

Fifth graders rumba, swing

Sara DeGonia
Assistant Features Editor

It's comparable to two hours of playing with a box of fluffy kittens.

It only takes an ounce of affection — merely a heart the size of Mr. Grinch's pre-growth — to react in the following manner: "Awwww. They're sooo cute."

And the children of the featured New York City elementary schools are in fact completely adorable. But the documentary "Mad Hot Ballroom" isn't about the charm and loveliness of dozens of fifth graders. It's about their participation in a mandatory ballroom dancing program.

The 10-week program is taught by the nonprofit organization American Ballroom Theater's Dancing Classrooms, which instructs 11-year-olds at more than 60 New York schools, according to Paramount's "Mad Hot Ballroom" official movie site.

The students learn a variety of dance styles, including merengue, rumba, tango, foxtrot and swing dancing.

At first it seems unlikely that a bunch of socially awkward, pre-pubescent, gangly kids

could succeed at such a feat. Not to mention that each dance uses boy-girl partnering. But miraculously this seems a complete nonissue: Perhaps the students are young enough not to care.

Furthermore, there must have been clever editing because the documentary includes a serious lack of complaint from the students. One boy casually mentions he dislikes ballroom dancing. But for the most part, the kids seem happy as clams to be recipients of free dance lessons.

Here's where the added bonus social commentary comes in. And why shouldn't it? Most of the 11-year-olds are inner-city darlings who look forward to little and often resign themselves to a sad fate they think is sure to sneak up on them. A few of them are interviewed and give astoundingly mature and poignant opinions on their social situations and future prospects.

So what could be better than these kids finding a little bit of deserved enjoyment in the classy sport?

Now, the lessons do not end abruptly after 10 weeks, but rather the hard work and careful concentration culminates in a citywide competition: the Rainbow Team Matches. Each qualifying team submits five couples for each of the five dances, as well as an alternate couple who must know all five dances.

Viewers of "Mad Hot Ballroom" can't help but form attachments to the endearing personalities who struggle to improve their dancing skills with every passing week. From Tara — the spunky, dirty blonde-haired girl who thinks she's destined to sing, act and dance — to Wilson, the doe-eyed sweetie who speaks little English but dances like a pro — each child has an addictive character that's hard to come by.

Their teachers have unending encouragement to offer, and it shows as each fifth grader strives to make his or her dance steps just a little bit crisper and a little bit cleaner.

Of course, the true advantage of the young age of the competitors is that at the end of the day they just want to have fun.

They certainly care about the success of their teammates, and each of the chosen five couples sincerely hopes to aid their team in achieving victory, but they're only 11 years old. Merely participating in the competition is award enough for many of the students.

The cinematography is simply perfect although the natural stardom of the featured youths truly makes the movie.

Bottom Line: "Mad Hot Ballroom" is the perfect upbeat DVD rental. For any time of day and any time of year, it's an endearing story of a troop of underprivileged kids feeling privileged to compete in their new favorite hobby.

AROUND THE VILLE

Campus

Kohlenberg Lyceum Event
The Nebraska Theatre Caravan will present "A Christmas Carol" at 7:30 p.m. Tuesday in Baldwin Auditorium. Visit lyceum.truman.edu for more information.

Texas Hold 'Em
The Student Activities Board will sponsor Texas Hold 'Em poker at 1 p.m. Saturday in the SUB Activities Room. The Grand Prize is 200 Pro Clay casino chips with aluminum case, and first and second runner-up prizes also will be awarded. Entry is free for Truman students.

Holiday Lights
Students can enjoy hot chocolate, cappuccino and cookies while listening to the music of True Men, Minor Detail and Unique Ensemble at 9:30 p.m. Tuesday at Kirk Memorial. This event is free to all Truman students.

