

Rocker lacks right chords

BY FRANKLIN CLINE
Reviewer

"The Rocker," which has been promoted as — and I suppose in some of the lower circles of Hell actually could be — a comedy, actually is the summer's worst movie. Yes, it's more awful than both of Brendan Fraser's two pathetic outings, "Journey to the Center of the Earth" and "The Mummy: Tomb of the Dragon Emperor."

A review of a film that fails at the magnitude at which this film ultimately does cannot be based upon the usual presupposition made by any film critic that the object of his or her analysis has some inherent worth, be it as an artistic venture or a commodity with the sole intent of turning a profit.

This cannot be the case with "The Rocker." Granted, the film is blissfully short, but it contains neither a single inspired, genuine moment of comedy nor the sheer marketability found in other star-driven, similarly awful

comedies-in-name-only, such as Will Ferrell's "Semi-Pro" or that near-classic carnival of errors from earlier this summer, Eddie Murphy's "Meet Dave." No, the overarching question of any film this bad must be "Where Did It All Go Wrong?" — certainly a question not easily answered given no concrete knowledge about the actual production of the film and the multiple flaws found at any given moment during this waste of celluloid.

"Fish (Rainn Wilson's character) is a totally reprehensible, attention-starved, ugly loser with no redeemable qualities. He can keep a beat, but that's about it."

I can toss out many obvious answers. One is Rainn Wilson's inability to play anything other than the charmingly, innocently ego-driven permanent second banana Dwight Schrute.

Another is the general facetiousness of each and every character. This is due in part to the film's paper-thin plot which caters more to an overwhelmingly underwhelming delivery of punch lines or slapstick than to anything other than the simplest development of character, and in part to an all-around feeling of genuine discontent to be related to this film, which is exhumed



George Kraychik/20th Century Fox
Rainn Wilson's character, Fish, consults with his teenage bandmates in "The Rocker." The movie grossed about \$2.6 million at the box office in its weekend.

by every actor in every scene, especially the reliably hilarious pros Will Arnett, Jane Lynch and Jeff Garlin, who must have been reminding themselves of the paycheck between each grueling take.

Also, there's the fact that the music performed by the supposedly-fantastic band is some of the worst featured in a film soundtrack since the Bee Gees' infamous train wreck extravaganza, "Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band." There's even the tired and lazy concept of the film: lowly ex-rocker gets a second chance to play in his nephew's high school band and, thanks to his misunderstanding of basic technology and love of rockin' naked, hits it big on YouTube, inciting a "Midwest tour"

(one of the only somewhat amusing lines of the film, delivered by the only somewhat amusing character, the band's stereotypically slimy agent and reason for the half-star, played as well as possible by Jason Sudekis) and eventual stardom.

In fact, the plot, which is centered around the idea that even the biggest of losers deserve a second chance, is the most insulting part of the film because other than his dedication to his band and to rock, Fish (Wilson's character) is a totally reprehensible, attention-starved, ugly loser with no redeemable qualities. He can keep a beat, but that's about it — not exactly leading man material and certainly not that of a likeable protagonist, a fundamental necessity for any

comedy (unless it is cleverly inverted a la Don Quixote, but "The Rocker" is no "Don Quixote").

But none of these possible solutions (though all are viable in their own rights) really cut to the core of our primary question. True, these are all factors, but really what's wrong with this movie is what's wrong with our general movie-going public. It's too easily satisfied to make (or receive, as the case may be) the simplest of jokes, to rely upon the thinnest of plots, to feature the most basic of characters. "The Rocker" doesn't even succeed as a series of unrelated jokes because the individual jokes aren't funny either. I can't stress this enough: Do not see "The Rocker."

What's on your iPod?

Junior
Brittany Wade
"Beat It"
Fall Out Boy

Senior
Kate Doyle
"Sidewalks"
Story of the Year

Junior
Pat Holley
"I Want You (She's So Heavy)"
The Beatles

Design by Andrea Bailey/Index

Wildlife Society to start up on campus for animal lovers

BY MICHELLE MARTIN
Staff Reporter

When junior Leslie Brinkman decided to pursue wildlife biology last year, no Wildlife Society chapters existed at Truman so she decided to make it happen.

"I saw that different schools like Mizzou and Missouri State all had this club, and we didn't and I was like, well, they have an advantage that would be nice for us to have here," she said.

Since the end of the spring semester, Brinkman has been working with The National Wildlife Society to start a student chapter at the University. The club is targeted toward students interested in pursuing a career in wildlife biology and conservation.

She said that because the biology program at Truman doesn't include a wildlife concentration, The Wildlife Society will give some much-needed experience to students planning on pursuing wildlife.

"Anyone can join, but the advantage is pretty much for people wanting to go into wildlife," she said.

Possible Wildlife Society activities include a winter bird count, a deer count, a trail/stream clean up, a fishing tournament, a duck calling contest, birding and herping trips, spelunking, fossil digs and lectures from professors, Brinkman said.

"Just being around people who want to be in the same field as me ... will get me even more motivated and excited about my passions," she said. "So I'm just kind of looking forward to meeting everyone."

Everyone is welcome to check out The Wildlife Society, biology major or not, Brinkman said.

"Anyone that joins I'm pretty happy about, even if they're not a biology major

and they're just interested," she said.

Shannon Pederson, subunit and certification coordinator for The Wildlife Society, said she has been working with Brinkman to form the Truman chapter.

"[Brinkman] seems very enthusiastic," she said. "She's very good at following through and keeping me posted. I do feel that now they have a really good leader. I hope she is able to inspire others to follow her, to be as inspirational and professional as she is."

There are 106 student chapters of The Wildlife Society on campuses throughout the United States and Canada. Having a chapter on a college campus can be a huge advantage for students, especially those pursuing wildlife biology, she said.

"The student chapters supplement the university system very well in that they give members the opportunity to gain hands-on experience and gain professional skills, presentational skills and networking skills that are not necessarily provided at the university level," Pederson said.

The club still is in its infancy because The Wildlife Society must ensure that the Truman chapter agrees with its policies, she said.

"They are still working on their draft of the bylaws, so once they receive that, we will review it and make sure everything is in conformance with our policies," Pederson said.

Chad Montgomery, assistant professor of biology, is the club's

adviser. He said that the group will benefit not only biology students but also the local community because Truman's Wildlife Society will probably volunteer with the Missouri Department of Conservation in Kirksville.

"[Brinkman] was talking about the Wildlife Society doing volunteer work for the Missouri Department of Conservation," Montgomery said. "... Often, government organizations and wildlife organizations in general don't have the funds to do all the aspects that need to be covered, so often they're going to have volunteers or they're going to benefit greatly from volunteers coming in."

The Truman Wildlife Society probably will do survey work, which involves taking an inventory of plant and animal species, he said. He said the work will greatly benefit both parties.

"I think [Brinkman's] connection with the Missouri Department of Conservation and just trying to get the survey work going benefits the Conservation Department as well as it benefits the society," Montgomery said.

The conservation work also will prove advantageous for students as they gain real-world experience, he said.

"I think that that will really offer students a lot of [insight] into the skills and influence a lot of governmental regulations do on a regular basis," he said.

"Just being around people who want to be in the same field as me will get me even more motivated and excited about my passions."

Leslie Brinkman
Junior

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