

SUM 41 SHOW POSSIBLE POTENTIAL AT CIVIC CENTRE

by Jonathan Smith

On Tuesday, September 16, Canadian pop/punk quartet Sum 41 played to an enthusiastic crowd at the Charlottetown Civic Centre. The Ontario-based group are evolving quite quickly, going from juvenile pop punks who play short and catchy teen anthems to juvenile pop punks who play slightly rawer and heavier teen anthems.

At the first of their commercial career, the group seemed doomed to fall into the same trap of pretty much every other copy-cat band that dealt with the same material. However, their latest album has revealed a side of the band that, properly nurtured, could separate them from the rest of the crowd and allow them to grow into a more formidable rock band. Songs such as "Still

Waiting" and "Over My Head (Better Off Dead)", while still pretty simplistic, do show a possible future for the band.

While still pretty juvenile characters, Tuesday's night performance showed that the group doesn't allow their antics to get in the way of professionalism. The stage set-up was well done, and even resembled some of the stages from bands of old that obviously have influenced the live style of the group such as Iron Maiden. There were various combinations of colored lights, and the two flashing high-beam style panels toward the back of the stage.

Sum 41 themselves were in good form, energetically moving about the stage in every possible direction. The sound quality was great, and the mixing was done

just right so that the lyrics could be clearly heard despite the volume of the instruments, a problem that tends to plague other rock shows.

The opening acts, fellow pop rockers Jersey and Treble Charger, held their own, but as is the role of supporting acts took a backseat to the main event. Treble Charger had some fun with the young average age of the crowd, taking the time to point out that they were still able to drink on stage, and what a shame it was that the crowd was not. Musically, Treble Charger was fine, though their performance seemed to lack energy at times as they simply stood in place on stage. Jersey, the youngest band of the three, suffered from some of the problems that beginning bands do, but managed to enter-

tain and get the crowd into the spirit of the evening.

The entire evening clocked in at only slightly over three hours, a problem that arises with newer bands. Realistically, neither Treble Charger or Sum 41 has the history and song selection to carry a headlining tour, and together barely manage to. Both are still trying to make their way and figure out what exactly they want to be by a process of elimination.

However, assuming they stick around both acts have the potential to go from being simple pop/punk bands that fit in a crowd to being great Canadian rock bands with vibrant futures. The price was right, the potential was there, and the evening provided a chance to kick back and enjoy the on-going evolution of a modern rock act.

Once Upon a Time There Were Better Films

by James Morrison

I'll begin this review with a question: How many of you folks enjoyed the 1995 Robert Rodriguez film, *Desperado*? For those of you who didn't enjoy it, I wouldn't recommend seeing this movie. For those of you who did, go rent it, it's a far better experience. "Once upon a time in Mexico" is the sequel to "Desperado" and does a fine job not outshining it's predecessor. Truthfully, it has a hard time outshining a Campbell's soup commercial. Let me begin to pointing out what is right with the movie, as it is the shorter list.

Foremost is the cast; this movie has a fantastic group of actors in it. Willem Dafoe, Johnny Depp, Mickey Rourke, Antonio Banderas, Cheech Marin, and Selma Hayek are the more famous actors in this film, and they do a pretty good job, really. It also has Enrique Igelias in it, who really doesn't do a bad job. It'll take another film to determine whether or not he has acting merit. Of the characters, only 3 of them really stand out as entertaining, each for different reasons. Johnny Depp's character is manipulative and noticeably insane, yet at the same time, his malicious insanity makes him fun to watch and adds some levity to the film. Mickey Rourke's character is probably the most emotionally fleshed out of the characters. He's one of the more moral of the characters and it's obvious he's done things he's not happy with. It's the kind of character one can feel somewhat sorry for. Then there's Marco Leonardi's character, who's complete apathy toward the situation makes him quite enjoyable to watch.

Well now that we're out of the good, it's on to the bad. First on the chopping block: the script. The script is posi-

tively rancid, with most characters spouting nothing more than insipid drivel for the entirety of the film. With lines like "You wouldn't dare kill me over \$10,000, you wouldn't dare. You wouldn't dare." and "Are you a Mexi 'can' or a Mexi 'can't'" I'm amazed I didn't tear the ears from my head and throw them at the screen. Along with the bad script comes the bad dubbing. On at least three separate occasions, what characters are heard saying and what their lips are saying are different things. I'm wondering if the dubbing department didn't simply splice in sound whenever they thought it would be cool, instead of where it should actually go.

From bad sound, let's go to bad visuals, such as the overuse of unnecessary CG. It seems like almost every fight sequence winds up being done more on a computer than simply having people fire blanks at each other. Honestly, if I'd wanted to see computer generated characters beating the stuffing out of each other, I'd have stayed at home, saved \$7 dollars, and played *Soul Calibur 2*. At least it has better graphics, sound, and story. In addition to the overuse of CG, there's in the complete and improper integration of it. This is a SPOILER ALERT, so if you don't want to know something pretty intrinsic to the later part of the story, as intrinsic as anything could be to a story that shoddy, then you may wanna skip to the next paragraph. Johnny Depp's CG eye sockets, which are visible after his eyes are gored out, are really poorly done. They don't react to the environment at all, such as sand being blown into his face. The color doesn't change, he doesn't seem to notice, nothing. It's really badly done.

Further in the visuals, comes the usual problems I have with action films. First off, who is the unfortunate shod-

who always drives a gasoline truck in front of vehicles careening out of control. Honestly, is there a union of the idiots, are they some sort of "new age" kamikaze pilots, what? It never ceases to amaze me that, no matter what, free roaming cars will always crash into gasoline trucks for unnecessary explosions.

Then there is the "Magical Guns from nowhere", which Banderas seems to have in spades. It seems like every time he empties a gun, he has a fresh one to replace it, until he has finally emptied all his weapons. It's like something you'd see in a computer game. I was just waiting to "I fraged j00!!!1" appear in the lower left corner during some of the fight scenes, I really was.

Finally, there's his DOOM guitar at the start. I call it a DOOM guitar because it has a machine gun, a shotgun, and a rocket launcher, all conveniently placed inside. As any seasoned DOOM, or any first-person shooter for that matter, player can tell you, you can carry as many guns as you need, without any form of encumbrance. This is, of course, incorrect, but who am I to tell people that a guitar can't fire live ammunition and still play properly, after all, I'm not a guitarist.

In the end, it doesn't really matter what I say though, because there's far too much wrong with this film to be fit into just one little review. I mean, there are some commendable things, notably the lack of screen time given to Enrigue, but there's still too much wrong with the movie to be salvageable. Now, I'm sure some of, if not, all of you will disagree with me, but, to be frank about it, I don't care. That's the point to this type of thing; I criticize, you take what you want from it. That's it, that's all, I'm done, enjoy yourself, and go see a good movie.