

AROUNDTOWN

Don't get stuck eating at Pita Kabob

W Uzma Ahmad
Editorials Editor

Walking into the recently opened Pita Kabob in Chicago's West Ridge neighborhood, patrons are immediately impressed by the welcoming, bright, orange and maroon walls. Unfortunately, the ambience failed to offset the average quality of the food that followed at this Mediterranean restaurant that left a poor impression on this reviewer.

Among appetizers, the hummus (\$2.99) is adequate. Made of chick peas, tahini sauce and olive oil, this Mediterranean dish tastes authentic and delectable and is appealing to the eye. The hummus is served with hot, fresh pita bread.

From there, however, the entire experience seemed to go downhill. Although the waitress was extremely pleasant, service was slow as patrons were second priority to the heavy take-out onslaught.

Pita Kabob serves various types of sandwiches (\$4.99), including chicken, beef, kofta and lamb. However, these can be offered in entrée style (\$9.99) and served with rice and a choice of lentil soup or salad.

The entrées can also be combined into a

three-way combo (\$12.99) consisted of any three meats including chicken shawarma, kofta kabob, beef shawarma and lamb kabob. This reviewer chose to order the three-way combo, which consisted of chicken shawarma, kofta kabob and lamb kabob.

The chicken shawarma is a plate of thin sliced, lightly seasoned chicken steak cooked on a rotisserie. This entrée was savory, yet pedestrian.

The kofta kabob was less pleasant. The kabob, which is shaped like a footlong hotdog, is made of grilled and seasoned ground meat mixed with herbs. The meat was rather dry and undercooked and left a slightly bitter aftertaste.

The most appetizing of the three entrées is the lamb kabob. This meat was more delectable and savory, yet did not surpass average.

The white rice that accompanies this three-meat combo is ordinary and not of authentic Mediterranean style. Lentil soup that is provided with the entrée was delicate but extremely bland.

Other entrée choices include sautéed lamb, chicken or beef. The sautéed lamb (\$9.99) consists of small pieces of lamb cooked with tomato, onion, olive oil and various spices. Although the lamb has tangy gravy, the meat was undercooked. Chewing the meat felt difficult and unnatural. Drenched in too much



Pita Kabob entrées disappoint. Photo by Uzma Ahmad.

oil for Mediterranean standards, the lamb was heavy and unappetizing.

The salad that accompanied the lamb did not compensate for the shortcomings of the lamb. Consisting simply of lettuce and chopped up tomatoes, the salad felt more of something that could be whipped together by anyone at home.

Dessert at Pita Kabob may be the only aspect that comes close to salvaging an unsatisfying

meal. Baklava (\$1) is a pastry made of layers of phyllo dough filled with chopped nuts and sweetened with syrup or honey. Quite tasty, this traditional dessert almost allowed this reviewer to leave Pita Kabob in a positive frame of mind. Almost.

Overall, the restaurant seemed more suitable for a last-minute, late-night take-out place. Although the prices are low, the barely edible food at Pita Kabob will not elicit a return visit. If, for some strange reason, readers would like to form their own opinions, the restaurant is located at 5701

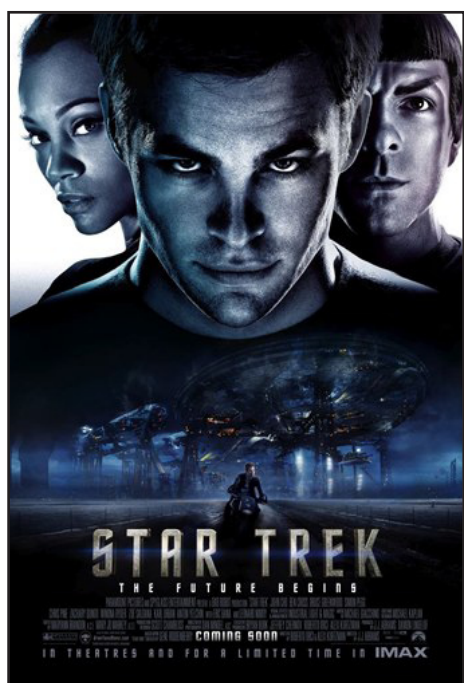
N California Ave. and can be reached by calling (773) 271-2771.



