In the two years since the full-band rhythm genre was launched with Rock Band, the popularity of musical rhythm games has soared to decline, with unit sales dropping almost 50% this year versus last year. It is certainly understandable; there are only so many plastic instruments a person needs to buy. The novelty of the genre has largely worn off as well, with the saturation point long having been exceeded by Activision churning out four full Guitar Hero games this year alone.

As with any other sequel, there has to be some sort of evolution in form to remain interesting. The novelty of first person shooters would not have been sustained without the improvements in control systems and graphics. It is not just the technical improvement but innovation in gameplay that keeps this genre alive, as seen in brilliant titles like 2K Games’s Bioshock or Valve Software’s Portal.

Rock Band developer Harmonix, a company founded by musicians, seems to understand this better than Neversoft, who seems to be shoveling Guitar Hero games out the door as fast as they can code them.

Compare this with Rock Band, which has subtle visual cues like the slight shaking of the note rails when you hit the bass drum pedal, or a crowd that will show a very slight cry of disapproval when a long note streak is interrupted before resuming their cheers. The instrument you are playing in Rock Band also has its presence enhanced in the overall mix, because if you were actually playing in a band, that’s how it would sound.

Harmonix is a developer that understands the value of such subleties, and it permeates every inch of The Beatles: Rock Band. Very quiet ambient sounds play when you go to a sub-menu while the details at the edges move ever so slightly, supported by a visual style that is nothing short of an artistic marvel.

If there is this much detail in the menus, you can imagine the gameplay to be the same. Indeed, there is just as much. However, the core gameplay of TB:RB is not changed very much from Rock Band 2. The greatest improvement is the addition of vocal harmonies, and what harmonies they are! For vocalists, TB:RB is a delight, particularly when the second and third vocals vary from the lead vocal. Harmonix has taken a “if it ain’t broke, don’t fix it” approach, and with the visual and narrative enhancements, this turns out not to be a problem.

With TB:RB, Harmonix is clearly spelling out the evolution of rhythm gaming. It is not the quantity of notes on the rails, but their quality. Rather than looking at the notes as a challenge to conquer, they are instead turned into something to experience. When you play the bass lines of Paul McCartney, you are focused intensely on how his playing supported the composition of the songs. This may lead to plastic guitarists actually preferring the bass in this game.

This attention to quality shines through the visual representations of the band members themselves. The historic venues and artistic dreamscapes behind the members look so good that you may lose focus on the notes you are supposed to be playing. These wouldn’t matter if The Beatles themselves didn’t look right, but they strike the perfect balance between realism and style. This contrasts with the resurrected musicians in the Guitar Hero series that look like they came straight from the Uncanny Valley.

As the venues change from small clubs to large stadiums to Abbey Road Studios, the appearances of The Beatles change slightly to denote the passage of time. When the final rooftop concert ends in Story mode and the final coda of “The End” plays, players feel that they have experienced The Beatles’ own journey from the optimistic
GT1000 students are invited to hear best-selling author and New York Times reporter Warren St. John discuss the role of community in his latest novel Outcasts United—the true story of a refugee community near Georgia Tech’s campus.

Book signing, September 25
Barnes & Noble Bookstore @ Georgia Tech
7:00 p.m.

“Truly unforgettable, Outcasts United offers a stirring lesson in the power of a single person to transform the lives of many.”
Past and present unite in new Melrose

TELEVISION
Melrose Place

NETWORK: The CW
WHEN: Tuesdays, 9 p.m.
GENRE: Drama
STARRING: Thomas Calabro and Katie Cassidy
OUR TAKE: ★★★★★

By Nirav Bhatia
Contributing Writer

The premiere of Melrose Place last week unleashed a two-sided plot, appealing to both a drama-oriented audience as well as to the fans of convoluted mysteries and twists. The characters seem to be driven by sky-high ambitions, and in pursuit of reaching to the top, morale is an unknown territory.

The show delves into the lives of seven incredible characters, each with his or her story to tell. There is compelling suspense, fashioned by a sense of total ambiguity in the identity of Sydney's (played by Laura Leighton) murderer.

The "you can't put your finger on it" melodrama is what evokes the intrigue that keeps you musing until the end. What's interesting, however, is the fact that the "suspects" seem to have their own reasons for wanting Sydney out of the way.

It's the pivotal and power-drunk persona of Sydney, which points out the grandeur of her control over other characters' lives.

In a sort of hackneyed style, Hollywood's reality is also set forth in the show through the million-fold underlying dirty tricks of achieving one's goals. Pride and dignity truly seem to be meaningless when a struggling photographer, Jonah (played by Michael Rady), has no other option but to give in to a deal where his short film is directed only out of fear that he might spill a secret about the very director, showing his filmmaking talent and ability far from any recognition.

On the other hand, an aspiring doctor, Lauren (played by Stephanie Jacobsen), agrees to sleep with a man out of downright desperation for money to pay for medical school. It's the scruples of these characters that leave a touch of reality in the show, right in the face of viewers laying ethics on a pedestal.

