

An empire has fallen



Courtesy | bandcamp.com

THE FALL OF AN EMPIRE: Fans mourn the break-up of the band Empire! Empire! (I Was a Lonely Estate) after providing two LPs, six EPs, 12 splits, two discographies and a compilation.

Empire! Empire!
(I Was a Lonely Estate) retires after a decade of emotional, breath-taking music.

By **MORGAN MITCHELL**
morgan.m.mitchell@biola.edu

It was January 2014, my first winter break at Biola, and I had just been tastefully dumped over Facebook messaging. I went into my room and laid on the floor like every normal teenager does. I had never listened to Empire! Empire! (I Was a Lonely Estate) before, but the guy who just broke up with me really liked them so I decided in that moment to find out why. I grabbed my headphones, went to their Bandcamp and laid in silence while soul-piercing lyrics and powerfully emotional melodies filled my head. Minutes turned into hours as I remained on my cold hardwood floor, listening to music that can only be described as pure, genius art. The song that stuck with me the most was “Keep What You Have Built Up Here.” The lyrics were angry and passionate with lines like, “I wish I could tear your heart out” and “I wish for your lungs to give out.” The lead singer, Keith Latinen, shouted them with such intensity it shook my heart in my chest and raised the hair on my arms, every nerve ending in my body

reacted to these songs and I fell into a world of music I would later call home. Two years and many EEI-WALE existential crises later, I was sitting in my cubicle at Newsweek scrolling through photos of Donald Trump to upload to the website with related articles when my boyfriend — who I met through this band — messaged me a link with the caption “Nooooooo.” I opened the link and saw a post on EEI-WALE’s Facebook saying they were putting the band to rest. After a decade of producing the best music the post-hardcore and ‘90s emo revival scene has ever seen, they decided to retire. I immediately broke down in tears in my cubicle. This band was my gateway drug into the punk community and led me to friendships and experiences I never would have had if I did not lay on my floor that day two years ago and put on my headphones. Because of this band, I was able to process emotions my brain would not have processed on its own and I was able to find other bands that have influenced my life as well such as TWIABP, Foxing and Sorority Noise. EEI-WALE is a small band from Michigan consisting of Keith Latinen, his wife Kathy and different drummers and guitarists they have picked up along the way to help with certain tours. EEI-WALE started off as a solo project for Keith and blossomed into so much more. According to their website, the band easily played over 500 shows, including 30 tours and played in 18 countries, as well as the contiguous U.S. They released 66 songs, spanning 23

releases — two LPs, six EPs, 12 splits, two discographies, a compilation, as well as a graphic novel. They started a record label called Count Your Lucky Stars and helped launch bands that are now big names in the emo revival scene such as Dowsing and The Reptilian. Their music shaped this genre and many of the bands in it made posts on their social media about EEI-WALE following the news of their retirement, such as Joie De Vivre and The Great Albatross. EEI-WALE told Couch King about their name, “The ‘Empire! Empire!’ portion is the idea of your grand vision, your dream — that one elusive, ultimate thing that makes you happy/keeps you alive... The exclamation points denote how important this dream is. “The second portion, ‘(I Was a Lonely Estate)’ represents how I felt at the time — overlooked, unimportant, and like I was never going to go anywhere. That is also why it is in parenthesis, because it is meant to be more of an afterthought. So the name in its entirety is trying to overcome that feeling and become who/what you want to be. The explanation is overly wordy — very much a sentiment of that period of my life. But that is what our name means. Don’t give up on your Empire!” EEI-WALE was part of my empire and it helped me overcome feelings of being a lonely estate. Although it has fallen, I will not give up on the music they have already produced and it will continue to play out of my speakers for the rest of my life.



Courtesy | wikipedia.org

OSCAR BOYCOTT: The lack of diversity in the Academy caused an Oscar boycott by several celebrities, including Jada Smith.

“Not enough African Americans are given the opportunity to write a screenplay, design a set or costumes, or even direct and produce films.”

-KYLE KOHNER, FRESHMAN

Is it entirely the Academy’s fault?


For the second year in a row the four main acting categories failed to include an African American.