Star Trek relates to hardcore 'Trekkies' as well as the public

W Hillary Lindwall
News/Wire Editor

At first glance, *Star Trek*, directed by *Lost* and *Fringe* producer J.J. Abrams, may seem like a film that would not appeal to a large audience. On the surface, the film seems geared toward hardcore "Trekkies" (or "Trekkers," as they prefer to be called) and science fiction fans. Viewing the film suggests otherwise: even those who are not fans of the *Star Trek* television series could enjoy this new prequel very much.



The story begins in the year 2233, when the USS Kelvin is traveling through space to investigate a lightning storm. After realizing that the storm is actually a black hole, a huge enemy ship called the Narada emerges, opening fire on the Kelvin. Nero (Eric Bana), the captain of the Narada, orders the Kelvin's captain, Robau (Faran Tahir), to come aboard their ship to negotiate. Robau then gives command of the ship to his first officer, George Kirk (Chris Hemsworth). After this, the ship is destroyed just as Kirk's son, James Kirk (Jimmy Bennett), is born.

The story resumes years later, when James Kirk is a child. It is obvious from this scene

that Kirk is a daredevil because he steals his stepfather's car and launches it off a cliff even though he is a young child. Around the same time, a young Vulcan named Spock is grappling with his half human-half Vulcan identity.

The story jumps again to the future, when both boys have grown into young men. Both join Starfleet, an elite group of starship personnel. On their first mission on the USS Enterprise, the crew is sent to investigate another lightning storm. On their journey, the Narada emerges once again, and the captain is requested to board the Narada.

From this point, the film provides the back story on the mythology known to all *Star Trek* fans, providing insight into the origins of the beloved crew of the Enterprise: Kirk (played as an adult by Chris Pine), Spock (Zachary Quinto), Sulu (John Cho), Scotty (Simon Pegg), Bones (Karl Urban), Chekov (Anton Yelchin) and Uhura (Zoe Saldana).

This reviewer found Robert Orsi and Alex

Kurtzman's screenplay very interesting because it deals with time travel. The topic is a good background for the futuristic theme, and it is interesting to audience members as well because it is a form of science that currently seems to be impossible.

Furthermore, the crew of the Enterprise grapples with such issues as time travel, love and human emotion. Throughout the course of the film, Spock considers undergoing the Vulcan ritual of draining all human emotion. This is an interesting concept for audience consideration because it is a rather obscure topic about which many people would not think.

Also, the acting was very good throughout the film. Even though the film is set in the future, the characters are very relatable and believable. For example, Quinto played Spock very well. Throughout the film, the viewer was able to believe that he actually was a Vulcan.

Additionally, the cinematography of the film is done very well. The enemy Narada ship is

very dark and creepy, whereas the Enterprise is white and bright. This symbolizes an obvious theme of good and evil that is prevalent throughout the film. However, this being said, the directing of the film was nothing special. So many movies about the future have been made that it seems impossible for any director to come up with an original idea. Even so, Abrams could not provide a reprieve from the monotony of fantasized future technologies.

Overall, *Star Trek* is filled with action, adventure and humor. The new *Star Trek* film does a good job of appeasing fans of the original television series as well as recruiting new ones, making the movie a success.



Terminator: Salvation lacks a challenge for competitive players

W Rexly Penafloida
Managing Editor

With every blockbuster movie that comes out, there is bound to be a video game that will relate to the movie in some way. *Terminator: Salvation* is no exception. Although some games replicate or transcend the excitement of the film from which they draw their inspiration, *Terminator: Salvation* does not live up to its movie counterpart. With very cheesy dialogue and linear gameplay, this video game does not impress this reviewer at all.

