

My time at The Echo: a review

Nick Pell, Staff Writer

Seeing as this is my final article for the Echo, I have chosen to do a review of my time here instead of a normal review. I began my time at the Echo at the behest of 2013 alumna Brianna Olson-Carr, who was, at the time, the A&E editor and my supervisor at the Lindell Library. She asked me to write for the section and, having been doing YouTube reviews, I decided to write on what I knew. The first article I ever wrote was on “The Walking Dead’s” third season, and I have written for

nearly every issue since. During my time here, I have gone through three A&E editors and two editors in chief. There have been interesting transitions year after year as I, for some reason, always thought the new boss would hate my material and never publish it. This has never been the case, but it kept me on my toes and forced me to continue writing quality reviews for each new editor. The diversity of this newspaper has always surprised me, both with the types of people who write for the paper and the various opinions of everyone

involved. More than anything, seeing these various views represented fairly under one title is a very neat thing to be a part of as well as the genuine respect each writer has for one another regardless of their section preference or individual opinions. I’ll conclude with this. The Echo has, more than probably any other aspect of my Augsburg experience, defined me as a writer. Through this newspaper, I have developed a certain style of writing in which I am confident and which flows easily. It has given me an idea of

what I want to do with my life, and I have continued to develop this style through my writing on [Moviepilot.com](#), where I have been posting my reviews for the last year and writing shortened reviews about the select material. The fantastic feedback from the Augsburg community and the Echo staff has changed my writing for the better, and I could not ask for a better group of people to work with. Until we meet again, live long and prosper. *Nick Pell does reviews online at [YouTube.com/ndpGAMES](#).*

A review of Ice and Fire

Riley Hunter, Staff Writer

The fifth season of “Game of Thrones,” HBO’s highly acclaimed fantasy series, began on Sunday—and what better time to reflect on the merits of a show that has become the subject of the most buzz since AMC’s “Breaking Bad” and Netflix’s “House of Cards.” “Thrones” holds the title of most pirated show in TV history, with its 2014 season finale clocking in at over 8 million illegal downloads, according to [Torrentfreak.com](#). This can only be testimony to its success, and these figures are not surprising to many familiar with the series. The story of “Thrones,” based on George R. R. Martin’s book series “A Song of Ice and Fire,” is set in the mythical-medieval land of Westeros, in which royal houses vie for dominance amidst blood feuds and devious schemes. Feudal roles populate Martin’s world, complete with knights, royalty, “smallfolk” and other archetypes. Control of the continent is divided amongst local lords and regional wardens, though all are subject to the rule of King’s Landing, the capital city that might best be described by borrowing a classic Star Wars line, “You will never find a more wretched hive of scum and villainy.” Unlike Mos Eisley, however, King’s Landing is more destination than spaceport: the action begins as Lord Eddard Stark of Winterfell is summoned to serve as Hand to a king whose claim he supported in the wars known as Robert’s Rebellion. Stark begins to unravel a web of intrigue whose thread winds throughout

the saga, quickly realizing things are rarely what they seem as he struggles to keep ahead of sabotage and subterfuge. The series mixes real, relatable scenarios with the unreal, blending concrete and abstract in a parallel to the prominent Spanish literary technique known as *realismo magico*. Actor Sean Bean’s convincing portrayal of Ned is the first of many strong characters caught in a whirlwind of danger and deception. As viewers and readers alike can attest, author Martin gave TV script writers plenty to work with, as each chapter weaves new layers of meaning into the rich history of Westeros. Martin’s epic depicts fallible, human characters struggling for survival amidst alliances that last days and seasons that last years, from the icy heights of the wall that shields the North from the threat of wildlings and white walkers to the fire of ancient dragons. The lore of Martin’s fantasy world is staggering in quantity and runs deep in detail, with an incredible range of characters and plot lines. Martin’s masterful interposition seems in retrospect a juggling act that would put seasoned circus performers to shame. But “Thrones” has more to offer than overall literary richness: Martin employs a novel approach that bucks genre conventions we are so accustomed to. The uninitiated often protest at Martin’s willingness, perhaps eagerness, to shock audiences by killing off key characters, which he does frequently and gruesomely. However, it is this willingness to let the factors other than audience favorites drive the narrative that allows

for the true “ad venture” (Latin for “to the venture”) nature of “Thrones.” Martin replaces “plot armor” with plate and mail, refusing to preserve characters for the sake of spectator attachment. Martin’s penchant for violence is well-earned, yet it is not mere spectacle; rather, the possibility of dismemberment that lurks around every corner creates a genuine sense of suspense oft absent from other shows today. “I want fans to be afraid,” Martin said in a 2013 interview with Conan O’Brien. Though fictional, the series contains a gritty realism of the horrors of civilizations, past and present. “A Song of Ice and Fire” is compelling because it deals with topics frankly, never shying away from the unsavory, but rather embracing it. Martin’s characters are complex, imperfect and unpredictable, their actions subject to reevaluation as new perspectives add layers of moral ambiguity. Situations are rarely black and white, as in real life, yet the ways they spiral out of control are fantastic enough to sate the most devout genre critics.

While the newest episode aired on HBO, accessible by those without cable via the HBO Go and HBO Now apps, not everyone opted to wait for the premiere. The first four episodes were leaked from an advance screener last week, and eager fans have already downloaded the first episode a million times, with over one hundred thousand actively seeding the same torrent. Don’t get too excited, however—at a grainy 480p resolution, you’re better off waiting to see them on schedule. We are in the era of glorious HD video, after all. A “College Humor” short satirizing Martin calls him “literatures greatest sadist.” Be that as it may, he has captivated the attention of audiences far and wide, and I know for one that Martin’s unflinching commitment to compelling storytelling will keep me tuning in—and turning pages, once his sixth installment is released in the near future. In the words of House Stark, “winter is coming.” So are the rave reviews and ravenous fans—it is known.

Aussies make you move

Kesang Olsen, Staff Writer

First Ave and 7th Street Entry could be mistaken for a sparse lounge with an unusual amount of floor space. The prior Greyhound bus station café’s intimate setting rakes in a variety of lesser known artists—the local, the aspiring, the semi-popular, but Minnesota-obscure, and sometimes the fairly-established foreigner. Sydney, Australia’s, Luke Dubber (Luke Dubs) and Angus Stuart (El Gusto) of “Hermitude” brought their

experimental, mixed tracks to the venue on March 16. Opening, Wisconsin-native electronic/hip-hop/funk artist, Beak Nasty (Ryland Sabien) set the tone for the collage-esque, multi-genre nature Hermitude and his own music share. Hermitude’s Dubber and Stuart then served a taste of Europe and Australia’s trending dance music. After a few Minneapolis-flattery lines in thick, Sydney accents, the electronic(a)/hip-
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Upcoming Augsburg Events

Saturday, April 18

ECOSTOCK

3:30 p.m.
Murphy Park

Friday, April 24

Final Chapel of the 2014-2015 Academic Year

10:40 a.m.
Hoversten Chapel

Sunday, April 26

Riverside and Cedar Singers Concert

4 p.m.
Hoversten Chapel

Monday, April 27

Late-Night Breakfast

10 to 11:30 p.m.
The Commons
Christensen Center

Saturday, May 2

Commencement

1 p.m.
Si Melby Hall