

Spice Girls' big-screen debut lacks cinematic flavor

By CHAD LORENZ
Film Critic

Anyone who has visited a sorority house after a day of baby-sitting and cheerleading practice has a pretty good flavor for the Spice Girls' film, "Spice World."

Unfortunately, the plot follows about the same progression.

The adventures of Ginger, Sporty, Scary, Posh and Baby are about as exciting as their barely intelligible accents.

The girls, who live in a sugar-coated fantasy world of glitzy gleam, struggle to find the balance between having fun and practicing their third-

grade humor while maintaining their rigorous schedule of playing dress-up for photo shoots, dancing with studs in tight, bum-exposing pants, and flirting with extraterrestrial fans.

And as if life traveling in the plush playground of the Spice Girls' double-decker bus isn't bad enough, a sinister British tabloid photographer is intent on turning their public comments and playfulness into the next day's scandalous headlines.

Their escapades are overshadowed constantly by fear of the Backlash, where they are charged with "releasing a single worse than their first," and condemned to "entering the charts at 179, then dropping off the next week."

But the ra-ra optimism of Girl Power keeps the Spice Girls from letting the pressures of the pop world lighten the flavor of their lollipops.

The humor of the other ridiculous entourage members pursuing the girls ranges from bizarre to juvenile. A documentary crew's effort to make drama out of Spice silliness falls flat. A film writer and producer hound the group's manager with wacked-out film ideas that get more ridiculous until their "best" idea matches the goings-on of the actual movie.

The only comic saving grace is the surreal cameos from Roger Moore, the record chief, who enters the storyline through ominous phone calls to the group's uptight manager.

Shown in his dark, sterile office stroking various small farm animals, the chief makes his demands and offers cryptic advice to the manager while sipping on his shaken-not-stirred martinis. Directors probably hoped other cameo appearances from Elvis Costello, Meatloaf and Elton John would validate the film as a serious effort. Instead, let's hope it doesn't ruin their careers.

The film's only redeeming qualities are that, one, the music is kept to a minimum, and two, that all viewers must admit, the girls are too cute and adorable to vehemently despise. Behind the giggles and mindless chatter, the platform shoes and bum-hugging outfits, the girls just want to

The Facts

Title: "Spice World"
Stars: Melanie Brown, Emma Bunton, Melanie Chisholm, Geri Halliwell, Victoria Adams
Director: Bob Spiers
Rating: PG
Grade: D
Five Words: Sugar-coated, slumber party silliness

be loved.
But for moviegoers hoping the catch a peek up Posh Spice's dress or a deep shot of Ginger's cleavage, you're better off seeing a real porn movie.

And, the music's better.

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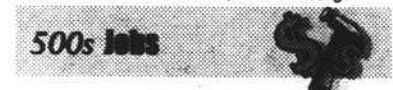
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