The player takes on the role of John Connor who has given up the role as leader of the Resistance and is now a regular soldier. While retreating from a very gruesome battle, Connor picks up a distress signal from a soldier named David Weston. Weston says that he and his men are being held at Eagle Rock, the central hub of Skynet, which is the source of all the machines that are fighting the Resistance. With a small group of people, Connor battles his way through Los Angeles and eventually arrives at Eagle Rock to rescue Weston and his men and to destroy Skynet.

One would expect the story line to be a little bit more complex considering that the *Terminator*



franchise is one that is well known. Not only is the plot line pedestrian, but the game is very quick. Players can finish the game in about two and one-half hours.

Unfortunately, the brevity of the game is only one of its numerous drawbacks of the game. The dialogue is inauthentic, and while most games today focus on gameplay to drive the story, this game uses cut scenes to progress forward. Also, the voice actors are very poor in their performance. Playing the game is like

watching a very bad action movie with cliché-ridden dialogue.

As for the gameplay itself, it is very mediocre. The player fights against only three types of robots, two of which could be seen in every section of the game, which made this reviewer very bored and makes the game very monotonous.

Furthermore, an intriguing enemy who is seen in one scene and who is expected to be encountered later in the game completely disappears.

Overall, the game is too easy. It takes about six to seven shots to take down an enemy, and with the player's large amount of followers, battles are obviously not very difficult. Also, the camera is very shaky. It gives the player nausea, not what designers thought would be the excitement that comes with the character's running around.

While the movie claims to be the number one action film in the country, *Terminator: Salvation* gets terminated by this reviewer.



WestWord

4 Out of 5 Doctors recommend this album

Fourth in a series

w Hillary Lindwall
News/Wire Editor

The year 1980 was a defining one that would set the stage of the music scene for the next decade. Upon removing themselves from '70s rock and funk, '80s musicians had to find a new

Of 5 Doctors emerged from under the radar long enough to reform common musical styles, set the standard for so-called "power pop" and establish the musical tone for the remainder of the '80s.

The band released its self-titled debut LP in 1980, a disc that features 11 songs of mixed themes. The LP did not cause the band to become instant pop stars, but they were able to open for popular bands such as the Cars and the Clash and to tour with musicians such as Hall and Oates.

Originally recorded on vinyl, *4 Out of 5 Doctors* was not widely distributed on CD but resurfaced recently on iTunes™ as part of a compilation that includes their second (and only other) LP, *Second Opinion*.

The first song on the album, "Modern Man," opens with a series of fast, heavy drum beats. Next, a synthesizer is prevalent, and finally, the vocals are audible. This layering effect is a good opening for the album because it sets a rather mysterious tone. The listener is not sure what to expect next, and (s)he is induced to listen to the entire LP in order to unravel the mystery.



musical style with which to express themselves. From the ashes of disco rose a new style of music, pioneered by the Washington D.C.-based band 4 Out of 5 Doctors. With searing guitars in hand and heads full of hooks, 4 Out

of 5 Doctors emerged from under the radar long enough to reform common musical styles, set the standard for so-called "power pop" and establish the musical tone for the remainder of the '80s.

The voice of lead singer/bassist Cal Everett is very soothing in tone, and at times, he sounds like Sting. He especially sounds like the lead singer of the Police during the second song on the album, "Jeff, Jeff."

All of the songs on *4 Out of 5 Doctors* have a common '80s feel, but are all very obviously different in terms of style and theme. This can be attributed to the fact that three of the band members (Everett and guitarists George Pittaway and Jeff Severson) wrote songs for the album.

Furthermore, even though the album was recorded almost 30 years ago, the songs do not at all seem dated or dull. On the contrary, the songs have a fresh sound that must have seemed ahead of its time in 1980.

One of the best songs on the album is "Opus 10," a fast-paced, catchy rock-pop song. The only down side to this song, like the majority of the album, is that it is sometimes difficult to understand the lyrics.

Most songs on the album are fast-paced, which is energizing for the listener, but can get

tiring at times. For this reason, it is good that 4 Out of 5 Doctors added a few slower songs, including "New Wave Girls" to break up the otherwise frenetic pace of the album.

