

Review: 'The Great Wall' is flashy but lacks substance

JACOB VAN HOUTAN, STAFF WRITER

"The Great Wall" is the English language feature film debut for Chinese director Yimou Zhang. The film is about two mercenaries, played by Matt Damon and Pedro Pascal, who travel to China looking for Black Powder and end up finding themselves in the middle of a war between horrific monsters and the men and women who defend the Great Wall.

The performances seem underdeveloped. Matt Damon plays the central mercenary in the film and hams it up with a very bad European accent. It doesn't help that his character has little time to be fleshed out. The film vaguely goes into his past and why he has become a mercenary for hire, but as an audience we never get to see that side of him outside of an uncharacteristic freak out.

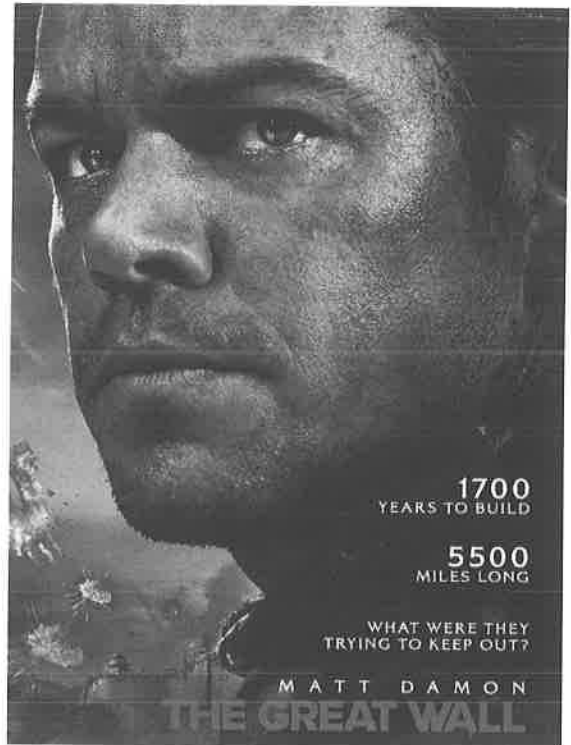
The performance of Tian Jing as a commander in the film is quite good, but like Damon's character, doesn't feel completely developed. There are hints at who she

was, but you never get to completely understand her character. Even Pedro Pascal's friendship with Damon's character doesn't feel genuine.

There is a lot of interesting imagery to look at in this film. The colors of the armor are very vibrant. The action scenes are very kinetic and you do feel the struggle along with these soldiers. However, there is an abundance of CGI that makes the creatures in the film look fake.

While the action in the film is good, you never feel the death toll and you never get to spend any time with the characters. The film never allows any of its characters to fully form. The pace of the film is quick, but this causes it to lack any character connection.

There is some quippy dialogue to help bring some laughs, but these moments seem few and far between. While I find that the action scenes are good, it is hindered by the fact that I just



"THE GREAT WALL" MOVIE POSTER

don't care about what is going to happen to our main characters.

This film is just something to see while turning your brain off. The characters aren't developed and,

even if you can get passed the silliness of the premise, it still doesn't make a ton of sense. This film is made for cable TV or a rental at your local Redbox in a couple months.

Springboard for the Arts brings art to the classroom

CARSON HUGHES, A&E EDITOR

Springboard for the Arts is a Minnesota community development program. Their goal is to connect artists with the local community to create art that reflects the community

as a whole, tackles the issues and inequities that the community faces and encourages collaboration among artists.

The program has many different initiatives put to work to accomplish these goals.

These programs include Artists and Aging, which uses the arts to bring awareness to the community about issues surrounding aging; Art4Health, which matches local artists with health orga-

nizations to address the importance of healthy lifestyles; and a partnership with the International Downtown Association that helps business districts pair up with local artists.

Spring for the Arts continued...

One such program is the On Stage program which is meant to connect local theater with younger audiences. On Stage has visited several colleges in the Twin Cities area including Augsburg, the University of Minnesota and St. Thomas. During these visits, actors from "Anna in the Tropics," a show currently playing at the local Jungle Theater, had group discus-

sions with students about the play.

The visits started out with an introduction of "Anna in the Tropics." The play is a 2003 Pulitzer Prize winning drama written by Nilo Cruz. The story follows Cuban immigrants working in a cigar factory in 1920s Florida. When a lector, a person who would entertain factory workers by reading to them,

reads aloud the classic Russian novel "Anna Karenina," the novel's themes of love, jealousy, fidelity and family drastically change the relationships and lives of the characters.

After introducing the play, the actors performed a scene from the play and then analyzed it with the class. These discussions focused on the dramatic elements of

the scenes such as character motivations, subtext and thematic elements such as Cuban American history, love and jealousy, and changes to our traditions and culture. "Anna in the Tropics" will be playing at the Jungle Theater until Sunday, March 12.

Big Show speaking volumes about Augsburg talent

GABRIEL BENSON, OPINIONS EDITOR

Augsburg's annual Scholarship Weekend took place over the Feb. 17 weekend. Usually occupied by comedy shows and group games, the main focus of this year's presentation was on student talent in instrumental, vocal and spoken word arts. The audience was comprised of current Augsburg Honors students, prospective Honors students and Act Six applicants.

Prior to any performances, emcees Abby Tetzlaff and Andrew Jewell led the prospective students in a few interactive games. The majority of the show was composed of spoken word artists. Bryce Kadrlik was the first to present, displaying a number of powerful pieces about conformity, retail and societal expectations. Jayce Hanson performed pieces relating to sexuality, inclusion and one's place in society.

Augsburg alumnus, and

past Echo Editor-In-Chief, Jens Pinther performed a number of eloquent poetry pieces while also humorously interacting with the audience. Peta Schaffer performed pieces that she had written about Hurricane Sandy.

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Nia Ross, Nikki Whitaker and Gaozong Yang all performed pieces relating to being a minority in society, specifically the struggles of being a woman in oppressed groups. These pieces were particularly poignant as the ideas of being an oppressed person in society are still relevant, no matter how inclusive Augsburg may be.

Musical performers included a student jazz group

called the Great Danes. They performed on the upright bass, piano, drums and saxophone. Another performer was BK Everyday, who rapped to the pumped-up audience of students.

All of these performances were incredibly well-received

by the audience and provided all of the prospective students with a look at what current students of Augsburg value and put work into. I look forward to going to Big Show performances in the future, as all of the performers were entertaining, meaningful and professionally prepared.



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