11-3

State to the free-throw line where they would convert both to go up, 66-63, but the Eagles would come down and swing it Osojnik as he hit the go-ahead three-pointer to tie things up, 66-66, and sent it to overtime.

In overtime, both sides would trade baskets to put the score at 69-69 with a little over 20 seconds left to play. The Eagles would put the ball into the hands of sophomore guard Orlando Lovejoy (Detroit, MI.) as he would hit the game-winning floater to win it for the Eagles at the buzzer, 71-69.

"When you beat a team like Kent, just mentally it makes you feel like okay we have a good team and can beat people," Heath said. "I think this win can do a lot for us, but we have to be locked in for tomorrow and get ready for Central Michigan. The MAC is the MAC, there's no easy games, I don't care who you are."

Despite losing the shooting battle in the first half, the Eagles would finish the game shooting 47.5% from the field (28-59) while the Golden Flashes shot 46.4% (26-56).

Lovejoy led the Eagles offensively as he finished with 16 points, three rebounds, three steals, and two assists, while freshman Connor Serven finished with 15 points and eight rebounds. Acuff chipped in 11 points.

"Acuff's our guy but he didn't have his best game as Kent State was all over him, but to see other guys step up, it's not going to do anything but make our team better in the long run," Heath said.

Next up, the EMU men's basketball team will host Central Michigan University inside the G3 on Tuesday, Jan. 9. That game is scheduled to tip-off at 7 p.m. and will be streamed live on ESPN+.



PHOTO CREDIT: EMU ATHLETICS
EASTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY MEN'S BASKETBALL GUARD ORLANDO LOVEJOY LAYS THE BALL INTO THE BASKET AGAINST WAYNE STATE UNIVERSITY.

run to close out the first half with a 38-26 advantage.

Shooting would be the key to success for Kent State in the first half as the Golden Flashes shot 60% from the field (15-25) while the Eagles shot just 40% (10-25). The difference would be the three-point shooting as Kent State shot 55% from beyond the arc to EMU's 14%.

Kent State would continue its hot streak in the second half of play as the Golden Flashes ran out to a 49-32 lead before the

run resulted in EMU coming within two of Kent State, 53-51, with 7:33 left to play. Then, after trading some baskets, the Golden Flashes would attempt to steal the Eagles' momentum as they built their lead to 62-56 with 4:10 remaining.

EMU would then battle back within four points right before junior guard Tyson Acuff (Detroit, MI.) would hit a three-pointer to cut the score, to 63-64, with 38 seconds left to play.

An intentional foul would send Kent

Toledo snaps Eastern Michigan women's hoops winning streak

BLAKE MCQUEARY
SPORTS EDITOR

It was the return of the MAC (Mid-American Conference) champions inside the George Gervin GameAbove Center in Ypsilanti, MI., as the University of Toledo women's basketball team battled against the Eastern Michigan University women's basketball team.

Heading into the matchup, EMU interim head coach Ke'Sha Blanton was searching for her fourth consecutive win at the helm after starting 3-0, but the Rockets had other plans as they walked away with a 48-35 win, ending EMU's three-game winning streak.

"I'm just making sure our players have a great time, and the more they buy in, the easier it is," Blanton said. "My goal by the time all of this is over is to just instill values into them that they can take with them for life."

Junior center Tayra Eke (Madrid, Spain) would start the game off hot for the Eagles, scoring six early points as they found themselves tied with the Rockets, 6-6. The Rockets would finish the first quarter on an 8-2 run to start the second quarter with a



PHOTO CREDIT: EMU ATHLETICS
EASTERN MICHIGAN JUNIOR CENTER TAYRA EKE SHOOT A FREE THROW FOR THE EAGLES AFTER FOUL.

14-8 advantage.

The Eagles would hold their own through the second quarter as they cut the Rockets' lead to 18-13 with 3:12 to play in the first half. The rest of the half would be the Rockets as they extended their lead to close out the first half with a 21-14 advantage.

The Rockets finished the first half winning the shooting battle as they landed 42.9% of their field goals to EMU's 20%. Toledo also won the rebounding battle, as they out-rebounded the Eagles, 19-14.

