Burton delivers dark delights in vivacious 'Corpse Bride'

Depp's, Bonham Carter's stop-motion animated characters packed with energy, humor



Special to THE GAMECOCK

Johnny Depp is the voice behind Victor Van Dort, right, a groom with cold feet in Tim Burton's new film, "Corpse Bride."

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Leslie Dennis FOR THE GAMECOCK

Although Tim Burton and Johnny Depp have collaborated on four other movies together, "Corpse Bride" is the eccentric duo's first attempt at animation. While Depp lends his voice and likeness to the character Victor Van Dort, Burton puts the bones of the story together and constructs a beautiful, gothic fairy tale revolving around death, heartbreak and love.

The film begins with nervous and insecure Victor's impending wedding to the quiet and shy Everglot Victoria (Emily Watson). The circumstances surrounding the wedding are revealed to the audience through a song by the Van Dort and Everglot households.

Arranged by Victor's nouveau riche parents (Tracey Ullman and Paul Whitehouse) and Victoria's penniless (Albert Finney and Joanna Lumley), the marriage is merely a social contract. The families hope the marriage will give the Van Dorts' status and the Everglots' economic stability.

When Victor and Victoria meet for the first time the day before their wedding, an initial connection emerges, and both seem comfortable around each

Victor forgets his vows at the rehearsal and ventures into the woods to practice reciting the words alone. While saying the vows to himself, Victor puts the wedding ring on what he thinks to be a twig but is actually the finger of the Corpse Bride (Helena Bonham Carter). Having unknowingly married the Corpse Bride, Victor is taken to the underworld and leaves behind two sets of angry parents and a heartbroken fiancée.

Through another jazzy, pop song sung by a group of skeleton singers, Victor finds out how his bride became a corpse. The night that Emily, the Corpse Bride's real name, and her fiancée planned to elope, she was murdered while waiting for him

to arrive. Ever since, she has waited where she died for someone to come and marry her.

Throughout the film, Victor is torn between his feelings for Victoria and his attraction and obligation to Emily. The emotional tug-of-war within Victor adds a new aspect to a seemingly straightforward story. Through Victor's confusion, Burton makes the audience sympathize with the female characters. Instead of following the fairy-tale formula of having a single, clear love interest, Burton gives Victor two equally deserving characters, one living and one dead, to choose from.

In all his films, Burton fashions a world visually stimulating and intriguing. "Corpse Bride" is no different in both the land of the living and the realm of the dead.

The drab, colorless world of the living mirrors the rigid social and familial relations of society, while the jazzy, carefree lifestyle of the underworld is shown through vibrant colors. Burton's vision of the afterlife is more vivacious than the world of the living. The dead seem to be happy that they died and enjoy their life after death more than the previous one.

Like Burton's Nightmare Before Christmas," "Corpse Bride" is created through stop-motion animation. Unlike hand-drawn or computer animation, characters are created and moved little by little for each movement. Stop-motion animation adds to the gothic feel of the film and gives the story an eerie appearance. Burton

humor and heart in "Corpse through storytelling and eye-popping animation. Less than an hour and 15 minutes long, "Corpse Bride" allows children and adults to enter a strange and wonderful world of love and death, if only for a short while.

Comments on this story? E-mail gamecockfeatures@gwm.sc.edu



"Someone in Control" is alternative band Trapt's second album.

TRAPT • CONTINUED FROM 5

Realist," demonstrating the band's ability to write songs without the need of distorted metal riffs. A song such as this shows the band's diversity and adds a little to the album in the process.

Featuring an acoustic guitar rhythm, the song's lyrics reveal a person in search of answers to life. It provides a pleasant middle to the album, giving the listener a break from the previous aggression.

However, "Bleed Like Me" continues with more dejected lyrics. The music balances soft melodic verses and a heavy pre-chorus. Absent in this song is a hook to keep it in the listener's mind after it's finished.

Finishing off the album, "Product of My Own Design" is styled much like the other gamecockfeatures@gwm.sc.edu

songs. Guitar melodies are fashioned with heavy bass riffs, while Brown sings "You were my ears/You were my conscience all these years/No

Overall, the second album continues with Trapt's known style. The blend of Ormandy's guitar, Charell's bass, Monty's drums and Brown's voice keeps them sounding unique among other bands in their

But the overwhelming similarities between first album and sophomore release test the album's credibility. With most of the songs hooking the listeners, they tend to sound alike and do not stand out. A bigger use of versatility in the next album will be very welcome.

Comments on this story? E-mail

