

Full-frontal shocks viewers

BY JEREMY HELLWIG
Reviewer

After attending the theatre department's production of "Bug," by Tracy Letts, I still can't think of a situation in a live play that would require full-frontal nudity. I say this, despite the fact that "Bug" features both male and female full-frontal. Interestingly enough, that literally was the only thing I knew about the play before I saw it. Despite the name of the play, I didn't even know whether the plot had anything to do with bugs, assuming instead that the title was some sort of metaphor. Turns out, the play was sort of about bugs. Because I did not know anything going into the play other than that there would be nudity, I was hoping that the nudity wouldn't just be random. I was disappointed in that regard. Like much of the dialogue, the nudity was unnecessary and pointless.

Time out for an aside — there is a strange phenomenon that occasionally occurs in theatre, especially at the University. This phenomenon is the coexistence of a very bad script and very good performances by the actors in the same show. This happened with "Bug."

The play took place in the Black Box Theater in Ophelia Parrish and was directed by senior

theatre major Clint Worthington. As someone with a fleeting knowledge of the process involved in putting on a play, I always have the utmost respect for student directors. As far as I could tell, Worthington did a good job. The actors all portrayed very deep and interesting characters.

The entire story takes place in a motel outside of Oklahoma City. The room belongs to Agnes, a middle-aged woman whose abusive convict ex-husband just got out of jail and started stalking her. Her friend/possible lesbian hook-up

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partner/cocaine dealer introduces her to a weird guy named Peter who ends up living with her. She and Peter start seeing bugs, getting bit by them and freaking out in general. The first act ends with a bunch of crap about how Peter was a military test subject.

Senior Emily Champlin played Agnes. The first couple of scenes are mostly about Agnes' paranoia, and Champlin did a good job of portraying this fear. As a matter of fact, her overall performance was really good, and I ended up being proven wrong after I assumed her fake accent would get annoying by the end of the play. In the second act, even when the dialogue got to be really drawn out and annoying, I still was touched by Champlin's



Brian O'Shaughnessy/Index
Senior Walter Stokely (left) and senior Emily Champlin (right) perform in the final dress rehearsal of "Bug," the recent play directed by senior Clint Worthington.

delivery.

Senior Walter Stokely pulled off a chilling portrayal of Agnes' ex-husband, Goss. Whenever Stokely appeared on stage, the tension went through the roof. Other than an awkward fake slap in the first act, the scenes featuring Goss pulled me in and made me actually fear for Agnes' safety. Whenever Stokely's character left, I almost felt exhausted. These scenes, other than the climax, were by far my favorites. Perhaps this was partly because the dialogue between Goss and Agnes was fairly streamlined and straight forward, whereas much of the other dialogue throughout the play seemed unnecessary or dumb. Nonetheless, Stokely's performance was absolutely exceptional.

Sophomore Kyle Smith's portrayal of Agnes' new man, Peter, also stood out. By the end of the play, Peter is a raving mad, blood-

soaked schizophrenic, and Smith pulls it off. But the most impressive aspects of his performance are the subtle little quirks he added from the beginning.

Another noteworthy bit of performance came from junior Andrew Stashefsky. Stashefsky had a very minor role as a man named Dr. Sweet. Toward the end of the play, Peter stabs Dr. Sweet to death, and as a result, Stashefsky had to lie motionless for about five minutes. On the night that I saw the show, a mattress and bedspring fell over onto Stashefsky, and he didn't even flinch.

In the second act, revelations come to light in a manner that is best described as willy-nilly. Turns out the bug bite wounds were all self-inflicted, and nobody else can see the bugs. Because we are told this five minutes into the second act, there is no reason for

the audience to buy into any of Peter's later conspiracies. Then they tell us that Agnes lost a child years earlier, something hinted at earlier. Then we find out that Peter is a schizophrenic, not a victim of military experiments. We already knew he was hallucinating, so this really wasn't a huge shock. Then they rant about some ridiculous plot that they thought the government had pulled on them, strip naked and pour gas on themselves. Apparently, underwear is flame retardant or something.

Don't get me wrong, there were some really interesting scenes. For example, the scene in which Peter stabs his doctor was really intense. But most aspects of the play seemed unnecessary and dumb. The nudity, the blood and the entire storyline served no purpose beyond being mostly failed attempts to shock the audience.

"High School Musical 3" album hits stores, rakes in millions

BY STEPHANIE HALL
Reviewer

The original "High School Musical" pulled \$42 million in the United States, and Americans weren't the only ones willing to shell out for a ticket to see high school students sing and dance in a cafeteria.

Worldwide, "High School Musical" grossed an additional \$40 million, prompting other countries to look into adapting "High School Musical" to fit their own audiences.

After the success of the first "High School Musical" soundtrack, the music could be heard from around the world, literally. The soundtrack was the best selling CD of 2006 in the U.S., according to Rolling Stone, and the album jumped off the shelves in other countries — songs were translated into Spanish, Italian, Mandarin, French, Polish, Japanese, Portuguese and Russian.

The initial plotline of "High School Musical" is about as American as Disney itself. Golden boy basketball star falls for artsy theatre newbie in a suburban high school setting with just enough racial diversity to not get called out by the media. But what makes this story applicable to other cultures is the classic "Romeo and Juliet" plot modified so that its pre-teen audience can relate. With this initial draw, the series keeps audiences hooked with catchy tunes and creative choreography. The draw of "High School Musical" is international.

In addition to the songs being translated into various lan-

guages, Bollywood has taken it to the next level by re-recording the entire soundtrack and dubbing the original movie. They even added their own rhythms and instruments to make the music their own.