Because of the trio of songwriters, the distinct personalities of the band members are very prevalent throughout the album. One particular example is the song "Danger Man," the eccentric spy theme ("I play lead guitar for the CIA") of which proves to be very comical.

Throughout, *4 Out of 5 Doctors* features raw guitar combined with Tom Ballew's powerful drumming, literate lyrics and catchy tunes. Overall, the album is very good. It has stood the test of time because of its unique themes and catchy choruses. For this reason, *4 Out of 5 Doctors* has earned the distinction of cult classic.

4 Out of 5 Doctors



4 Out of 5 Doctors

Fight for Love's monotones fail to impress

w Hillary Lindwall
News/Wire Editor

There has been a recent ongoing trend that a runner up of *American Idol* has become more famous than the actual winner of the contest. The same is true for season five participant Elliott Yamin. Although he did not win the competition, he has released two albums, which is more than 2006 winner Taylor Hicks can say. Released on May 5, 2009, Yamin's sophomore album, *Fight for Love*, sounds very much like a pop album.

However, the difference between Yamin's style and that of pop artists is that Yamin combines pop beats with a classic R&B sound. Even so, many times on the album, Yamin comes off as trying to hard rather than soulful.

The majority of the album seems as if Yamin is trying to be an R&B and pop singer simultaneously. Yamin should decide between the two rather than continuing on his hybrid quest. All songs on *Fight for Love* consist of the same instrumentation: an obvious synthesized beat coupled with piano. Although this technique does a nice job of featuring the voice of the performer rather than the background, the entire album is performed in this style even though change is definitely needed.

The title track of the CD, "Fight for Love," does not seem to have a melody until the chorus is sung. It seems like a string of disconnected notes. The track is rather anticlimactic because it seems as if the title track should be the best song on the album. After all, that is what the CD is named after.

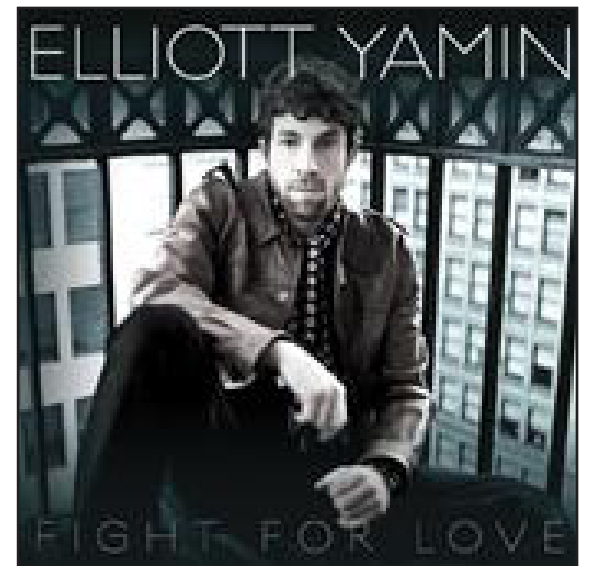
Although Yamin's voice is nice and rather soothing, it gets overly shaky at times. It is as if Yamin is trying to add flair to his songs, but he is greatly overdoing it. The shaky quality of his voice can especially be heard in the song "Know Better," where his voice almost seems unstable. However, his voice has a good range and he can hit a lot of notes.

To add to the monotony of the song style reflected by the entire CD, most of the songs on the album are about love. While love songs are a musical staple, there are many other themes about which songs can be written.

Not only are all of his songs about love, but Yamin also seems to be undergoing a lot of

mood swings throughout the album. The songs alternate between being happy and sad, with most of them focusing on the depressing side of love. However, none of his songs could be described as ballads because there is a persistent beat in every song, making it difficult to imagine where any of his songs would be played. They cannot really be danced to, so they must settle for being labeled as easy listening.

However, it is not that easy to listen



to all of his songs either, so the album is ultimately just depressing and monotonous.

