

The top summer blockbusters of 2007

Apatow delivers cheers, hilarity with season hit

BY JACKIE GONZALEZ
Assistant Features Editor

"Knocked Up" is a knockout. Written and directed by 40-Year-Old Virgin's Judd Apatow, the film was a surprise summer hit.

Ben Stone (Seth Rogen) is a scruffy, unmotivated twenty-something involved in the creation of a porn Web site with his also unemployed housemates. Alison Scott (Katherine Heigl) is a gorgeous, newly hired E! reporter. The two meet at a club, and Alison, having had a few too many celebratory drinks, invites him back home for a one-night stand. As the movie's title suggests, the one-night stand did not go as planned, and four months later Alison discovers she is pregnant with his child.

Shocked, Ben and Alison agree to keep the baby and work together through her pregnancy. Although the relationship is not necessarily romantic, Alison is committed to figuring out if Ben and she could ever be seriously compatible as parents and possibly lovers.

Although the plot appears incapable of being considered a comedy, Apatow manages to create scenes that are entertaining, fresh and full of wit. The film drags on a bit longer than expected, but those extra moments provide for some extra laughs. (Although I would have left the birth scene — with clear shots of a vagina and all — out of it.)

As the film focuses on the problems and experiences they undergo during those nine months, both Rogen and Heigl portray relatable, charismatic individuals. Although some might say this is a "Beauty and the Beast" type of



Movie Review

"Knocked Up"

Director: Judd Apatow

Genre: Comedy/Romance

Released: June 1, 2007

Rating

☑☑☑☑☑

relationship, the two displayed very real chemistry throughout the film. The characters are unbelievably likeable and appear incredibly human.

The film is both crude and obscene, and yet it still manages to be both heartwarming and somewhat romantic — a lofty endeavor for such a low-comedy film. Underneath the drugs, sex and sleaze lies an honest and irresistible tale about responsibility and growing up. It manages to be successfully crass and charming.

'Deathly Hallows' enchants hearts, minds of all ages

BY BEN YARNELL
Staff Reporter

After almost 10 years of wand-waving, Quid-ditch-playing and world-saving, it all came down to one final book.

This summer, the final installment of the Harry Potter series, "Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows," was unleashed upon the world. And the world was more than willing to accept it with open arms.

The long and the short of it is that author J.K. Rowling finished off her literary masterpiece with strokes of genius.

When we last left the boy wizard in "Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince," things looked grim. His mentor and headmaster of Hogwarts, Albus Dumbledore, had been killed by Severus Snape, Harry's former potions professor, and the evil Lord Voldemort was on the rise.

Now we find our hero prepared to set out on the mission left for him by Dumbledore — to destroy Voldemort's horcruxes which, fans will remember, are items in which a wizard can keep a piece of soul.

Along to aid Harry in the hunt are his two best friends, the clever Hermione Granger and loyal Ron Weasley.

As has been the trend in these books since 2000's "Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire," Rowling delves into a much darker tone for "Hallows." But, this episode deviates from its predecessors.

Most noticeably, Rowling picks up the action much earlier, after only a few chapters. In the earlier books, it often takes until the 10th chapter before the reader comes to an

edge-of-your-seat moment. "Hallows" cuts to the chase after only four and rarely slows down from there.

From that point on, Harry could almost be confused with Harrison Ford's character from the movie "The Fugitive."

Harry becomes a marked man by a corrupt Ministry of Magic and must go on the lam, hiding out in a different place each night. Schemes and plans soon develop for capturing the horcruxes, adding to the barrage of action.

Many fans would assume that because it is the book, Rowling wouldn't have enough time to develop new storylines. The earlier books have allowed enough loose ends that just tying them up could make for a full book.

However, Rowling finds a masterful way of introducing new storylines, including a very interesting look at the enigmatic life story of Dumbledore and a legend that could even make Harry the Master of Death.

It should not go without stating that as these books have become more adult, so too have the language and the action. It was no secret that major deaths were going to occur, and nothing is held back in this arena. It might even be referred to as a bloodbath by some.

The argument that this series can simply be dismissed as children's books goes completely out the window with this book.

And so Rowling pulls off the greatest bit of magic with this final book. She will have you simultaneously cheering out loud and crying in sorrow. In short, she has firmly secured her place on the list of literary giants.

Book Review

"Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows"

By J.K. Rowling

Arthur A. Levine Books

759 pages

Rating

☑☑☑☑☑

Positive predictions for fall 2007

"Graduation"
Kanye West
Release date: Sept. 11.

"Almost Moon"
Written by Lovely Bones
Alice Sebold.

"Superbad"
In theatres now.

Design by Nick Withey/index

... and the duds that fizzled out

'The Starting Line' album fails to climb charts

JONATHAN STUTTE
Reviewer

When someone remarks, "Waited too long for a ship to come/ Don't you float away," the recipient could be insulted by the desperation (read: you're all I could get in my laziness, don't leave me now).

But this lyric, from "Island (Float Away)," the debut single from Direction, the new album from the Starting Line album, isn't intended as a slight. They might be going for depth, but after sitting down with the album, it's clear that the Starting Line has yet to venture very far from its namesake.

The title track "Direction" begins with requisite stop/start melody and chugging guitars a la Jimmy Eat World, before fading into almost emo-core territory and then uncomfortably settling into more Jimmy Eat World aping in the chorus.

"21," the second track, is a bored rumination on what else but growing

up. If ever there was a more worn-out theme in pop, it's coming of age, or lack thereof. Yet they insist on dwelling on it for two albums now. If you have no maturation to show and no introspection to share, why think you have anything relevant to say?

Apart from this, "21" sounds like Robby Takac (second-string singer for the Goo Goo Dolls) doing his best Glassjaw impression. In fact, the problem with this album is it sounds like a cut-rate emo-pop band.

Take a song like "Birds" and make it the template for every track the Starting Line wrote for this album — double-tracked, over-emoted chorus, flat, overproduced distortion and lyrics that can't ascend higher

than the mundane.

The vocals share the same slight echo chamber production on every track. This makes numbers like "Island" and "Something Left to Give" less intimate by distancing the singer from the listener.

The acoustic-hardcore slamdance juxtaposition plagues every song here, making listening to the album the aural equivalent of climbing a 5,000-foot mountain with a terrible view — strenuous, but no reward for reaching the summit.

Derivative sound and vocals with limited pop hooks and no personal style don't amount to much in the way of music. If the Starting Line continues in this direction, it will end up just another faceless pop rock band sharing a footnote in history with bands such as Homegrown and Finch.

"Listening to the album [is like] the aural equivalent of climbing a 5,000-foot mountain with a terrible view..."

Music Review



The Starting Line

"Direction"

Virgin Records

Released: July 31

Rating

☑☑☐☐☐

"The Number 23"
The trailer was oh-so-good, and yet the film was oh-so-bad. Lead Jim Carey seems to struggle through the confusing plot himself.

"I Now Pronounce You Chuck and Larry"
With Adam Sandler and Kevin James as leads, it was a shock that the movie lacked in humor and appeal.

Mims,
"Music Is My Savior"
The mega-hit "This Is Why I'm Hot" called for hip-hop expectations that his album failed to reach by a landslide.

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