

SCOTT PILGRIM VS. THE WORLD

Edgar Wright / USA / 112 minutes / Digital Projection
 Aspect Ratio: Majority 1.85:1
 US Release: 13 August 2010 / Universal / Rated PG-13
 UK Release: 25 August 2010 / Universal / Rated 12A



When the idea of a *Scott Pilgrim* feature film was first put to Universal in 2004, Edgar Wright had directed one film, Bryan Lee O'Malley had published two graphic novels and Michael Cera's biggest movie role to date was a few minutes as the young Chuck Barris in *Confessions of a Dangerous Mind*. In the six intervening years, all three have become fully-realised Gods in the eyes of your average Comic-Con attendee (and in Cera's case, your average teenage hipster) and now as *Scott Pilgrim* gets ready to quite literally *take on the world* - hold your applause - they're getting ready to take on the mainstream.

Job done. *Scott Pilgrim vs. The World* couldn't be much more universally enjoyable if they gave everybody on the planet a free ticket and the free ticket came with a free balloon. [That would be awesome though.] As it is, *Pilgrim* clocks in at just under two hours and wastes precisely zero percent of that runtime, packing every single minute with shit-hot action, cockle-warming romance and numerous Culkin-based ROFLs. But enough with the pointless hyperbole (this isn't *Aint It Cool*), let's get down to some serious analysis.

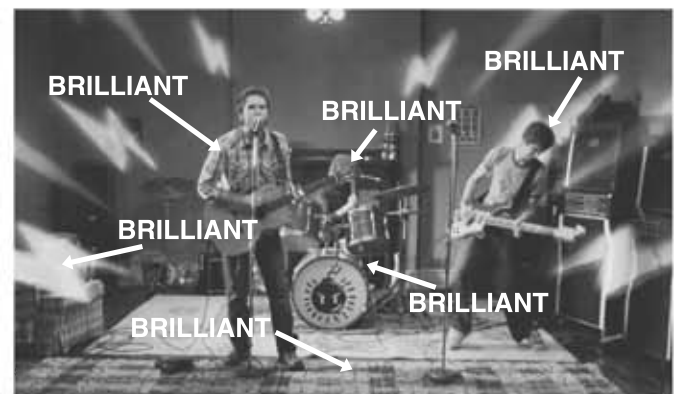


Fig. 1: Serious Analysis

From the moment the studio logos arrive on screen, nothing about *Pilgrim* is quite what you expect. Characters and locations are introduced three at a time in some of the most breathtakingly efficient exposition ever to grace a cinema screen (pay attention, Christopher Nolan), while the opening performance by Scott's band Sex Bob-Omb (whose music is written by Beck and produced by Nigel Godrich *cue blogosphere folding in on itself*) is so fucking exciting that it had my mouth hanging open in cartoonish awe. **CARTOONISH AWE!**

Fears that all those photo blogs and video diaries (not to mention

Edgar Wright's incessant tweeting) might have left *Scott Pilgrim* over-exposed and over-familiar are soon assuaged by the avalanche of perfect little moments that litter the film's first half. Even if that '*lesbians*' joke lost all meaning after your six-thousandth viewing of the trailer, you can be sure that at least one of the film's countless inspired touches will connect with you (and seemingly you alone) on a deeply, deeply personal level. As a card-carrying maths enthusiast, my special moment came in the shape of a fridge magnet shaped like the infinity symbol, but hey - that's just me.

I THINK IT'S CALLED A LEMNISCATE

Given that the whole *Scott Pilgrim* universe feels like it was invented purely so it could one day become an Edgar Wright movie, it's unsurprising to learn that he's been involved in the creation of *Pilgrim*'s increasingly popular little life since not long after the first volume's release. He spent years swapping playlists and casting ideas with O'Malley as both the books and film gradually took shape, and the affinity between them is right there (no, not there, *there*) on the screen. Like *Shaun* and *Fuzz* before it, *Pilgrim* is a gloriously perverse blend of the mundane and the outrageous, and no one does mundane and outrageous quite like Wright. For every epic airborne duel to the death or otherworldly desert dreamscape, there's a stroll through a thrift store or an acutely observed conversation about the idiosyncrasies of Canadian life.

And Canadian it most definitely is. Trendy record stores, supercool gig venues and more obscure band T-shirts than you'd find in the Wimbledon Oxfam Shop help to make *Scott Pilgrim* the cinematic equivalent of a Toronto hipster's wet dream, and that's no bad thing. And while dream-girl Ramona Flowers hails from Canada's over-bearing neighbour to the south, the film is instilled with a charming affection for its snowy suburban setting. Even the majority American cast has a few famous Canucks on board, in the shape of *Milk*'s Alison Pill and *Pilgrim* himself Michael Cera, who's surely only a few years away from overtaking agricultural produce as Canada's most valuable export.

Yes, I did have to Wikipedia that.



With his almighty mop of hair and superhuman comic timing, Cera was literally (by which I of course mean 'not literally') born to play the eponymous hero and while Mary Elizabeth Winstead might not have been the obvious choice for Ramona, she instantly proves herself to any and all uncertain fanboys with some A-plus eyebrow-raising. As you've no doubt heard in every other fucking review going, Kieran Culkin rocks a proverbial bitch as Scott's gay roommate Wallace, cementing his eight-year absence from movies as one of the great tragedies of our time. And then of course there's Mae Whitman from *Arrested Development*, whose greatness requires no explanation.

TRUFAX: For three months in 2008, Mae Whitman was the voice of the UK's Speaking Clock.

Graphic novel shut-ins will delight in the faithfulness of Wright's film to its source material (the opening half hour is practically frame-for-frame) and video game geeks are liable to spontaneously combust at the sheer volume of almost-subliminal references dotted around the frame and sound mix, but *Pilgrim* is by no means niche. Personally, my knowledge of the *Final Fantasy* franchise extends no further than that unbelievably shit Alec Baldwin movie, but that doesn't make it any less awesome when Scott busts out an *FF*-inspired bass line.

Instead, *Scott Pilgrim vs. The World* is a gloriously diverse mash-up of styles, influences and, of course, mid-nineties indie rock. And apart from anything else, it **MUST** be the first film to have a Dance Dance Revolution scene in which characters actually play in a realistic manner rather than just dancing randomly on top of the platform. Listen and learn, '*Karate Kid* remake'.