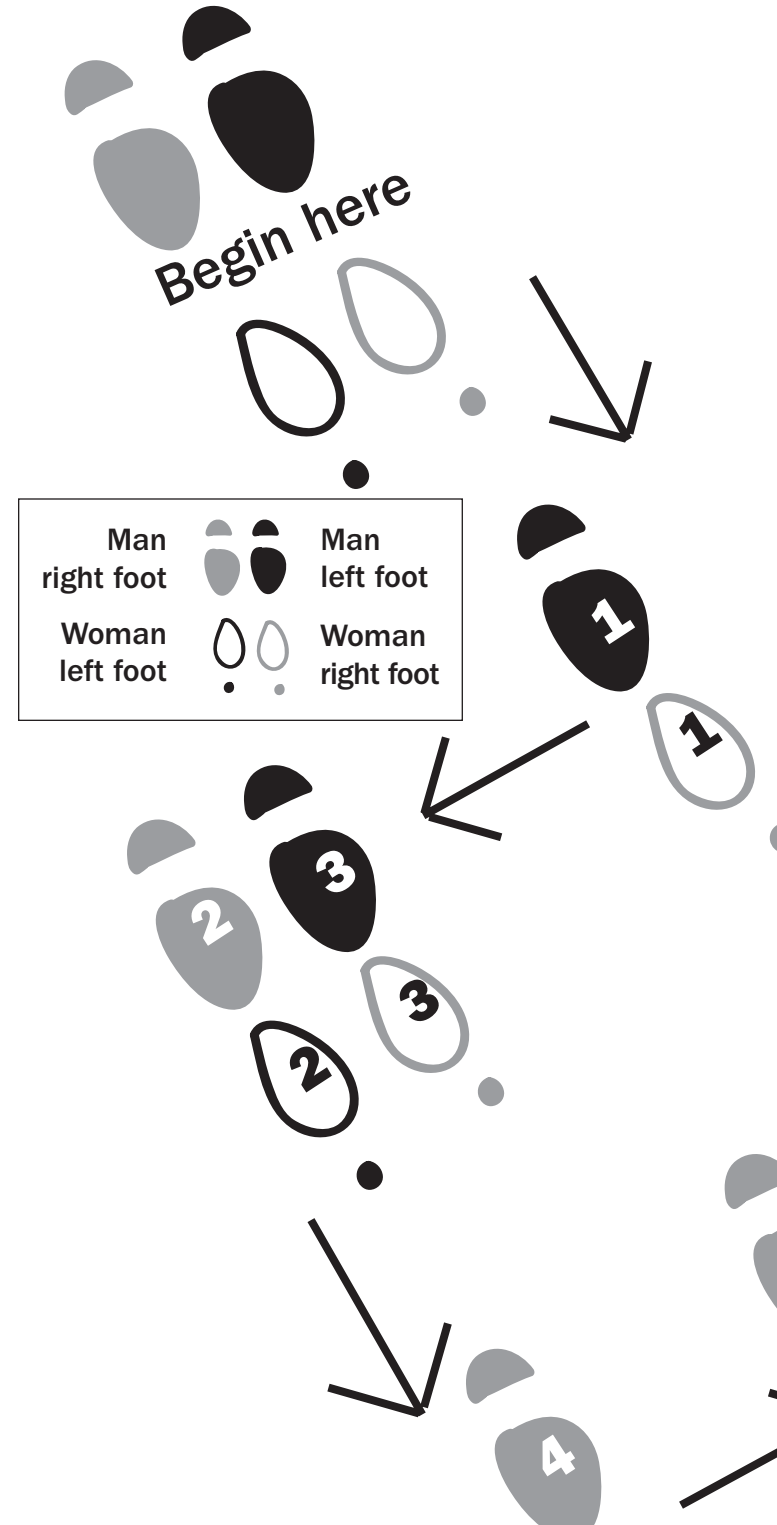
Ryle Holiday Market
Alpha Sigma Gamma Service Sorority and the Residential College Program present the Ryle Holiday Market to benefit Victim Support Services from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday in the Ryle Hall Main Lounge.

Local

Holiday Home Tour
There will be a holiday home tour from 1 to 4 p.m. Sunday beginning at the Kirksville Senior Living Campus at 500 S. Osteopathy St. Contact the Kirksville Chamber of Commerce for more information.

Concerts

Yodeler, Songwriter, Rancher
The Missouri Livestock Symposium will sponsor Wylie Gustafson leading the band Wylie and the Wild West at 7:30 p.m. Saturday at the Kirksville Middle School. Tickets are \$10. Call 665-9866 for more information.



How to Waltz

Source: <http://www.dancetv.com>

DVD Review
"Mad Hot Ballroom"
Starring: The fifth graders of P.S. 150, P.S. 115 and P.S. 112
Director: Marilyn Agrelo
Length: 105 minutes
Genre: Documentary

Make a bite, take a bite

7-Layer Dip

- 1 can refried beans
- 1 8 oz. container sour cream
- 1 1/2 cups salsa
- 1 medium tomato
- 3 cups shredded cheddar cheese
- 1 small can sliced black olives
- 1 small red onion



Spread refried beans evenly in a 9-by-12 inch dish. Layer on the sour cream next and then add about 1 1/2 cups salsa (enough to cover sour cream evenly). Dice one medium tomato and spread evenly on top of the salsa. Add one small can of sliced black olives and chopped red onion sparingly if desired. Lastly, sprinkle about three cups of shredded cheddar cheese as the last layer. Feel free to exclude any undesired layers to taste. Any number of combinations can be a tasty treat with tortilla chips or crackers.

Makes a perfect appetizer for about six or seven people.

Source: Brenda DeGonia

FLASH GORDON
BY JIM KEEFE

THE PLANET MONGO.

THE DELEGATION IS ON ITS WAY WITH THE PEACE TREATY, KALA. YOUR SIGNATURE WILL BRING US ONE STEP CLOSER TO A UNIFIED MONGO.

SINCE THIS WILL BE A HISTORIC OCCASION, BARIN...

I HAVE MADE ARRANGEMENTS TO HAVE THE CEREMONY TRANSMITTED FOR ALL THE WORLD TO SEE.

LEAGUES BENEATH THE SEA OF MYSTERY, KING KALA RECEIVES A COMMUNIQUE FROM KING BARIN.