Toledo would continue to add to their lead in the third quarter as the Rockets would garner a 29-21 advantage, until a three-pointer from sophomore point guard Olivia Smith (Fort Wayne, Ind.) would cut the Eagles' deficit, to 24-29.

To end the third quarter, the Rockets would go on a 9-2 run highlighted by a three-pointer from Toledo's Sophia Wiard (Muskegon, MI.) to give Toledo a 38-26 lead heading into the fourth quarter.

The fourth quarter would be all Toledo as their resilience to give up their lead led them to a win over the Eagles, 48-35.

The Rockets would finish the game with a 39% shooting clip from the field (19-48) while the Eagles struggled to put the ball into

the bucket, shooting just 24% from the field (12-50).

Eke would lead the Eagles offensively as she finished with 17 points and seven rebounds.

"Tayra has stepped into a whole different mode. She's unbelievably confident, she wants the ball in her hands, and she's not a selfish player," Blanton said. "We have total confidence in her and the whole team is feeding off of her."

Toledo's Wiard would finish with 12 points and five assists, while Hannah Noveroske (Michigan City, Ind.) added 12 points and five rebounds off the bench.

EMU has now dropped six-straight matchups against the Rockets.

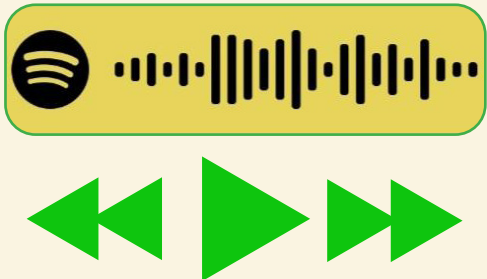
"I thought defensively we did what we needed to do, offensively we had one of our worst shooting nights of the year," Blanton said. "If we get shots to fall we can compete with anybody in the league, we just need to do better offensively and take better shots."

The Eagles will now shift their focus to Bowling Green State University as they will face the Falcons on Wednesday, Jan. 10, in Bowling Green, Ohio. That matchup is scheduled for tipoff at 7 p.m. and will be streamed live on ESPN+.

New Episodes Weekly!



Eagletainment
Eagle Talk: Holiday Special



Soaring Eagles
Hosted by Sarai Yanes (left) with guest MaKayla Stevens.

Around The Community

Graduation Edition



PHOTO CREDIT: MILES CORLEY
COMMENCEMENT SPEAKER GARY TORGOW AND EMU PRESIDENT JAMES SMITH PREPARE TO SPEAK TO THE 2023 GRADUATING CLASS ON DEC. 17.



PHOTO CREDIT: MILES CORLEY
2023 GRADUATING CLASS APPLAUDS AS GRADUATION CEREMONY BEGINS ON DEC. 17.



PHOTO CREDIT: MILES CORLEY
GRADUATE BEING RECOGNIZED AT WINTER COMMENCEMENT.



PHOTO CREDIT: MILES CORLEY
GRADUATES WAITING FOR THE CEREMONY TO START ON DEC. 17, 2023.



PHOTO CREDIT: MILES CORLEY
GRADUATE RECEIVING THEIR DIPLOMA FOLDER ON DEC. 17 AT THE WINTER COMMENCEMENT CEREMONY.



PHOTO CREDIT: MILES CORLEY
LINE OF DOCTORATE CANDIDATES AT THE DEC. 17 GRADUATION CEREMONY.



PHOTO CREDIT: MILES CORLEY
PRESIDENT JAMES SMITH ADDRESSING THE GRADUATION CEREMONY AUDIENCE ON DEC. 17 AT GEORGE GERVIN GAMEABOVE CENTER.



PHOTO CREDIT: MARIE WHITE
GRAD ACCESSORIES FOR SALE IN THE LOBBY OF THE COMMENCEMENT CEREMONY ON DEC. 17.



For more content visit our website, we upload daily!



PHOTO CREDIT: MARIE WHITE
STUDENTS MAKE THEIR WAY TO THEIR SEATS TO WAIT FOR THE COMMENCEMENT CEREMONY TO BEGIN.



