

Eye on Entertainment

MOVIE REVIEW: EASY A

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A refreshing surprise; I am still shocked at how much I enjoyed Easy A. I love a good comedy, but I admit to being difficult to please when it comes to funny movies. I wouldn't say that the movie is hysterical, but the entire film is amusing and engaging. I find that most comedies begin to lag towards the end, but Easy A has no pacing issues.

The story is told from the perspective of high school student, Olive Penderghast (Emma Stone). She tells a white lie to her best friend about losing her virginity to a college student (a nonexistent college student). The rumor spreads, and Olive starts to use her new reputation to her advantage; guys pay her to pretend she "got" with them. The key word is pretend; neither Olive, nor any of the guys that she helps, actually get with each other during the course of the film. Olive's fabricated reputation begins to earn her unwanted attention. Classmate Marianne (Amanda Bynes), attempting to uphold religious and "moral" values, is completely against who Olive is portraying throughout the film. While all of this unfolds, Olive is reading Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter* in one of her classes. She finds, not surprisingly, that she can relate to the main character, Hester Prynne. The film's title Easy A is a reference to the A, for adulteress, that Hester is forced to wear in *The Scarlet Letter*; Olive is inspired to stitch a red A to her own clothing because of her new reputation.

One of the best aspects of Easy A is that the characters are easy to relate to. In that respect, it reminds me of *Superbad*; a great part of the enjoyment of both movies is that the characters are both genuinely funny and realistic. They remind you of people that you knew in high school. Every character is cast well. Stone's sympathetic yet quick-witted Olive is likeable from the start, and is able to remain likeable throughout the entire film. Bynes' prudish Marianne is perfectly annoying, but the performance stays entertaining and never becomes grating.

Olive's family adds a whole other dimension of interesting characters. Her mother Rosemary (Patricia Clarkson), father Dill (Stanley Tucci), and adopted brother Chip (Bryce Clyde Jenkins) are quirky in the best sense of the word. Olive's decidedly unorthodox family is easily one of the most entertaining aspects of the film. They are the type of family that almost anyone would be happy to be a part of.

I cannot think of any glaring issues with the movie. It's thankfully not too long; that's one of the worst things a comedy can be. It also does not try to be any more than what it is. There is no unrealistic character arc or annoying moral tacked on to the satisfying conclusion.

While Easy A is certainly not fine cinema, it does what it sets out to do. It is a good distraction from school and work, which most of us need. I recommend it for light-hearted entertainment.

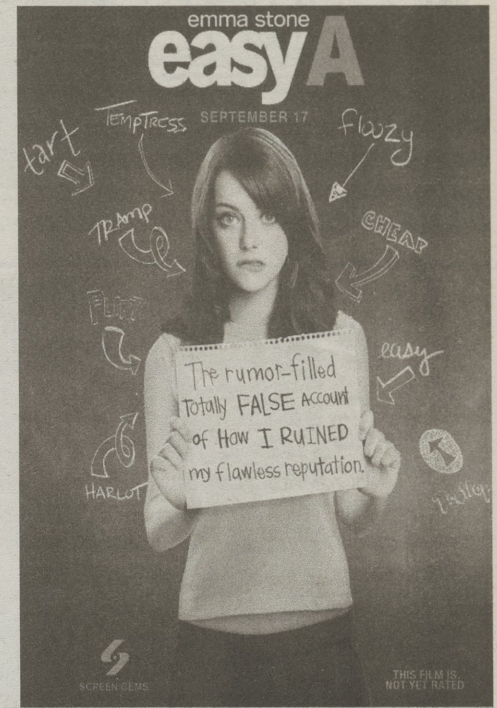


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ARTIST REVIEW: "QUOTH THE PARSONS, NEVERMORE"

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Allow me to begin with two questions: who likes music and who likes Edgar Allan Poe? Hopefully you answered "yes" to these questions. Well, the first question should be an obvious answer, but if you are not a Poe fan, hear me out. I believe we have all read some works by Poe before; such as "The Raven," "The Tell-Tale Heart," or "The Fall of the House of Usher," just to name a few. Okay, let me stop here; yes, this review is about music and not a paper for English class. By now, you're still wondering what Poe might have anything to do with music. Well, in 1976, the progressive rock band, The Allan Parsons Project (famous for their songs "Sirius" and "Eye in the Sky") released their debut album *Tales of Mystery and Imagination*, which creatively featured songs titled and based on some of Poe's work; even the title of the album is a title from one of Poe's anthologies. Their concept album did achieve gold status and received mixed reviews; after all, it was pretty risky and bold to do a concept album for their debut. Personally, it was truly an interesting blend of creativity and music while at the same time it paid homage to the late Gothic writer.

This forty-minute, seven track album featured the following songs and interpretations: "A Dream Within A Dream," "The Raven," "The Tell-Tale Heart," "The Cask of Amontillado," "(The System Of) Dr. Tarr and Professor Fether," "The Fall of the House of Usher," and "To One in Paradise." In addition, two of these songs are instrumental; "A Dream Within a Dream," and the epic "The Fall of the House of Usher," which clocks in at sixteen minutes. Obviously, the lyrics for each song are not that original, but they do put a creative spin on Poe's words using some of their own. Alan Parsons, Eric Wolfson, and the long list of fellow band members and crew presented each song with powerful vocals and a myriad of instruments and percussions.

