



Bert's Big Adventure Gives to Those in Need

Courtney Bixby
Contributing Writer

Bert's Big Adventure is a non-profit organization began by Bert Weiss in 2002. The organization takes children with chronic and terminal illnesses between ages 5-12 to Disney World for five days. The trip is an all expenses paid trip and includes the whole family. The trip began taking seven families, but now has grown to be able to take 12-15 because of the community donations and partnerships. Throughout the trip the kids will have limos, chartered flights, princess makeovers, and much more.

Bert Weiss is the host of a nationally syndicated radio show called The Bert Show. It plays on Atlanta Q99.7 on weekday mornings from 6-10 a.m. The show allows for a national platform to encourage listeners to donate to the non-profit providing kids who have never been to Disney World an amazing five day experience. To date, Bert's Big Adventure has served 173 kids and their families. Families can fill out an application if they have never been to Disney, if they are in the listening range of The Bert Show, and if they meet the age and financial qualifications. Bert's Big Adventure is dedicated to taking families that have day to day struggles and otherwise would not be able to take this trip of a lifetime. A nomination is also accepted for friends or family who want to nominate someone they are very close with.

"Seeing all the beautiful children who have been through so much get a trip like this is such a warm feeling," said Amber Jones, a producer on The Bert Show. "On the day they left, they had absolutely no worries which is a

feeling they never have."

There are several fundraising events held annually for the community to meet and get to know the kids selected each year. One of the biggest events is the Noon to Night Fashion Show. The fashion show just celebrated its tenth anniversary. The show is held at Avalon in Atlanta and the selected children have full makeovers so they can walk the runway and show off their looks. In 2024, the fashion show raised \$100,000 because of donations and their silent auction. Atlanta celebrities and the Bert's Big Adventure staff walk with the kids down the runway making each one feel like their own celebrity.

Bert's Big Adventure runs several programs throughout the year including the annual Disney trip. They also host several reunion events for any family that has been on the trip since the very beginning leading to a wee connected Bert's Big Adventure community that supports every family. The reunion events are usually located in Atlanta at entertaining destinations such as the Georgia Aquarium. The Fairy Godparent is another program partnered with Carter's Charitable Foundation that is run every year to ensure that each and every child gets the support they deserve during a chronic or terminal illness. Godparents visit children in the hospital bringing toys, food, and activities and provide support to parents and families.

Bert's Big Adventure is always looking for volunteers and individuals who want to get involved. Individuals can volunteer locally with the program, become a digital sidekick sharing

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and reposting information about the program, and accept donations on behalf of Bert's Big Adventure. The Fairy Godparent program is accepting applications for anyone over 21 that can volunteer for a year minimum. The nonprofit has an amazon wishlist each year, as well as the opportunity to host a fundraising event.

To locate events near you or to donate please visit the Bert's Big Adventure website.



Photo courtesy of Bert's Big Adventures

Dive Star Breaks into the Atlanta Music Scene

Emma Swales
Editor-In-Chief

Taking a leap of faith to start something new can be daunting, but the will and determination to follow your passion can transform the journey into something effortless. When you pursue your goals with intention and passion, it can feel more like play than work. And with a team that shares your dreams, growth and success become even more attainable.

Forming a new alternative indie band in a musically saturated city like Atlanta may seem challenging, but for singer Emily Rish. Relocating from Asheville, N.C., she brought with her a passion for singing and an unwavering commitment to creating music, no matter the obstacles. With the support of new friends, she founded Dive Star—a dynamic band that brings a new, grungy twist into the alternative indie scene. Together, they’re carving out a unique sound that’s making waves in the underground music community through genuine, raw dedication.

Dive Star released its most recent EP, *Childstar*, in July earlier this year. That marks the fourth work delivered by the indie grunge band, following its third release *Protomartini* that debuted in June. Rish explains that the band takes heavy influence from alternative artists such as Modest Mouse and Chastity Belt,

while also including a mix of clashing elements to differentiate its sound.

“There are tons of elements that definitely influenced our music in different ways,” said Rish. “Especially me as a vocalist, I have learned a lot from listening to music and trying new things.

“Shaun, our guitarist, writes our music and he comes from a screamo background. It’s a lot different from the music we are making now,” continued Rish. “That glimpse of screamo mixed with slowed down indie is what makes our music so unique. Instrumentally it sounds like a perfect blend of alternative experimentation.”

In 2022, Rish changed her environment in hopes of finding the right collaborators to lay the foundation for Dive Star. Shortly after arriving in Georgia, she crossed paths with drummer James Cramer and guitarists Alex Delgado and Shaun West while biking through downtown.