Instagram @EASTERNECHOOFFICIAL



TikTok @THEEASTERNECHO



Facebook @THEEASTERNECHO

Review: 'Aquaman and the Lost Kingdom' is an underwater trainwreck

FRANK REMSKI
COLUMNIST

After a decade, the DC Extended Universe has come to an end over the 2023 Christmas weekend. Beginning with 2013's "Man of Steel" and ending with 2023's "Aquaman and the Lost Kingdom," the interconnected films follow various DC Comics characters.

"Aquaman and the Lost Kingdom" is the sequel to 2018's "Aquaman." The films follow Arthur Curry, aka Aquaman, played by Jason Momoa. He is the king of Atlantis and the superhero protector of the sea. Both films were directed by James Wan.

Highs

The film tonally stays true to the first "Aquaman." Both films are high-adrenaline action movies with elements of science fiction and fantasy and fast-paced plots.

They're both surprisingly lighthearted films as well, especially considering how earlier DCEU movies took themselves too seriously. Though the more mature tones differentiated the films from the Marvel Cinematic Universe, it often made the films overly pessimistic, notably in "Man of Steel" and "Batman v. Superman." In more recent movies, the DCEU has gone more lighthearted to mixed results, at their best leading to the heartwarming "Shazam!" and at worst leading to the parody-like sequel "Wonder Woman 1984."

The film has an environmentalist message to it. Although there are issues with how the message is delivered, it is an admirable stance to take and fitting given Aquaman's connection to the sea.

Lows

Though staying true to the first film lends to series cohesion, the sequel also inherits its same problems. The first film is all over the place, swinging violently from humorous

romantic scenes, to over the top fights, to expansive fantasy political intrigue, making viewer submersion difficult.

The sequel is more tonally tight, mostly staying in its genre as a fantasy/science-fiction action film. Its plot is just as fast-paced, leaving no room for the viewer to breathe. The film has one main plot and it can't decide which subplots are most important, leaving none of them satisfyingly expanded on.

The character Mera, played by Amber Heard, is the most notable to have a dropped plotline. Though she was a major character in the first film and she and Aquaman have a child together in the sequel, she is demoted to a glorified extra. She has no importance to the plot, little dialogue, and is absent for a significant portion of the movie. Despite the actress's controversy around her infamous defamation case with ex-husband Johnny Depp, it is a disservice to Mera, her character. Her exclusion is a missed opportunity, and her character having more significance would have allowed for an exploration of superhero parenthood.

Though Mera receives little dimension, the characters with more screen time aren't much better. Nobody's acting in the film is dynamic, even Nicole Kidman is one-note with her portrayal of Atlanna, Aquaman's mother. The disorganization of the plot leads to none of the characters being fleshed out, including Aquaman himself.

Climate change is dealt with in a clumsy way that turns it into a fantasy villain who is outright trying to melt the ice caps for nefarious purposes. The film is preachy, but unable to say anything of substance, whether it be educational or a call to action besides a vague "get along with people" mantra with no answer as to how people are supposed to get along.

To top it all off, the film is outright ugly and unfunny. It heavily relies on computer-generated imagery that lacks realism, at times looking like a poorly designed video game.



The humor is clichéd and lacks surprise and cleverness.

Verdict

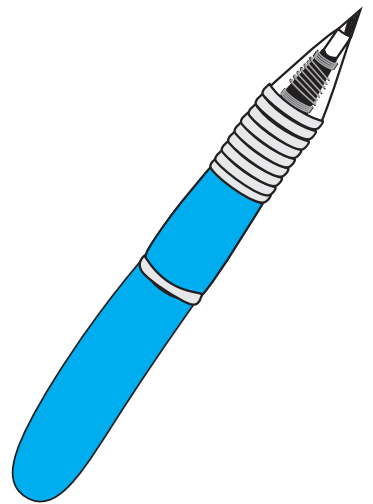
There is a fight scene in the movie where an underwater train gets derailed, this is an apt metaphor for the entirety of "Aquaman and the Lost Kingdom." The film is a mess with its too-fast plot, one-dimensional characters, half-baked message, ugly special effects, and tired jokes. The DCEU has been inconsistent to say the least, yet it is still an unsatisfying send-off to a decade-long franchise.