First, let's look at "The Raven." In the poem, it begins with a distraught, lovesick man on a dismal evening sometime after midnight. As the narrator is sulking, a raven swoops into his bedroom and begins to speak to the narrator. The only line the raven recites is,

"Nevermore." At first, the narrator believes that is the raven's name. As the poem progresses, the depressed narrator asks the raven when will he see this woman named Lenore again, his deceased wife. And the raven

never found and Montresor was never convicted. Relating to the song, it begins with a slow tempo and somber piano tune, just like Queen's "Bohemian Rhapsody." Then the song shifts using classical instruments along with the piano. As the song progresses, the tempo fluctuates. The best part is toward the end with a crescendo that gives a happy and triumph feeling. The ending of the song is ironic because it is not a happy ending. It is only a happy ending for Montresor, which fits his triumph feel of a successful murder plot. Mixing Poe's text and Parsons unique choice in tempo, beats, instruments, and vocals make it one superb song.

Even though this album is short in length and in track numbers, it still packs a punch of true mystery and imagination. The Allan Parsons Project created this rare gem by dedicating an entire album and basing every song off of the great works of Edgar Allan Poe. It is truly unique that they were inspired enough wanting to write songs and put a little interesting style of funk, rock, classical, and the use of synthesizers all in one. And each song delivers an interesting style in tempo, tones, solos, and bridges. If you are a fan of The Allan Parsons Project, this album should bring a smile to your face and bring back memories. If you're a sort-of fan of the band or you might have heard of them, check out this album and some of its songs. Not to mention, most of these songs have a Pink Floyd vibe; so

if you like Floyd you might like this album and Parsons. If you're a fan of Poe, you too will like this for his texts come alive using the power of music and creativity. In addition, listening to these songs would certainly give a little summary referencing some of Poe's works. That way if you're reading Poe and you are confused, listen to the songs and read the lyrics, it should make some sense. Once you have read the poems or stories and listened to the songs, you should gain a greater appreciation for such effort. Finally, if you are not a fan of either the band or the author, we can still respect the ingenuity and the power of what inspiration can do to someone. Remember folks, if we inspire one, we inspire all!

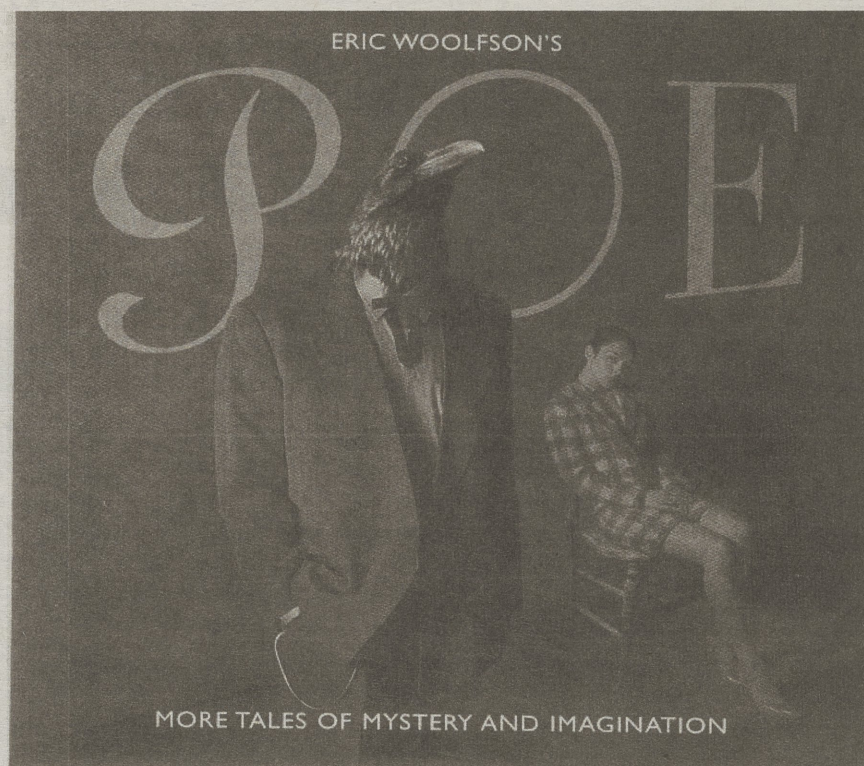


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utters its only line and this time the man now thinks there is no chance he and Lenore will reunite. That being said, here's what The Allan Parsons Project did to enhance Poe's work. They used a vocoder to distort certain vocals, which was the first rock song to do so, and used other synthesizers, keyboards, instruments, and a fantastic beat that made Poe's story come to life.

In Poe's short story, "The Cask of Amontillado," it depicted a wealthy nobleman named Montresor who planned a revenge plot on another man named Fortunato. In Montresor's mind, Fortunato insulted him so much that he vowed revenge. SPOILER ALERT: at the end of the story, Montresor leads Fortunato to his catacombs (an underground crypt), chained Fortunato to a wall, and entombed him. Fifty years have elapsed, Fortunato was