However, if you thought these were the only striking elements presented in the show, wait until complex relationship triangles unfold in the form of an almost Greek tragedy type drama, with the trio of Michael (played by Thomas Calabro), his son David (played by Shawn Sipos) and the ever-influenntial Sydney.

Sydney being a common lover of both the father and the son seems almost unreal to digest at first. However, when her persuasive personality is assessed, and it is only leveraged by her ways of blackmailing and threatening David to get back with her.

And guess what? The saga of love conundrums doesn't stop here. Ella (played by Katie Cassidy), is a publicity agent for Jonah and also seems to be falling for David to the point of turning him against his girlfriend, Riley (played by Jessica Lucas), who is reluctant to marry Jonah out of the doubt that he is not mature enough.

Although this might suggest an instance of sanity and gravity in relationships, the show twists the whole idea at the end when Elia's orientation is revealed, in the form of her kissing a girl at a bar. Needless to say, the show renders relationships for pure pleasure and fun, discarding any significance.

Overall, the characters hold a duality, and a somewhat slick personality, which gives all the more reason to watch the show.

Fair (played by singer-songwriter Ashlee Simpson), who only recently arrives in Los Angeles, is shown to behave in a sort of eccentric way, and with her comment to Lauren, "We're good girls," she drops a hint for the viewers to look beyond what appears. Not to mention, with a clip of Sydney threatening to evict Ella and to ruin her career soon before her murder, another suspicion presents itself.

Even simple and innocent characters seem to be out of line when it comes to achieving their goals, and that's another dismissal at the trustworthiness of any of the characters.

Past and present unite in new Melrose Place is the show for you.

Enjoy a FREE bruschetta when you purchase an entrée. Present your student ID.
Shane Acker’s 9 takes the audience on an extremely fast-paced thrill ride that maintains its momentum from the opening credits to the very end.

The film is backed by the legendary producer Tim Burton and an all-star cast of voice actors that includes Elijah Wood, John C. Reilly, Jennifer Connelly and many others.

The story of 9 originated from a short film by the same title. The director, Acker, received an Oscar nomination for this short film, giving him the chance to turn his eleven-minute short film into a feature-length movie.

While 9 may not be a truly Oscar-worthy film, it still entertains the audience from start to finish, which is one of the most important things movies should do. At only an hour and 19 minutes, the movie has no time to slow down, and the movie’s intensity never dies down as a result.

The film begins in an old, abandoned house where a doll wakes up in a world where life seems to be completely wiped out. This doll has been given the spark of life by an old scientist and is given the name “9” because he is the ninth doll that the scientist has brought to life.

This doll, voiced by Elijah Wood, quickly discovers that he is one of the few remaining life forms in a dark, post-apocalyptic world. Though he manages to find others like him, he also discovers that they are not completely alone.

The dystopian world of 9 is set devoid of human life because machines have replaced men. These machines have eliminated all life on Earth, and the nine dolls are their next target.

As the movie progresses, the machines become more and more frightening. They certainly fit in with the dark and somewhat scary setting of the film, and they quickly turn potentially boring moments in the movie into intense action scenes. The anticipation of these scenes only adds to the intensity of the movie.

At first, it seemed like the ending of the movie left something to be desired, but that quickly changes. The ending ultimately fits in with the rest of the movie, so much so that the movie ended with the audience from start to finish. The fast-paced action is really one of the best parts of the movie, but many other things come together to form one of the best movies of the year.

For example, the director constructs a very believable world where men create machines and where the machines eventually take over the world. Granted, this isn’t the most original plot. It is actually repeated over and over in books and movies, but the plot still manages to capture the imagination of the post-apocalyptic genre fans.

The animation is also one of the key parts of the movie, and it clearly has Tim Burton’s stamp all over it. It’s nothing short of superb, and the fire and explosions in the movie are particularly phenomenal.

The movie definitely would not have the same effect if the animation wasn’t so attractive, and the visuals are really the most important part of the movie.

Acker’s short film didn’t even use dialogue because he believed that the visuals were able to tell the whole story. In an effort to make the feature-length movie more commercial, much dialogue was added. Fortunately, it does not detract from the movie. In fact, the voice acting is really good, and it gives each doll a more defined personality.

9 is one of those rare movies where the film actually lives up to the promises that are made in the trailer. The trailer manages to capture the excitement and intensity of the movie and doesn’t make any empty promises.

Especially for a short-film turned feature-length, 9 takes all of the promises from the trailer and delivers an explosive and fast-paced thriller that ranks as one of Tim Burton’s best movies.
By Robert Zimmerman
United Features Syndicate

ACROSS

DOWN

Flu Shots Available!

Protect yourself and those around you.
The single best way to protect against the flu is to get vaccinated each year. (CDC, 2008)

Make your appointment TODAY.

Appointments are REQUIRED.

