

Entertainment

"Watchmen" depicts troubled heroes, gritty

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Staff Reporter

"Watchmen," the movie based on the acclaimed graphic novel, tells a story that is anything but ordinary. Written by renowned author Alan Moore and illustrated by artist David Gibbons, it has received praise from critics both inside and outside of the comic industry, including Time Magazine. This praise is well deserved—the story line is very original.

Set in an alternate 1985 where Richard Nixon is still president, tensions between Russia and China are at an all-time high. Superheroes have been around for the past 45 years and have been key in changes that the U.S. has gone through. Although at one time these heroes were accepted by the general population, they eventually become unpopular and the government decided to pass an act in 1977 that bans all of these "heroes" from continuing their vigilante activities unless they are sanctioned by the government.

The only heroes left are the Comedian, a cynical individual who has an unusual view of the world, Doctor Manhattan, the only superpowered human in the story and a human

atom bomb that is the main reason for the United States' supreme standing in the world, and Rorschach, the only outlaw vigilante who is acting outside of the government and a conspiracy theorist that has a bleak view of existence. Retired heroes include Nite Owl, the second individual to use the name who has lost his sense of purpose; Silk Spectre, who is in a relationship with Doctor Manhattan and only became a hero to please her mom; and Ozymandias, the smartest man in the world who now runs his own enterprise.

When the story starts, a man named Edward Blake is killed and Rorschach decides to investigate. When he finds out that Blake was actually the Comedian, Rorschach becomes suspicious of this murder and believes that it is the beginning of an elaborate plot to eliminate costumed heroes. The story is very gripping, with complex plots that leave the reader

wondering what will happen next, and characters that are interesting enough that the reader can't help but relate to them.

The reason that "Watchmen" is more than just a regular comic book is

own personal problems to deal with in life, and that these heroes are human just like the people they swore to protect. It also seems as if Moore was trying to depict a grittier society that the world could have followed if only a few key events had changed, such as Nixon remaining president for 11 more years.

Regardless of what exactly Moore's goal was when writing this, the series is famous for transitioning comic books to a whole new level. Before "Watchmen," comic books were usually thought of as fantasy stories directed towards children and teenagers, and usually not taken seriously. However, when "Watchmen" was released and received enormous amounts of praise, comics decided to take a cue from the realistic and mature depiction of this

form of entertainment, and adapt some of the themes into their own stories. From 1986 on, comics have drifted away from the former childish interpretation and are now directed towards a variety of audiences,

with new mature themes and storylines. And while comic books are not nearly as dark and gruesome as "Watchmen," this novel played a big part in comic books becoming an acceptable form of literature.

The upcoming film, which is coming out Mar. 6, plans to remain true to the original novel, with only minor alterations to the story. The film is directed by Zack Snyder, who directed "300," and stars Jackie Earl Haley as Rorschach, Patrick Wilson as Nite Owl, Malin Akerman as Silk Spectre, Billy Crudup as Doctor Manhattan, Matthew Goode as Ozymandias, and Jeffrey Dean Morgan as the Comedian.

There will be several follow-up products released around the time the movie comes out, including the DVD "Tales of the Black Freighter," a pirate tale adapted from a comic book in the story, and the documentary that comes with it called "Under the Hood," which gives backgrounds and interviews of the main characters and some of the heroes that existed before them.

Some of the special effects that are used in the film include making Doctor Manhattan appear in the movie, which involved Crudup wearing a special white body suit. While he still provides the voice, he is replaced by a motion capture computer generated version of himself. The film has also included actors portraying celebrities from different time periods and uses make-up to age some of them, rather than hiring two actors to play the same part.

The film has already come under attack by 20th Century Fox, who sued Warner Brothers (the distributor) who believed that they still had the rights to produce "Watchmen," even though they had not acted upon these rights for more than ten years. The lawsuit was settled, with the verdict being that Fox will receive a small portion of the profits. I would not recommend this film for children or anybody that does not like action or gore, due to the fact that this film will be gruesome. Nevertheless, this novel has become a staple in American literature, and I believe that this film will do just as well.



because it follows the same concepts as a novel and then some. The novel explores many complex themes that normal comic book had not yet analyzed, such as heroes living their lives in the real world, how they have their

"Coraline" serves as building block for local animation

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Staff Reporter

Portland isn't usually known for its red-carpet movie premieres. However, the city has been gaining national attention after a local company produced the animation for the movie "Coraline" which premiered on Feb. 5. LAIKA entertainment is based in Tualatin, and they teamed up with Henry Selick (director of "A Nightmare before Christmas") to produce the stop-motion animated movie that's based on the popular book by Neil Gaiman.

Dakota Fanning and Teri Hatcher star in the movie, which is a story about a young girl who learns to appreciate the love of her parents. Fanning is the voice of Coraline Jones, the main character in the movie. Hatcher plays the voice of Coraline's real mother and her "other" mother.

As they move into a new apartment, Coraline and her family start to settle in. However, Coraline is a

very adventurous girl who is easily bored. She soon imagines a utopia through a hidden door in the living room of her new apartment. On the other side of the door is a mirror image of her real life, with the exception that everything seems to be just

or she will be stuck there forever.

The movie was sort of a "test run" for LAIKA entertainment to see how it would fare in the box offices. Since it has done extremely well, earning over \$16.3 million in its first weekend



a little bit better. Her new parents pay more attention to her, and things just seem more cheerful. But not everything is what it seems. Soon, her new mom tries to keep her there forever, and she wants to replace Coraline's eyes with buttons. Coraline must find a way out of her fantasy world quickly,

at the box office, LAIKA has now moved on with plans to produce more stop-motion animated movies. LAIKA is owned by well-known Nike co-founder Phil Knight. He was the main force behind the production of the movie.

After seeing "Coraline" I would have to say that the animation was extremely

detailed and realistic. The plot was also relative to many children's lives. I can see how kids would enjoy the idea of living in a perfect world. The majority of the people who attended the movie were mothers who brought their children to see the movie. However, I believe that it has the ability to appeal to all types of people at any age.

At 100 minutes long, it didn't drag on, but it also didn't end too soon. What made the movie special and unique was the stop-motion animation. The film was even unique compared to past animated movies, because it was like nothing I had ever seen before. It was similar to "A Night before Christmas" but to me it was like a new and improved version. Tickets are \$5-\$10 at theatres in the Portland area. I was a little judgmental at first because I thought that this movie was only for children, especially since it's rated PG. Sometimes movies surprise you, and that is what "Coraline" did for me.