The only reprieve from the tedium of the album is the song "Cold Heart." Even though this song is also about love, it has a rather jazzy feel, complete with horns in the background. While every other song almost sounds like Yamin is crying, "Cold Heart" finally gives the listener the feeling that Yamin actually enjoys singing.

Also, it is very easy to understand the words that Yamin sings throughout the album and all of the songs are reasonably short, which are good aspects considering the repetitive nature of the songs.

Overall, *Fight for Love* is a rather mediocre album. Although the track "Cold Heart" is good, Yamin accomplished too little too late. This song is not enough to salvage the album from its monotony or make the album at all memorable.

Fight for Love

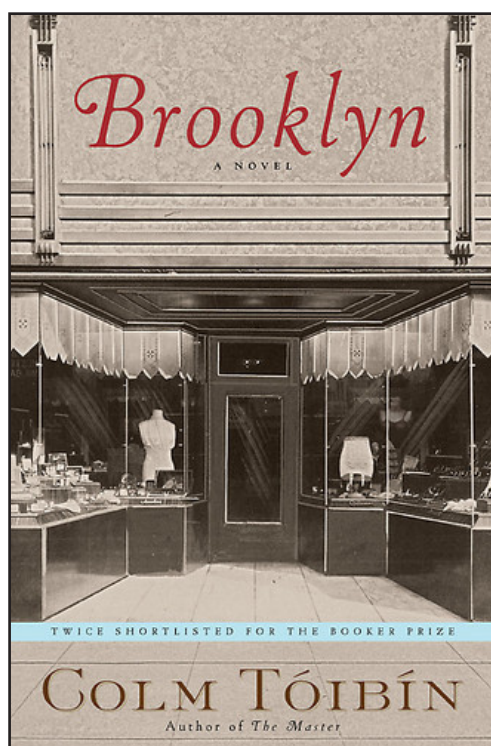


Elliott Yamin

Tóibín's epic immigration novel charms readers

w Naomi Prale
Around Town Editor

Colm Tóibín's *Brooklyn* is a coming-of-age novel set in the eponymous borough and in provincial Ireland. It examines one young woman's choice of where her home is.



a blonde Italian with whom she falls in love. He slowly wins her over with his patient charm, taking her to Coney Island, Ebbets Field and home for dinner to the two-room apartment that he shares with his large family. He talks of having children who will become Brooklyn Dodgers fans. Just as Ellis begins to fall in love with Tony, she receives some distressing news of her sister's death and hurries back to Ireland to be with her mother.

As if Ellis' sister's death weren't bad enough, Ellis comes to realize that she has two different lives, one in Ireland with her mother and one in Brooklyn with Tony. She has to choose where her heart belongs. Tóibín's novel is about the power of conformity, and in the end, Ellis makes a choice that is true to herself, a lesson all women should be able to understand.

Tóibín uses a dark and mysterious tone to create emotion in his novel. Homesickness and rupture are the main experiences of Ellis' life, which creates a feeling of pathos upon which the reader can draw. Tóibín writes, "She wondered if she could go out now, do anything rather than face her tomb of a bedroom...it was like the arrival of night if you knew you would never see the daylight again." Feelings of sympathy and sadness erupt from Ellis' gloomy look on life in *Brooklyn*.

The immigrant experience in America has become a basis for several compelling and epic narratives. Still others have exaggerated the accounts of true immigrant experiences. The latter is not the case with *Brooklyn*, as details give life to each page and new happenings unfold surprises, sadness and smiles for Ellis.

Tóibín's complex story line and unusual mix of characters give *Brooklyn* a fresh slant on the typical immigration story because Ellis finally learns to live her life by putting her past behind, which is what immigrants come to America every day to attempt.

Brooklyn



Colm Toibin

As Ellis Lacey grows up in a small-town in Ireland post World War II, she does her best but fails to find a job in the miserable economy despite her bookkeeping skills. When an Irish priest offers her work in America, Ellis jumps at the chance for the job. She emigrates to work in a department store in a Brooklyn neighborhood, leaving her fragile mother and charming sister at home.

Ellis finds much more than money at Bartocci's department store. She meets Tony,