“We all live in Atlanta and all of us have lived here for at least five years, some of us even more,” said Rish. “It is a really weird story; I had just moved here from Asheville and the pandemic was ongoing, so I didn’t have many friends.

“I was riding my bike around and I saw this group of guys playing

volleyball,” continued Rish. “I used to love to play volleyball when I was younger, so I felt the urge to reach out. I discovered they had a band and were looking for a singer, it was perfect.”

After meeting her new friends, Rish revealed her ongoing passion to create Dive Star and perform music. She soon formed a close connection with her new bandmates, who hold the same determination to establish a spot in the indie music scene.

After working together for over a year, Dive Star released its debut *Demo* in January of 2023. Between its first release and its most recent fourth, Rish explains that Dive Star has experienced tremendous growth. Now in 2024, the band is producing work in professional spaces and has begun promoting its unique sound at bars and venues across Atlanta.

“We have been working and expanding on a lot,” said Rish. “We just recorded our new EP in a professional studio, and I have never done that before. It was a cool and unique experience for me. It took all day long, maybe 13 or 14 hours, and four days in a row. By the end of it, it felt like I went on a retreat with my band.

“It made us all come together and grow closer, and I felt like we sounded so much better than when we started,” continued

Rish. “I remember coming home from that and sitting on my stairs thinking, ‘I just did something that I am really proud of.’ I don’t feel that way often, but that was a moment when I realized we worked hard, and I was just so proud of it.”

After experiencing such a sudden growth in a short time, Rish is confident in Dive Star’s ability to successfully create something from scratch that people can appreciate and respect. She claims that starting was the hard part but owning the confidence to be creative as an artist and having a supportive team influences growth more than anything.

“I think what is on the agenda next for us is hopefully writing a lot more, putting more out, and working on a full album,” said Rish. “I also want to start a tour even if it is small. I am eager and have big dreams because I know we can reach these goals. My passion for doing what I love makes it easy to move forward, and my band has shared that with me on this journey.

“I am just continuing what we are doing, which is making music that we are proud of and making music that comes from a genuine place,” continued Rish. “That is what will feed this steady growth. We are going to keep pushing ourselves as artists to expand more on



Photo Courtesy of Dive Bar

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A Walk Through Time: Feathers and Twigs

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Photo: Kaden Carr, *The West Georgian*

Tucked away by the train tracks on Maple Street, you'll find a historic building by the name of Feathers and Twigs, an antique store that prides itself on having a little something for everyone. Founded in 2007, it has been Carrollton's go-to for vintage decor and homemade treasures.

"I honestly don't think a single person on this Earth could go through the whole store and not find at least one item they like," said Molly Skinner, the outlet's general manager and co-owner. "We have so many cool items that I can't even think of, and we're constantly changing."

The sheer variety and scope of their wares is no understatement. Browsing through the building feels like entering a maze, surrounded by comforting keepsakes and heirlooms on all sides. Made up of over 50 different unique vendors, each packed to

the brim, simply exploring the shop is an experience all its own. It's labyrinthian, yet cozy all the same.

There is much to see in every nook and cranny, spanning from repurposed furniture, decorations from all corners of the world, locally produced pottery, video tapes, and vintage clothes that all have their own particular story.

"It really makes me appreciate history. I wonder how many families some of our items have gone through," Skinner says about their catalog. "I want to make sure I take good care of the stuff that I've collected so that I can eventually pass it on to my family in the future."

A particular selling point is their wealth of handmade goods lovingly provided by Carrollton locals. Spread across the store, shoppers can find jams, jellies, and even

premium goat milk soap bars. Inventory is constantly being refreshed, restocked and updated to meet demand.

Skinner made it clear that Feathers and Twigs isn't simply a place to shop, but somewhere to reminisce and absorb a particular welcoming atmosphere. "I love being able to talk to the people that come in. I love hearing about the stories customers have with certain items that remind them of their childhood," Skinner says. "I love being able to move the furniture around and decorate it all pretty, and I especially love when regulars come in and notice the changes that I have made."

Being one of the only present workers there, Skinner feels a great deal of gratification in helping to run the place. Her mother Amy has owned Feathers and Twigs for four years now, making the antique store somewhat of a family business. That familial bond shines through in nearly every aspect of the location.

