

Iron Hero blasts boxoffice records

Iron Man II starts summer off with explosion and thrills

VINCENT COLETTI

Feature Editor

Corn on the cob, fireworks and grilling; all of these things remind us summer is here. For Hollywood, blockbuster movies are also a sure sign summer is here.

Iron Man II, the sequel to the highly successful first film, opened in theaters on April 26, 2010, earning a reported \$100.2 million in its opening week, therefore earning its status as a summer blockbuster.

Iron Man, a character yanked from the comic book of the same name, was played by the roguish Robert Downey Jr. Downey Jr. is joined by, his co-star from the first film, Gwyneth Paltrow.

Iron Man must go toe-to-toe with Russian terrorist Omega Red played by Mickey Rourke.

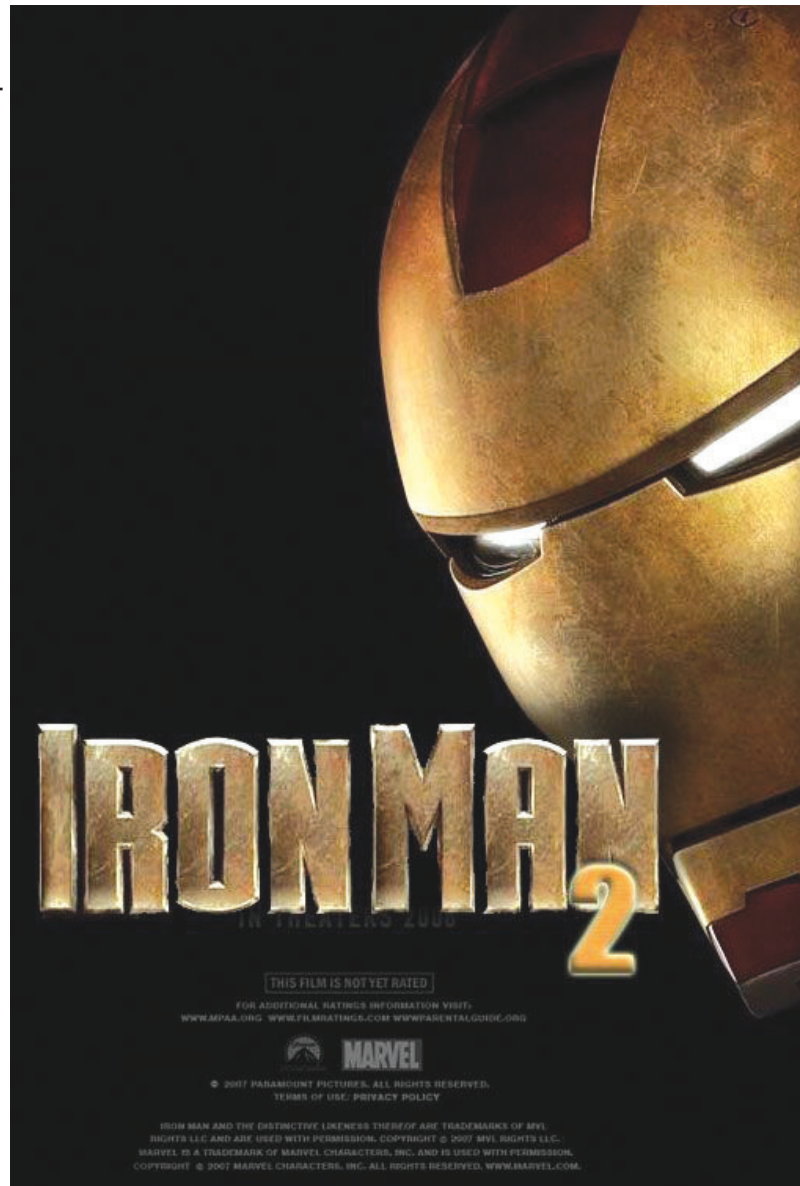
Joining him this trip in an Iron Man suit of his own is James Rhodes, played by Don Cheadle, who replaced Terrance Howard in the first film.