But the cute, witty, insightful phrases from "High School Musical" are not easily translatable. According to the New York Times, the song "Bop to the Top" translated into "Pa Pa Pa Paye Yeh Dil," actually means "the heart is full of happiness," which a translator told the Times sounds appealing but really has no deep meaning — it's a nonsense song. In the second movie, the song "All for One" becomes "Aaja Nachle," which means "come dance along" in Hindi.

The "High School Musical 3" soundtrack follows a similar pattern to the previous two. The CD is blessed by yet another powerful and insightful Zac Efron solo accompanied by a Vanessa Hudgens sweet melancholy soliloquy. And what "High School Musical" soundtrack would be complete without at least two duets by these love-struck seniors and a slew of medleys by the cast? Basically, if you found yourself humming "Bet On It" from a previous soundtrack, you will be humming to the first two CDs. Be prepared to crank up your headphones. While the Bollywood soundtrack to "High School Musical 3" still is in the works, Disney is finding even more ways to cash in.

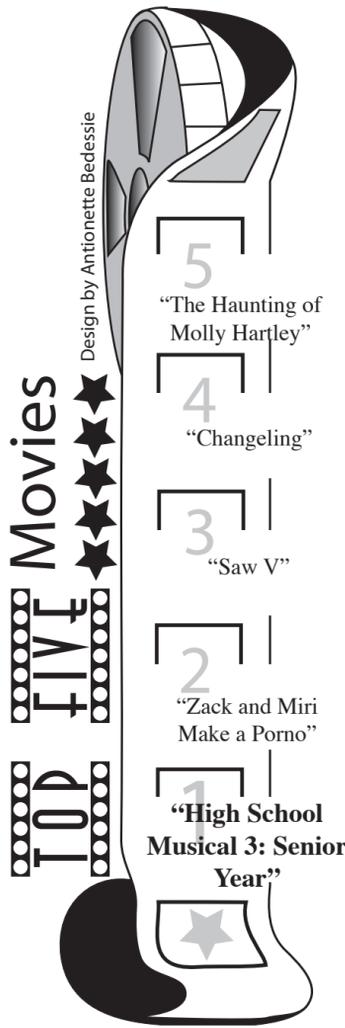
After the second "High School Musical," Disney began developing a theatrical version of the series. The production started in Britain in February making more than \$18 million in advanced ticket sales, according to the International Herald Tribune. Productions are planned worldwide, hitting Germany, Denmark, Indonesia, Italy, Mexico, Japan, Switzerland, the Philippines and Argentina.

Performance rights for the first film have been given to 2,500 schools and amateur performance theaters across America and to more than 500 venues around the world. It started with the soundtrack, but soon "High School Musical" will become worldwide.



Courtesy of Walt Disney Studios

"The initial plotline of 'High School Musical' is about as American as Disney itself."



Rogen and Banks make another hit comedy

BY TYLER GEORGE
Reviewer

Seth Rogen and Elizabeth Banks are featured in the new romantic comedy, "Zack and Miri Make a Porno." The film, released on Halloween, is the latest work of director Kevin Smith, who directed other great comedies like "Clerks," "Dogma" and "Mallrats" and also has made appearances as Silent Bob in most of his projects.

Zack (Rogen) and Miri (Banks) have known each other since first grade and are friends — nothing more, nothing less — who share an apartment. Zack works at the local coffee shop, Bean-n-Go, Miri works in the mall and they split the bills for their apartment. Because of excessive Web surfing, Zack soon gets caught

between paying utility bills and buying adult novelty items. When the going gets tough, he suggests that he and Miri make an adult film in order to keep up with their bills — not to mention the huge amount of debt that they've landed themselves in. Zack and Miri recruit Lester (Jason Mewes) and Delaney (Craig Robinson), among others, to assist them with this task.

As the audience, we all know that this cliché just-friends setup always will result in the two ending up together. However, despite the

typical plotline, Zack and Miri kept me guessing the whole time and made me realize that although you might know what's going to happen in the end, you never really know how they are going to end up there. The movie contains plot turns that make it more than just your same-old romantic comedy.

Although the movie is labeled a romantic comedy, the classification might be a bit misleading. Romantic comedies often are seen as ideal movies for a first date, but this is not a movie I would take, a girl to on a fifth date, let alone the first. This is a movie

people should see with close friends or a girl/boyfriend who has been around long enough that it wouldn't be uncomfortable. What's uncomfortable? Think about watching "Superbad" with your parents or seeing "Borat" on a first date with a girl who is almost a stranger. In order to avoid such an awkward situation, approach the label "romantic comedy" with caution. The movie was rated NC-17 before it was put up for MPAA review and then received a very deserved R. It contains everything from nonstop profanity to full nudity of both sexes. The movie is about Rogen's character making a pornography flick. Connect the dots.

To put the movie into perspective, it was cruder than "Forgetting Sarah Marshall," but still had that movie's romantic appeal that was absent in

Rogen's 2007 appearance in "Superbad." Go to this movie prepared for a little less vulgarity than "Superbad" with romance in mind.

The acting in Zack and Miri is great. Rogen pulls off yet another gut-busting comedy. The combination of director Smith and actors Rogen and Banks is golden. Also, I was blown away by the performance of Robinson. He certainly surprised me as he stole the show with his one-line zingers and awkward monologues.

The soundtrack to this movie was the perfect complement to the story and the perfect genre and style of music to couple with the characters in the film.

"Zack and Miri Make a Porno" is hilarious, maybe even the romantic comedy of the year.