

Remake proves hysterical, unoriginal



BY KEN DUSOLD
Staff Reviewer

Russell Brand might not be as funny as Dudley Moore, but his interpretation of screenwriter Steve Gordon's lovable millionaire playboy, Arthur Bach, certainly is a humorous performance from a relative newbie to the world of Hollywood leading men.

Brand stars in director Jason Winer's remake of the 1981 comedy which gave Moore his only Oscar nomination. Essentially the same story updated for the present day, "Arthur" is a well-cast and good-intentioned romantic comedy that ultimately falls short of the original. But it doesn't fall short of a good time.

Similar to the original, the film is a look into the life of Arthur, the one and only heir to a billion-dollar corporate empire controlled by his family. Unlike his business-oriented and distant mother (Geraldine James), Arthur is utterly averse to all responsibility and predisposed to a childlike sense of joy in the greatest pleasures money can buy — i.e., Elton John singing over the sound system at a grocery store for \$2 million. He passes his days spending extravagant amounts of money on the frivolous — a spoon once owned by the Romanov family — and the exciting — the Batmobile. Keeping him clean, dressed, fed and alive is the job of his nanny Hobson (Helen Mirren). Mirren plays the role of caretaker with more heart than John Gielgud played in the original film, due to the character being less funny (Gielgud won an Oscar). The film is nevertheless appropriate consider-

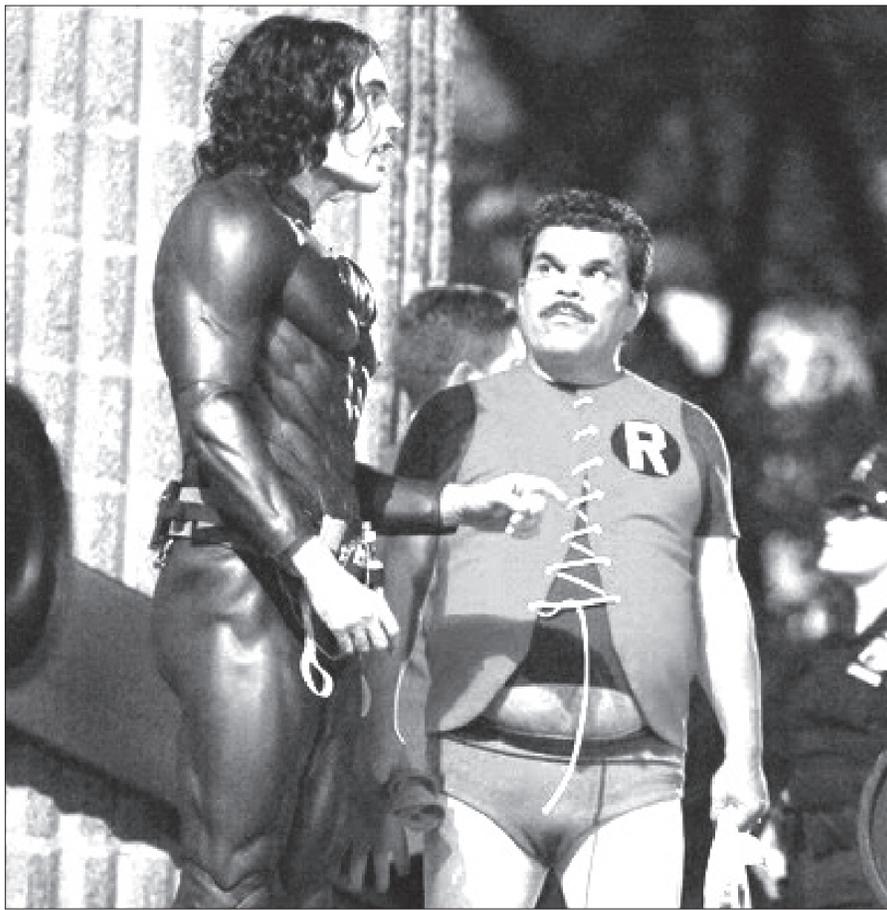


Photo courtesy of arthur.the-movie-trailer.com
Arthur (Russell Brand) and his chauffeur Bitterman (Luis Guzmán) make their way to a black tie social event, a fundraiser for Arthur's parents.

ing the more motherly presence a nanny is presumed to have.