Also along for the ride are Black Widow played by the lovely Scarlett Johansson and Samuel L. Jackson as Nick Fury.

The film has all the iconic trademarks of a summer blockbuster, including romance, sex, nail biting action sequences and the right amount of comedy and drama. The actors have a certain chemistry that is hard to find in such a diverse cast.

In the film, Iron Man and his alter ego, Tony Starke, must face off the machinations of a Russian terrorist whom his father has a bad history with.

Starke must also come to terms with his impending disease, and his feelings for Pepper Potts,



his beautiful secretary.

Downey Jr. and Paltrow bring such vibrant chemistry to the screen a that all you can do when

they share a moment on screen is smile.

The same could not be said about Cheadle, the replacement for Howard.

Although more recognizable than his predecessor, Cheadle had a hard time delivering the emotions of his character.

The villain in the movie really was not the main bad guy. Mickey Rourke can play any sadistic character. For instance, in Wild Orchid he was phenomenal.

The real villain was Starke himself, pulling a plot from the pages of the comics, using alcohol to cover up his illness.

While this was a good test of Downey's acting, midway through I was so bored with it I wanted him to just get over his alcohol problems.

It would have been more interesting if Marvel Studios focused a bit more on Pepper's feelings for Starke and less on Starke's alcoholism

The scene stealer was Johansson and her character the Black Widow, as well as, the always professional, Samuel L. Jackson as Nick Fury.

Together they pulled the characters straight from the book to the screen and Johansson had an action sequence that will keep people talking for months.

All in all, the movie was a success in bringing the iconic character from Marvel Comics back to the big screen.

The action sequences were solid, and the story, although very dry, had its moments.

Hopefully this franchise will not share the same fate as other Marvel Movies like the X-Men franchise.

As with all Marvel movies, make sure you stay to the very end past the credits to get a sneak peak at the next upcoming Marvel character to make it to Hollywood.

Adults wear spandex too!

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I was about 10 when I was introduced to the wonderful world of comics. I walked into Walden Books in Eastland Mall in Michigan, and just for kicks, picked up an issue of "The New Teen Titans".

That moment changed my life, and 21 years, and over 900 comic books later, I am still reading that same title.

Comic books have become an integral part of my life. The funny thing is that I am not the only adult reading them.

After doing some digging I found several adults who still enjoy reading comic books just like a new generation of children.

"I love comic books," said comic book collector Micheal Mertz, 45, a certified nurse. "They have such a rich history and they take me back to a time when things were simpler."

Today, Hollywood movies are bringing Batman, The X-Men, Jonah Hex and Iron Man to a new generation of people.

Even more surprising is how many comic books have evolved and grown in much the same way I have.

Right now there are comic books dealing with homosexuality, religion and even relating to the new President and the fall of the Twin Towers.

"As the culture changes, so does the way people write comic books," said Danial Mackie, owner of Comic Kingdom in Detroit, Michigan.

I remember reading "The Dark Phoenix Saga", a graphic novel from the pages of Marvel's X-men.

I actually got teary-eyed by the end of the book. Imagine my surprise that a comic book touched me so much.

I am seeing more and more people my age at comic book shops. It seems that adults have outnumbered the amount of kids who read comics.

From bulky bikers, to jocks to women, all types of adults can be seen purchasing comics.

Wonder Woman, Batman, The X-men and Su-

pergirl all seem to remind us of where we came from and where we can go.

"I love reading comics," said comic book collector Katie Salkhoun, 32. "I never stopped reading them even when I was in college."

It used to be that Superman would always save the day, but that is not always true anymore.

As we grew so did the threats our favorite heroes had to face. Even heroes like Superman have their own personal issues.

I have seen such creativity in bringing comics to the page; I can associate with the characters because they go through the same hurdles I have to.

Many comedians and television shows make pop culture references to comic books opening the door to other people to join me in that world.

"I'll pick up an issue and get so engrossed in the storyline I sometimes forget that I am at work," said Mertz.

As cynical as we adults can be dealing with the everyday stresses of living, working and going to school, comic books bring us that much closer to taking a breath and enjoying life.