Rating: 3 out of 10 stars.

Frank Remski is a film and theater reviewer for the Eastern Echo. He is majoring in media studies and journalism and minoring in public relations. He has worked for The Echo since the summer of 2023 and has written both news stories and opinion pieces.



Check out more reviews of new movies on the Echo website!



Review: 'Poor Things' is a pretty movie with room for improvement

AMEERA SALMAN
CELLAR ROOTS EIC

"Poor Things," a dark, sexy, humorous, and philosophical film from director Yorgos Lanthimos, is like nothing that's been done before. In some ways, it's a feminist thinkpiece, in others, it's a capitalist commentary; across the board, it alludes to stories that have come before it like "Frankenstein."

Based on the 1992 book of the same name, "Poor Things" follows a thorough, winding course of plot, highlighted most by the character development of its main character, Bella Baxter (Emma Stone). Brought back to life in the body of a grown woman with the brain of an infant by Dr. Godwin Baxter (Willem Dafoe) as a daughter-like companion, Bella begins her new life rediscovering language and motor skills. As Bella gains a desire for independence, she embarks on a journey with Duncan Wedderburn (Mark Ruffalo) to see the world and discover herself, a journey filled with sexual liberation, dancing, and the hard truths of life.

Highs

Some of the best parts of this movie were purely visual. Portions of the movie were in black and white, with others in vibrant color; this choice represented the growth of Bella as a woman. Other visual choices were made that enhanced the movie, including the use of fish-eye lenses and vignettes, drawing attention at certain moments and pulling it away at others. Another fantastic visual element in this movie were the costumes. Set in a dystopian Victorian London, the costumes definitely matched the fantastical yet realistic approach of the movie. Most of the characters were in clothing that blended into the time period, but it was Bella Baxter's costumes that always drew the eye. Her extravagant, colorful, and evolving outfits served as more than just clothes; they were a representation of her growth from a woman crudely and forcibly brought back to life to a woman fully in control and capable in her own right.

Lows

Where this movie struggles is in a few places. One is its length. The film very well could have been condensed in several places, making it feel less endless, coming

from someone who watched it twice. Its other struggle finds itself in the film's claim to feminism. While there is no denying this film is one that takes a classic story, "Frankenstein," and twists and turns it for modern society, it does not in fact tell a story for this modern society. A story about a woman coming of age, in circumstances against her will, that portrays her primary method of liberation and awakening as one of sexuality is one-dimensional to say the least. It is often that stories told by men about women show them as such through a lens of sexuality, fetishization, and control.