The story's conflict — again, identical to the original — is manifested in the character of Susan Johnson (Jennifer Garner), a social ladder-climber seeking Arthur's vast fortune and respected name. She is supported by Arthur's mother, who wishes to allay inves-

tors' worries about Arthur's competency, and her own father (Nick Nolte in an unfunny older version of almost every character he has ever played). Susan forces Arthur into a loveless engagement at the same time he meets and begins falling in love with Naomi (Greta Gerwig), a poor, working New York City tour guide from Queens.

Susan and Arthur's mother threaten him with disinheritance to persuade him to agree to such a miserable choice. With the exception of modern gadgets, pop culture references and the decision to make Hobson a woman, "Arthur" is loyal to the 1981 plot. The filmmakers obviously saw fit not to mess with what already

was a brilliant work of comedy. However, this begs the question: Why was it necessary to re-make? The film does nothing for audiences the Moore film doesn't do and does nothing better than the original. Indeed, the story is so familiar, there is little at which one can laugh out loud.

With that said, rather than attempt the impossible and copy Moore, Brand creates his own Arthur. Less subtle in appearance and more sober — which causes fewer laughs — Brand carefully flashes hints of deep-consciousness and rich humanity while traipsing through the overtly ludicrous. His performance is enriched by his ability to express real and relatable feelings like lost love in moments more likely to be found in a Will Ferrell movie. This ability is best used in scenes like the one in which Arthur pleads for Naomi's companionship from below her apartment window — à la "Romeo and Juliet" — while wearing only his teal and purple briefs.

In addition to Mirren's solid turn as Hobson is Gerwig's performance as free-spirited and caring Naomi. Gerwig is a relative unknown with a lot of potential in the romantic comedy genre. She makes it easy for Arthur and the audience to fall in love with her as Naomi — a character who represents the best of recession-affected Americans, struggling to take care of a sick parent in addition to themselves.

As remakes go, "Arthur" does not measure up to "True Grit," "The Departed" or "Heaven Can Wait." However, it is not insulting to the original like 1998's "Psycho" remake starring Vince Vaughn, which caused Alfred Hitchcock to roll in his grave.

It simply is a fun-filled comedy with humorous characters, silly moments and enough emotion to balance the ridiculous. It might not earn Academy Award nominations, but Moore could be proud of Brand's take on such an iconic and beloved role.

Media demands 'superwoman'



BY ELIZABETH NECKA
Columnist

"Someday you'll slow down and realize you can't do it all."

I can't tell you the number of times I've heard this sentiment. Sure, I'm involved in a lot of extracurricular activities, research teams and social groups. I've stayed on top of homework as much as my senioritis allows, while looking and applying for jobs. I love everything I do — I would not throw myself so fully into my work if I didn't reap enjoyment from it all. But I will be the first to tell you it's stressful. It's unrealistic to expect to be able to juggle all the aspects of your life without dropping the ball every once in a while.

So why do I have that expectation? One of my friends made the comment about her sister, "She is so beautiful and she's got a career going for her. She has the whole package." But how do we define the "whole package" for women?

An article this month in the journal *Sex Roles* found that the media has a lot to do with framing our expectations. Sure, that sounds like common sense, but researchers from the University of California-Davis, explored how the media shapes our perceptions of women and why it is so effective. The researchers began exploring the "superwoman" concept, the idea that women should excel in both stereotypically feminine and stereotypically masculine behaviors. Much like my friend's assessment of her sister, the "superwoman" expectation is that women should have the feminine features of beauty and grace, have a reliable

social network for which they feel compassion and be in touch with their emotional side. Meanwhile, they should be masculine in respect to their aggressive pursuit of their career or academics, their practicality and their attempts to "get ahead." The researchers hypothesize that by seeing these "superwomen" portrayed in the media (think Evelyn Salt in "Salt" or Hermione in "Harry Potter"), people come to expect it in real life.

