

Compiled by R. GASQUE

Marvel explodes into theaters

“Avengers” sequel returns with a vengeance

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Action packed scenes. Witty quips. A robot set on the path of destruction in the name of good armed with artificial intelligence and sarcasm. What is not to love?

In “Avengers: Age of Ultron,” the Avengers recover Loki’s scepter. True to his characterization, Tony Stark aka Iron Man, reprised by Robert Downey, Jr., creates an artificial intelligence called Ultron designed to protect the world using the power of the scepter.

Of course, nothing can ever go as planned in action movies, and true to super villain form, Ultron decides the best way to save the world is to destroy it.

The team of superheroes, called the Avengers, must stop their all-powerful enemy through witty dialogue, good natured teasing and spandex super-suits.

The sequel introduces the genetically enhanced Maximoff twins, Pietro and Wanda, played by Aaron Taylor-Johnson and Elizabeth Olsen respectively, who hold a grudge against Stark. As the no-holds, stiff-lipped, gun-toting Maria Hill, played by Colbie Smulders, explains, “He’s fast, and she’s weird.”

While the film was a box office hit, taking in \$156.3 million in its first six days,

the next installment in the Marvel franchise does leave much to be desired, especially for die-hard fans of the original comics.

Most noticeably, the romantic relationship between Mark Ruffalo’s character, Bruce Banner (the Hulk) and Scarlett Johansson’s character Natasha Romanoff (Black Widow) comes out of the blue, and their interactions seem forced and stilted.

Another issue overlooked by director Joss Whedon is the Maximoff twins’ origin story. In the original comic series, Wanda and Pietro were born mutants of Romani heritage and in some storylines, Jewish and children of Magneto.

Whedon ignores this and decides instead to ally them with Hydra, a Nazi group. In what world would a Jewish person want to be in cahoots with Nazis?

Despite these pitfalls, the movie holds many twists and turns that keep avid fans on the edge of their seats.

Black Widow’s backstory is explored, and the movie reveals a shocking aspect of Hawkeye’s, played by Jeremy Renner, life that deviates from his original comic book storyline.

Downey lives up to his past persona of Stark, embodied by a contradictory mix of arrogance and insecurity.

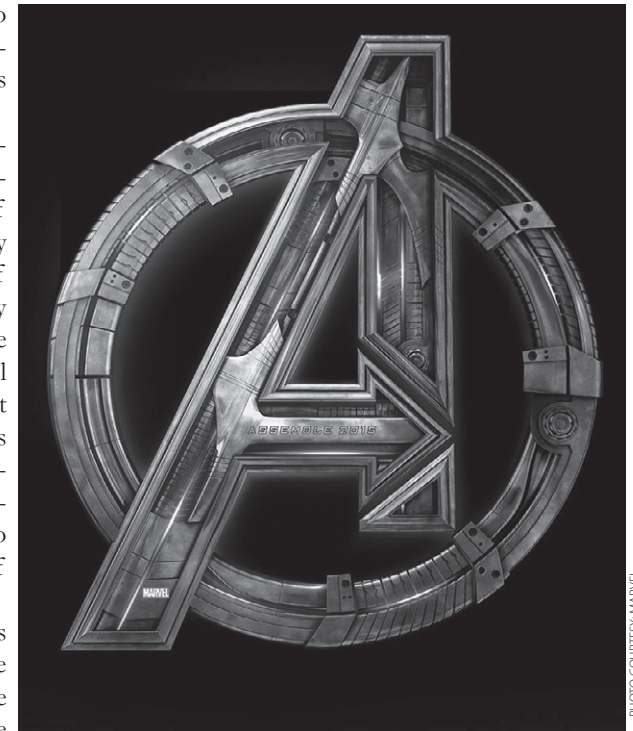
As team leader of the Avengers, Chris

Evans epitomizes superhero morality in his role of Captain America as he acclimates to modern day.

One thing done especially well by the Marvel franchise in general is the lack of civilian casualties. Contrary to DC movies like “Man of Steel” where an entire city is decimated and half the population is killed, Marvel creates superheroes that put the civilians’ lives first. This value of life allows the audience to enjoy the action sequences while not having to endure the needless loss of lives.

While the action scenes comprise the meat of the movie, the glimpses into the Avenger’s everyday life are gems cherished by the fans to comfort themselves in the face of the emotional ending.

Be warned, though. Watching the other installments of the Marvel franchise is practically a necessity for understanding the plot. Those without any prior knowledge will be completely lost.



Official “Avengers: Age of Ultron” poster from the Feb. 24 press release. The movie debuted on May 1.

PHOTO COURTESY/MARVEL

This film is worth seeing if a fan of action and an incredibly attractive cast.

Though rated PG-13, Adults and kids alike can enjoy this thrilling sequel that reminds people exactly what superheroes are about: saving the world.