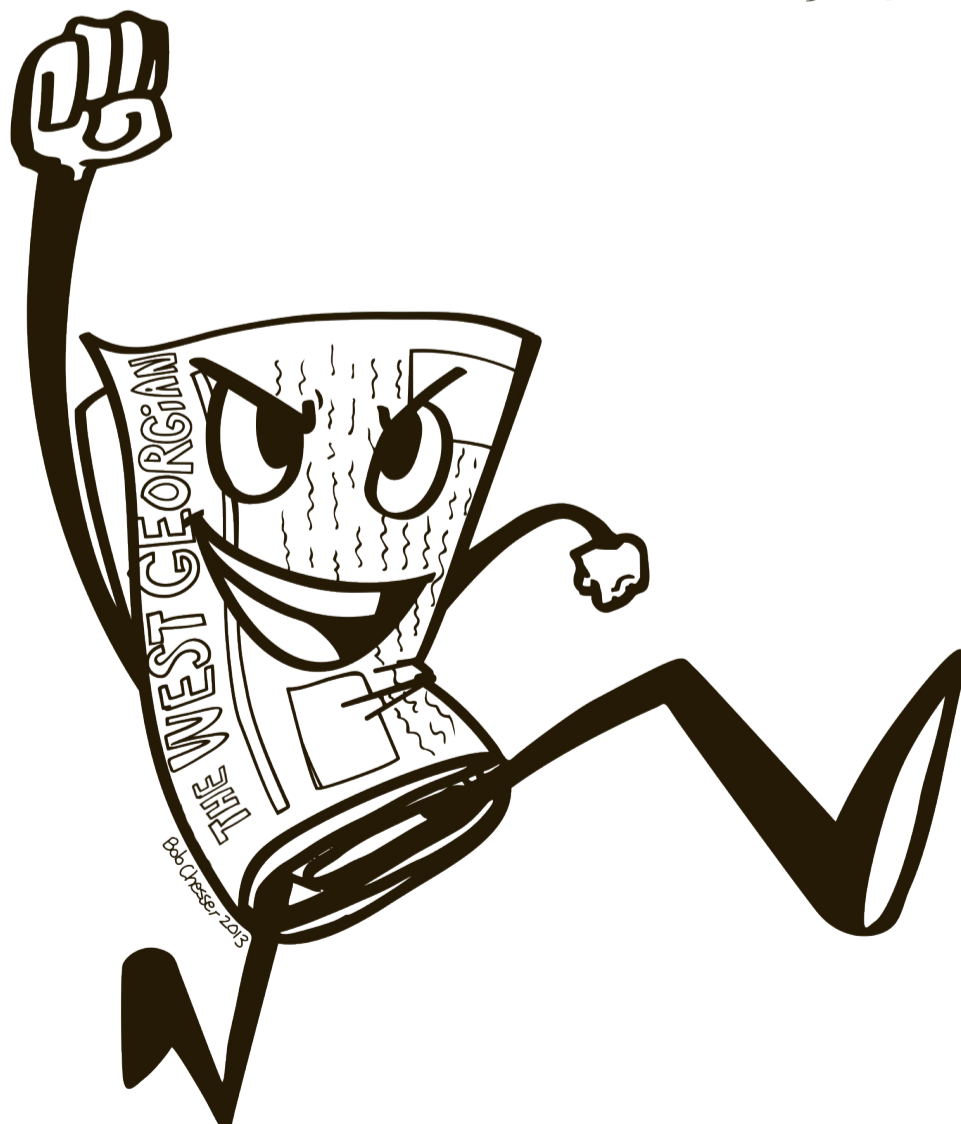
"I hope the store lasts for as long as that building can stand," Skinner says. "It's been standing since 1911, and I hope that it continues to stand for hundreds more years to come."



Photo: Kaden Carr,
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Lonely Planet Could Not be Saved Despite Beautiful Morocco Setting

Breanna Tillie
News Editor

One of the best aspects of art is that an art appreciator can admire a beautiful piece of creation, while still disliking multiple elements of it. Art is open to interpretation. "Lonely Planet," a new movie released Oct. 11 on Netflix, is a film that can be commended for its beautiful setting, yet the storyline, characters and message very much fall flat.

"Lonely Planet" tells of a writer's retreat in Morocco. Attending this writer's retreat is a successful and popular novelist named Katherine and a finance manager named Owen, who is there with his girlfriend, Lily. Katherine and Owen meet and immediately begin spending a great deal of time together, much to Lily's understandable jealousy as Katherine is an author that Lily admires.

Owen and Lily are in a difficult spot in their relationship, and Katherine is the only thing Owen is enjoying while being in Morocco. Eventually, while Owen is drunk and in the heat of a fight with Lily, he makes a romantic pass at Katherine where she mentions the age difference between the two of them. This angers Owen and he walks away. The very next morning, it is revealed that Lily has been cheating on Owen, so he runs into Katherine's arms and the two carry on their relationship from there.