By **KYLE KOHNER**
kyle.j.kohner@biola.edu

The Academy sustains criticism for the lack of African American nominees in the Oscars the past two years. The blame should be placed on the individuals who put ink to paper when writing screen plays and the individuals behind the cameras of production and direction. When the Academy announced the Oscar nominations Jan. 14, 2016, many individuals of the African American community, especially those in the film industry, reacted in outrage and rightly so. Shortly after actress Jada Pinkett Smith announced her refusal to attend the 88th Academy Awards, her husband and actor Will Smith followed in support. Thus began the boycott. Director Ryan Coogler and actors Don Cheadle, Idris Elba, David Oyelowo and Tyrese also announced they would not be in attendance. After seeing the films the actors and actress nominations participated in, people can easily support the Academy in their decision for the nominations. “Creed,” “Straight Outta Compton” and “Beasts of No Nation” predominantly featured narratives

filled with people of color. I say with caution, those films were not worthy of such nominations. Phenomenal directing and acting performances did comprise these three films and any other year they would receive nominations. Unfortunately, 2015 brought viewers and critics arguably the best year in the film industry since 1994. Anyone could easily argue Michael B. Jordan of “Creed” should have been nominated for his lead role. However, the performances by Matt Damon, Leonardo DiCaprio, Michael Fassbender, Bryan Cranston and Eddie Redmayne were career epitomizing. Ultimately, that should not take away from Jordan’s breakout performance. He is young and should garnish more lead roles in the coming years. Along with the overly stiff competition undermining the boycott, there is a possible bias against the Academy. The individuals boycotting share an interesting commonality between them all — not one of the individuals has won an Oscar. Could this boycott be in detest towards the Academy for not awarding them? There are African American racial injustice activists attending the Oscars: Morgan Freeman, Forest Whitaker, Samuel L. Jackson and Whoopi Goldberg — coincidentally all Oscar winners. Thus, the possible bias influenced by no Oscar wins makes the boycott less credible. Even though the boycott itself may be illegitimate in its motives, the issue behind exclusion of black nominations is real. The blame should not be entirely put on the

Academy. Yes, the percentage of white voters in the Academy is 94 percent. However, in a recent statistical study only 22 percent of the Academy is made up of actors and actresses, the remaining 78 percent make up those who direct, produce, write, design, etc. The lack of black nominations should be taken down to the root of the film industry, as mentioned by Morgan Freeman in an interview with USA Today. The racial injustices are a result of those writing the scripts, rolling the film and comprising the casts. Morgan Freeman endorses the injustices as an internal problem that needs to be reformed in the production process. Not enough African Americans are given the opportunity to write a screenplay, design a set or costumes, or even direct and produce films. The possibility of increasing racial diversity in the production and writing process of movies may lead to an increased number in black nominees and even winners. After an emergency meeting on Jan. 21, 2016, the Academy announced on their website they wish to fix its voting panel in hopes of more racially diverse nominations. The plan includes a global effort to recruit diverse talent in the film industry and an increased number of positions in the Board of Governors. Applaud the Academy for providing a possible solution to the lack of diversity. However, do not disregard the purpose of the Academy awards, which is to recognize excellence in the film industry, not the color of those who produce the talent.



Have more to say about diversity in the Oscars?

Comment your thoughts at chimes.biola.edu/ae



“Stuck in Love” proves a familiar find

Although it lacks originality, this Netflix film club movie is still worth the watch.

By **HAYLEY LANGDON**
hayley.a.langdon@biola.edu

The ordinary provides an unexplainable comfort. We like to know how things will end and like the stories that provide us with familiarity. “Stuck in Love” is by no means an original storyline. It follows three typical plots with characters who are not what one would call mold breakers. Yet, I enjoyed the movie because it did not attempt to show something Hollywood

has not seen before and instead remained realistic and authentic. Stories with the cookie cutter plots are popular because they portray normal life on the big screen. It reminds us that amidst fantasy movies and unrealistic action blockbusters, a mediocre life is actually beautiful in its simplicity. Bill Borgens, played by actor Greg Kinnear, is a husband still hung up on his ex-wife Erica, played by actress Jennifer Connelly. The cynical daughter, Samantha, is played by actress Lily Collins. The son Rusty is played by actor Nat Wolff and spends his days pining over the popular girl. The lives of the Borgens reflect the movie’s central theme — a writer is the sum of his or her experiences. As a result, I could tell where the movie was going in the first 20 minutes. This did not deter me from finishing the film, though. Josh Boone’s 2012 “Stuck in

Love” easily could have fallen flat if it were not for its cast who turned an average script into something that still evoked fresh emotions. My heart warmed when Bill and Erica reconciled, when Rusty got his girl and then lost her and when Samantha fell in love — even though none of these developments surprised me. Maybe it is because I am a writer and I love the idea of a dad paying his children to journal daily and that practice resulting in book deals, despite the fact their ages for such an accomplishment is highly unrealistic. Or, maybe it is because I like the small happy endings that happen in daily life. Whatever the reason, when the film was on its last scene and the credits rolled, I had a smile on my face. There is just something satisfying about watching relationships mend and cynics proven wrong that will never get old for me.



Courtesy | fangirlsarewe.com

FAMILIAR FIND: “Stuck in Love” remains a realistic and authentic film with a cookie cutter plot and should be in everyone’s queue.

There’s even more online



Visit chimes.biola.edu for even more A&E content.