Flu shots available at no cost to eligible students, spouses, & domestic partners.
$25 fee for GT staff and faculty (BuzzCards, credit cards, or checks only!).

To make an appointment: https://www.myappointment.health.gatech.edu

For complete schedule: www.health.gatech.edu
Post hoc vs Post-Doc

The Post hoc Fallacy
To incorrectly assume "A" is the cause of "B" just because "A" preceded "B".

E.g. "All Professors have Ph.D.'s, therefore getting a Ph.D. means you'll get a Professor job (right?)"

The Post-Doc Fallacy
To incorrectly assume you'll have a job just because you have a Ph.D.

E.g. "Now what??"

Crossword Solution From Page 17

ASSN  BOOZE  SELMA  DREW  NILE  UMBER  TRAIT  EIRE  IMAVISIONARY  IMHEADOF  TON  SITE  SALEP  ELDST  ANGELES  CURES  PILE  PERNARES  CASANOVA  ASSET  POWER  HUNTS  RAM  SAKE  ERNES  LARDS  KENO  SKE  TREND  AORTA  TIGER  ASP  AREA  ATSEA  POLO  MYTIME  PROBLEM  SIMONLY  ICECANA  NAPE  LEU  DECOR  CORES  ARIES  INK  ODIN  CATER  BLIND  ALTO  EDS  RABID  POINT  TRYON  SYMBOLIC  WRONG  PUT  OMEN  CHOKES  FALSITY  CAFTAN  CHAOS  LASS  RIO  ONEDANDA  HALFHOURS  AHEAD  STEN  ANISE  OUNCE  INRE  TIDY  RACER  PIKES  MEAL

OK...I HAVE TO GET YOU OUT OF HERE.
NAM?

BECUSE THIS IS TOO DANGEROUS.

HOW ARE WE IN DANGER?  THEY PREPARED US!

STAY AWAY FROM THE PROPHETS OF DESTINY, LIZARD-BOY!

I DIDN'T SAY IT WO=: YOU'S IN DANGER.

OH...

OK...SO WHAT THEN SNATCH US AND BRING US BACK?

BECUSE YOU MADE THE SACRED CALL OF THE VOYAGE...

I STAND CORRECTED ON THE MEANINGFUL FACET.
**Technique**

**Non Sequitur by Wiley**

- **Strip 1**
  - Panel 1: Someone is brought back from Earth. They're kept in the city to prevent species contamination.
  - Panel 2: Someone asks a friend if they've heard the news. The friend says they didn't have time.
  - Panel 3: Someone says, "Well... go into the zone and see for yourself."

- **Strip 2**
  - Panel 1: Someone finds out they're going on a mission. They ask if they need anything.
  - Panel 2: Someone says, "But once I brought someone back into the jungle..."

**Dilbert**

**Strip 1**

- Panel 1: Dilbert is at work. Tina says, "You can't work at home anymore because the admins can't do it, and they're jealous."
- Panel 2: Dilbert says, "I'm a technical writer. Why don't you explain to the admins that my job is different from theirs."
- Panel 3: Dilbert says, "When you find a big kettle of crazy, it's best not to stir it."

**Strip 2**

- Panel 1: Dilbert asks, "What kind of mood is he in?"
- Panel 2: Dilbert asks, "Tired and fuzzy?"
- Panel 3: Dilbert asks, "Also confused, bumbling, clueless, arrogant, short, bald and puddy?"

**Strip 3**

- Panel 1: dilbert is at work. someone says, "He's right behind you."
- Panel 2: dilbert says, "Add 'angry.' Good luck.

**Strip 4**

- Panel 1: dilbert is at work. someone says, "From now on, we will refer to all of our problems as opportunities."
- Panel 2: dilbert says, "One of your idiot spawn was playing with the oven and burned down your house."
- Panel 3: dilbert says, "Camping opportunity?"

**Strip 5**

- Panel 1: Dilbert is at work. Someone says, "You're paying contractors to do work that I could do if I weren't always in unproductive meetings."
- Panel 2: Dilbert says, "You could hire temps to attend the unproductive meetings."
- Panel 3: Dilbert says, "Why don't I understand what you just said?"

**Strip 6**

- Panel 1: dilbert is at work. someone says, "Moving forward, we'll go after the low-hanging fruit at the end of the day."
- Panel 2: dilbert says, "I like the way you used humor to mock the vacuous way managers speak."
- Panel 3: dilbert says, "Which part was humor?"

**Strip 7**

- Panel 1: dilbert is at work. someone says, "Negotiating in a bad economy."
- Panel 2: dilbert says, "My company is so poor that we need a 20% price reduction or we'll go belly-up."
- Panel 3: dilbert says, "My company is so poor that we only change of eating involves throwing office supplies at low-flying birds."

**Strip 8**

- Panel 1: dilbert is at work. someone says, "Shall we say 10%?"
- Panel 2: dilbert says, "Our health plan is "screaming.'"