The first bothersome aspect of this film is the storyline itself. It is advertised as being a tale of a love affair between an older woman and a younger man, yet this was hardly discussed in the film at all. The story would have been nearly identical, with

the exception of two scenes, if Katherine and Owen were the same age. It was also unnecessary for Owen to have a girlfriend coming into the film. There was nothing that Katherine possessed that Lily did not. They were both successful and focused writers, and neither of them had much of a personality.

Owen's career as finance manager also had little to do with the love story between Katherine and Owen. These elements seemed random and thrown into the mix for no particular reason, other than the movie needed to be an hour and a half long.

The way that Owen discovered Lily had been cheating was lazily done, and only existed to justify the fact that Owen had already been having an emotional affair with Katherine throughout the entire movie. Katherine and Owen also have a random and thrown in issue towards the end of the film, because this movie insisted on following the overdone structure of making the couple split up in the last twenty minutes, only to reunite at the very end. This movie could have taken this story in so many directions, yet it deliberately chose to be as cliché as possible.

With how poorly done the storyline is, it is no surprise that the characters are also majorly under developed. Katherine is a difficult character to care for. Her character has such little depth and the audience knows so little about her. She did reveal to Owen how her previous relationship ended, but her explanation of this still consisted of such little vulnerability.

Owen was certainly the worst character



Photo courtesy of Netflix in the film. He was obviously quite insecure and envious of Lily's success and refused to celebrate her accomplishments. He overreacted to any slight joke made towards him and had no ability to laugh at himself. He spends the trip primarily with Katherine, even though he is there to celebrate his girlfriend. Overall, the writers did a poor job of making this romantic lead even remotely likable.

Lily was a character that viewers probably could have rooted for, but the writers insisted on turning her into a cheater. This was silly considering Owen had been every other kind of unfaithful to Lily as well.

Overall, this film was irresponsible with its beautiful Morocco setting and badly missed the mark with the production of this film.

A24's New Movie We Live In Time Falls Flat on Portraying An Emotional Story on Love, Life And Loss

Abbie Klein
Feature Editor

Many movie goers have been excited and intrigued for John Crowley's new movie We Live In Time since photos of leads Florence Pugh and Andrew Garfield were leaked in April of 2023. The impressive filmography of both actors including classics like The Amazing Spider-Man and Little Women had people greatly anticipating seeing how well the two would work on screen together. While I am a fan of both actors and I think their performances were exceptional, I feel like the movie fell flat and failed to portray the message they intended to.

The A24 romantic drama starring Pugh and Garfield that released on Oct. 18, was meant to be an emotional roller coaster showing the relationship of Tobias Durrand (Garfield) and Almut Brühl (Pugh). The two met after Almut accidentally hit Tobias with her car, sparking the beginning of

a deep and long relationship. Almut and Tobias quickly fall in love and take their relationship very seriously very early on.

After moving in together shortly after they meet, Almut discovers she has ovarian cancer and begins to go through chemotherapy. Once she goes into remission she and Tobias begin their journey to have a child. Due to Almut's weakened reproductive system the couple turns to IVF to help them conceive. Through their IVF journey Almut and Tobias become pregnant with their daughter Ella, who is later born on the bathroom floor of a gas station on New Years Eve.

Around 3 years later Almut receives a second cancer diagnosis. This time she tells Tobias she wants to have a great 6 to 8 months instead of spending 12 months in pain and sickness. These months are spent alongside her family and preparing for a prestigious cooking competition, Bocuse

d'Or, in which Almut represents the UK in.

The movie ends with Almut completing the Bocuse d'Or and going ice skating with Tobias and Ella. The scene fades out showing Almut waving to her family from across the rink. Then cutting to the final scene of the movie, it shows Tobias home alone with Ella teaching her to crack an egg the same way Almut had taught him.

Instead of chronologically showing this story, the movie showed their relationship by going back and forth between three different points in time. These points being when they first met, the birth of their daughter and Almut's second cancer diagnosis. While this was tough to follow at first I quickly got used to it once I was able to identify which time the scene was in. This layout offered both disadvantages and advantages. The back and forth very much felt like watching a person's life on a highlight reel. I imagine the



Photo courtesy of

A24 Studios

director was trying to make it seem like how someone would view their life in their last moments, messy and all at the same time. While this helped add to the overall message of the movie it was difficult to connect with the characters emotionally.

For a movie that was meant to be an emotional take on life, love and loss I felt it difficult to greatly feel anything towards these characters and their story due to the way it was shown. The characters were very flat and didn't have much depth.

It was difficult to add detail and backstory to these characters while maintaining the highlight-reel effect.

As someone who is a fan of Pugh and Garfield and loves almost anything A24 releases, I was disappointed by We Live In Time. I felt like the story had the ability to be something extraordinary and memorable but I left the theater feeling indifferent. I don't regret seeing it but it's not a movie I feel I need to see again.