

'Grease' not a slick production

By Kent Wolgamott

Grease is purported to be a nostalgic tongue-in-cheek look at the '50s and a return of the great American musical to the silver screen.

It is neither. Robert Stigwood and Allen Carr's movie version of the successful Broadway production is only another in a series of movies tied in a symbiotic relationship to their soundtrack recordings.

If *Grease* is a tribute to anything, it honors '70s marketing techniques, including the technique of hyping the film's

beat into the movie's score leaving the only authentic '50s music confined to a set by Sha Na Na during a dance contest scene.

The movie itself seems to be haphazardly thrown together. Some of the musical numbers are intricately staged and choreographed and then immediately contrasted with sloppy productions in natural settings.

The stars of the show, John Travolta and Olivia Newton-John, provide little depth and do nothing to embellish their characters.

Both Travolta, as Danny, the greaser in a black leather jacket, and Newton-John, as Sandy, the Sandra Dee-Doris Day good girl, could have portrayed the problems of a relationship between the two conflicting types of '50s teenagers.

Instead Travolta simply shows us again that he can dance and displays none of the energy of *Saturday Night Fever* or even the rebelliousness of Gabe Kotter's classroom.

Newton-John's acting seems to be forced and stiff, pushing one to the conclusion that she was selected only because she looks the part and can sing.

The most convincing performance is

given by Stockard Channing as Rizzo, the leader of the Pink Ladies and the scandalous bad girl of Rydell High School.

Some portions of the movie are entertaining and humorous, especially those involving the T-Birds, Travolta's gang, and the Pink Ladies, their ladies auxiliary.

It is unfortunate that the *Grease* of Broadway could not make the trip to Hollywood, but economics seem to have interfered.

Director Randal Klieger uses few innovative techniques to transform the Broadway musical into a popular film. Appearances of 50s celebrities Frankie Avalon, Eve Ardan, and others seem awkward and just another part of the hype.

So if someone wants to see a great American musical that satirizes the 50s, he or she will have to take a trip to New York where *Grease* is still running or look for a touring company here in the great midwest.

review

finale song, "You're the One that I Want" to number one single in the country before the movie was released. The tactic guaranteed ticket sales and increased revenue for the producers.

Making *Grease* marketable in the '70s also required the imposition of the disco

Summer Film Festival

"The Blue Hotel" will be shown in the Nebraska union lounge at noon July 5 as part of the Summer Film Festival. The story, by Stephen Crane, is set in the 1880's and deals with a young Swede who arrives at the hotel of a frontier

Nebraska town.

Also showing is a Laurel and Hardy 1931 classic, "Laughing Gravy" with Stan and Ollie giving shelter to a little dog on a cold winter night and the landlord being anything but pleased.



Olivia Newton-John and John Travolta dance to the 50's beat at the prom dance in "Grease."

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