A MAGNANIMOUS GESTURE, KALA. HERE'S TO THE FUTURE... WHERE OUR CHILDREN NO LONGER HAVE TO LIVE IN THE SHAPOV OF WAR.

IT SEEMS KING BARIN HAS FINALLY STARTED TRUSTING YOU.

THAT'S WHAT I THINK OF BARIN AND HIS UNITED REPUBLICS. WHERE WERE THEY WHEN MY PALACE LAY IN RUINS... MY ONLY SON... DEAD IN MY ARMS!

NOW, UNDER THE GUISE OF PEACE, THE DELEGATES COME... JUST AS YOU SAID THEY WOULD!

Super Crossword NO CONTEST

ACROSS

1	Spasm	55	More minute	102	Maestro de	4	Unlock, in	42	Kenton or	90	Submarine
4	Honshu	59	With	104	Secular	5	Circus	48	Adoption	91	Line of
9	Pinza or	62	Abound	106	Dion's "Run-	6	New	50	Incongruous	93	Looked like
13	Alice's	64	Actor Ryan	107	Plug	9	Yorker"	51	Isolated	94	Asset
18	Aroma	65	Mongrel	110	Rohmer or	11	Last name	52	Last word	96	Palindromic
20	Jeopardy	66	Roger	113	Shameless	12	in piracy	57	of the	97	Arms or
21	Vivacity	67	End of	115	End of	13	Dismount	58	Spelling	98	Jazzman
22	Writer	68	one	119	Goblet part	14	Hum bug?	59	"Show	100	Zoot
23	Rogers St.	69	"Fool" singer,	120	Mohammed	15	Let	60	composer	101	Asian
24	Johns	70	Chris	121	— Jinnah	16	Fusillade	61	hook?	102	holiday
25	Start of a	71	through	122	Harry	17	Looks like	62	Shoestrings	103	Epic name
26	remark by	72	"Lucky Jim"	123	Chapin	18	Lehar's "—	63	Promote	104	in epics
27	134 Across	73	author	124	hit	19	Land des	64	Type of	105	Terra —
28	Parisian	74	Compass	125	Buckwheat	20	Lacheins"	65	roast	106	Absent
29	pronoun	75	pt.	126	dish	21	Neighborhood	66	Heavenly	107	Old
30	Raj address	76	Go-getter	127	Deler	22	Mont.	67	hunter	108	Testament
31	"Gladiator"	77	Part 3 of	128	Shinbone	23	Jawaharalal's	68	Knights'	109	book
32	extra	78	remark	129	Temporary	24	quaff	69	quaff	110	It may be
33	Stick	79	"The French	130	calm	25	"Middle-	70	"There's —	111	invisible
34	"Glad All —"	80	Connection"	131	Speaker of	26	author	71	Out Tonight"	112	Breaks off
35	('64 hit)	81	name	132	remark	27	Synagogue	72	"Moll	113	Worked in
36	Lowe or	82	Comic	133	Happening	28	figure	73	Flanders"	114	Vegas
37	Morrow	83	Charlotte	134	Unmarried	29	19 Competitor	74	author	115	Postern and
38	Valuable	84	Kuvasz and	135	Mme.	30	24 Untamed	75	Rotisserie	116	portcullis
39	Part 2 of	85	komondor	136	Macabre	31	29 Cereal	76	part	117	Martini
40	remark	86	Protected	137	Man the bar	32	spike	77	Lama	118	gamish
41	Barren area	87	85 Veto	138	Brawl	33	74 — Lama	78	117 Yak's turf	119	Part of UPI
42	"Under the	88	Fruit-tree	139	Actress	34	75 Wish and	79	118 Jump for	120	joy
43	Yum Yum	89	spray	140	Anna	35	Nutritional	80	abbr.	121	Prepare
44	— ("63 film)	90	"— pro	141	Man of	36	Baseball's	81	Fairy-tale	122	prunes
45	Mali event	91	nobis"	142	Malmo	37	cabell	82	Swing a	123	Present
46	Kimono cum-	92	Adult	143	John —	38	Beloved	83	sickie	124	Enthusiastic
47	merbund	93	tadpoles	144	Passos	39	Blow for a	84	Student's	125	Jocular Jay
48	Plunder	94	Canvas	DOWN		40	bouncer	85	80 Tours	126	128 Extremities
49	They may	95	cover	1	Some	41	topper	81	Airport	127	130 Part of UPI
50	be personal	96	95 Forsaken	2	turkeys	42	39 Reggae's	82	Marley	128	feature
51	49 Donizetti	97	Mobile	3	Pastoral	43	83 Mean	83	Marquis	129	131 From — Z
52	ditties	98	homes?"	4	poem	44	84 Marquis	84	Perch	130	133 Ford of
53	Male	99	Dissolve	5	Cold feet	45	87 Perch	85	135 Shoe width	131	134
54	kangaroo	101	— Grigio							132	135

©2005 by King Features Syndicate, Inc. World rights reserved.

For answers to the Dec. 1 Super Crossword puzzle, visit www.trumanindex.com.