Verdict

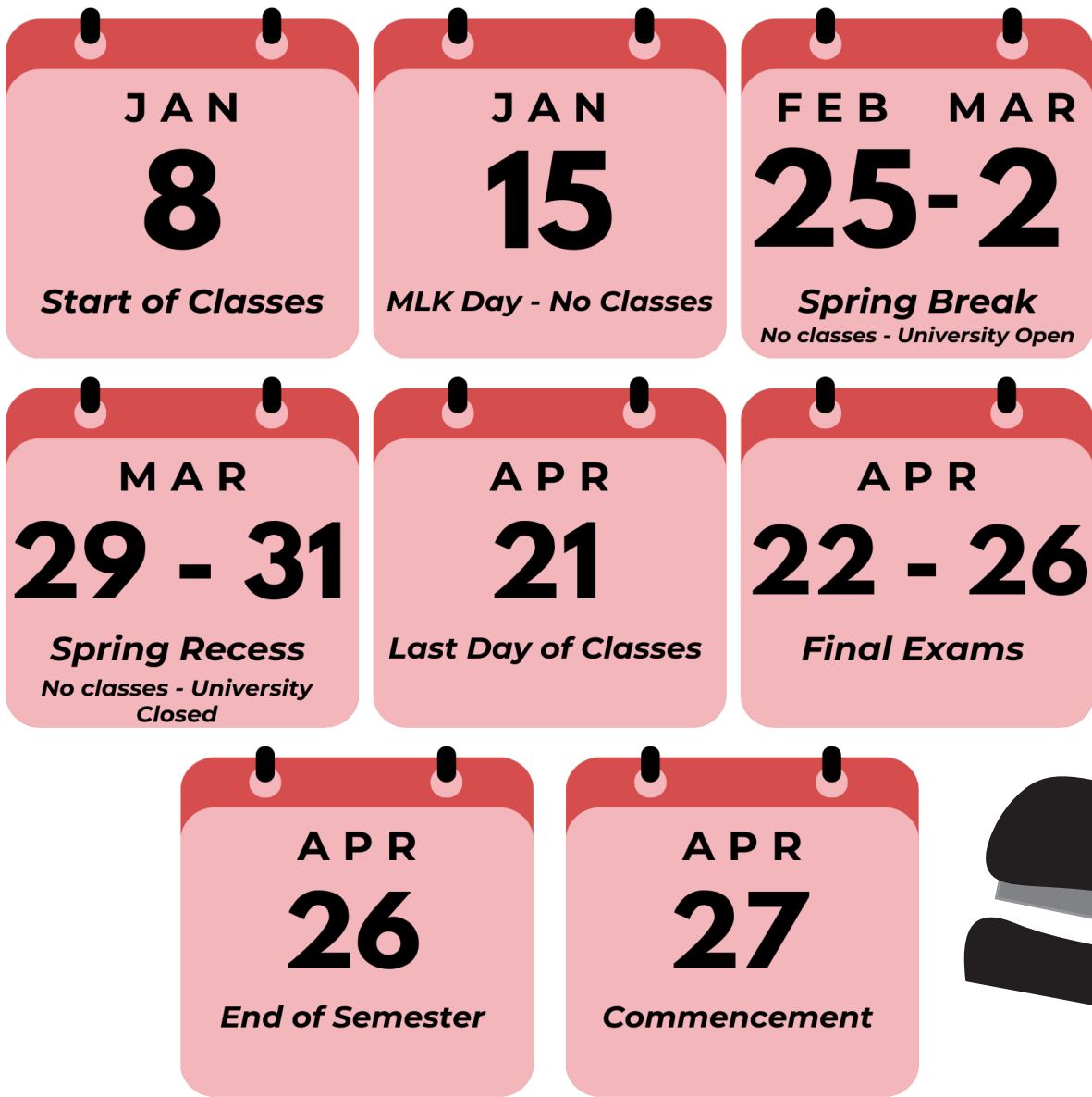
This film is successful in its beauty and visual mastery, but when it comes to its substance, "Poor Things" leaves too much room for improvement. Confusing in some aspects and strange in most, "Poor Things" left an odd aftertaste.

I would rate "Poor Things" a 7 out of 10.

Ameera Salman is the Editor-in-Chief of Cellar Roots, EMU's Art Magazine. She has written news, opinions, and columns for The Echo.



Winter 2024 Calendar



STAY OFF THE ROADS | RYLEE CURLEY



The Echo team

Marie White
editor@easternecho.com

Editor-in-Chief

Aaron Hughes
managing@easternecho.com

Managing Editor

Victoria Smith
content@easternecho.com

Content Editor

Blake McQueary
sports@easternecho.com

Sports Editor

Emma Owens
copy@easternecho.com

Copy Editor

Sarai Yanes
digital@easternecho.com

Digital Editor

Alex Kreps
podcast@easternecho.com

Podcast Editor

Ameera Salman
cellarroots@easternecho.com

Cellar Roots EIC

Ashley Schemer
Print Design

Christine Uthoff

advisor@easternecho.com

Echo Advisor

Our Mission Statement

The Eastern Echo informs the Eastern Michigan University and Ypsilanti community by highlighting newsworthy content in a fair, accurate and timely manner.



Instagram @EASTERNECHOOFFICIAL



TikTok @THEEASTERNECHO



Facebook @THEEASTERNECHO