In their study, the researchers examined how an attractive or an unattractive female role model behaving in an aggressive (masculine) or passive (feminine) manner influenced people's perceptions of women. They used Angelina Jolie as an attractive model (in "Tomb Raider" when aggressive and in "Changeling" when passive) and Kathy Bates as the less attractive model (in "Primary Colors" when aggressive and "Fried Green Tomatoes" when passive). They found that women were more likely than men to hold other women to the "superwoman" standard and that all people, regardless of gender, were likely to hold the "superwoman" standard after exposure to an attractive, aggressive woman.

Humans often fall prey to the halo-effect, which means our perceptions of one trait of a person influence our other perceptions of them. In this way, we have a "what is beautiful is good" assumption and are more likely to think an attractive person is good in other ways as well. Participants in this study trusted the female who was physically attractive to be a good role model more than

the less physically attractive female. By being physically attractive, she evoked a wide variety of stereotypes associated with femininity that were not mitigated by the fact that her aggressive behavior was inducing stereotypically masculine traits.

The authors argue that the media isn't a hero for broadening women's gender roles with these characters. Conversely, the characters challenge women to "do it all" and set high expectations, which likely can be met only through a variety of stress-inducing behaviors.

I find myself wondering why these researchers think it's a bad thing for women to try to excel in both masculine and feminine qualities. Even the division of certain activities or traits as "masculine" or "feminine"

I find myself wondering why these researchers think it's a bad thing for women to try to excel in both masculine and feminine qualities.

contributes to the stress of women who "try to do it all." Men who choose to maintain strong bonds with their friends and be compassionate do not receive a special term in psychology, so why do women who choose to pursue their careers?

It's a shame women judge other women more harshly than men do. And it's a shame the media makes women feel they need to be both masculine and feminine. But it's also a shame that pursuing a career and using practical reasoning still are stereotyped as male behaviors, which make women stress about meeting the standards. I can't help but wonder if a male friend doing all of the same activities as me would receive the same "you'll realize you can't do it all" premonition.



Krista Goodman/Index

Customers wait for their movie to start in Pickler's Famous theater, The Nickelodeon.

New theater renews old-school ambiance

BY BETHANY COURY
Assistant Features Editor

With phosphates in hand at newly opened Pickler's Famous, a few people make their way to the third floor and settle down for a documentary in The Nickelodeon, a knock-off of the popular early 20th-century movie theater.

Old-fashioned trust provided a fresh movie-going experience. There are no red velvet theater ropes or movie attendants of any sort. Customers can explore the kiosk near the food register, which conveniently displays showings and trailers (and soon will be set for purchasing tickets — temporarily, customers must pay in cash only). They buy their tickets from a nearby waiter and walk past a stage theater, a concession stand and restrooms to

find The Nick.

Seemingly omnipresent owner Todd Kuhns, decked in a maroon apron and white '50s style waiter hat, takes orders, answers questions, directs customers and takes tickets — on all three floors. It is personal attendance at its best: Think old-school shopping — "Pretty Woman," post-makeover.

The Nick, a small classroom-sized room with dark aqua blue walls, brown paneling and beige accents, is a modern take on old architecture and theater-going. It

features an 8-foot-tall screen, which shows alternative films like documentaries, Oscar-nominated short films and Sundance Film winners, an enterprise not to be found anywhere else in Kirksville.

Nickelodeon theaters often supplied just hard chairs, according to Pickler's website,

which explains the seating in The Nick — 70 conference chairs. They're padded enough to be comfortable the first 30 minutes, but the last hour calls for constant seat-shifting. Although this choice was surely an attempt at authenticity, movie-goers have been privileged with comfortable seating for far too long for this to be considered preferable.

What is comfortable is the temperature. It's not goose-bump-inducing like most movie theaters. But then, The Nick is very different than most theaters. Customers bring in food and drink in actual dishes, and a few maneuver the chairs in front of them to rest their feet, exhibiting a casual, home-like feel.

The building's activity supplies muffled background noise, but it's not entirely unwelcome. Without the rest of Pickler's Famous, the theater is just a back room with a huge television screen. But with the ambience Pickler's supplies, The Nick is the perfect fit for a first date and outings with friends.

With the ambience Pickler's supplies, The Nick is the perfect fit for a first date and outings with friends.