

Unusual touches can't save 'She's All That' from cliches

BY DIANE BRODERICK
Staff writer

Film Review The Facts

Title: "She's All That"
Stars: Freddie Prinze Jr., Rachel Leigh Cook, Mathew Lillard
Director: Robert Iscove
Rating: PG-13
Grade: C
Five Words: A patchwork quilt of cliches

"She's All That" could easily be turned into a cinematic version of "Saved By the Bell" ... God forbid. The plot comes straight out of a bad afternoon sitcom: the coolest guy in school gets dumped by the coolest girl in school. He has to prove it was not because of his shortcomings, so he makes a bet that he can make any girl into the upcoming prom's queen.

The cool guy in question is named, fittingly, Zach (Freddie Prinze Jr. "The House of Yes," "I Know What You Did Last Summer").

His girlfriend comes back from an MTV-style spring break at the beach, where she meets faux "Real World" celebrity Brock Hudson (Matthew Lillard, "Scream") and starts dating him.

Zach has to save face, hence the bet. And tortured, geeky, "scary and inaccessible" artist Laney (Rachel Leigh Cook, "The House of Yes") is chosen as the object of Zach's false affections.

The story line is so cliched and basic that the ending is implied simply by its setup.

Yeah, Zach made a horrible bet, but underneath all that, he's a nice guy who even stands up for Laney's little brother (Kieran Culkin).

Yeah, Laney looks like an ugly, geeky girl, but once she gets some makeup, cuts her hair and puts in her contacts, she becomes one of the prettiest girls in school.

With only that, "All That" could have been lost - one in a sea of purely predictable movies. But unusual touches help salvage some creativity.

The first of these is the aforementioned Brock Hudson. Lillard plays him with a perfect Puck touch - a bad boy who delights in alienating everyone else.

Fake "Real World" scenes capture the show's ridiculous nature, such as one where Brock disgusts his fellow house members with his foul bodily functions. He tries to spread the odor because, he says, "it smells

like roses."

Another situation, when Zach is trying to win Laney's trust, ends up with him on the stage at a performance art theater. He stands there for a few seconds, then improvises a discourse on how keeping a Hacky Sack in the air corresponds to keeping everyone in his life pleased.

What he says is banal, but his display of Hacky Sack skills is impressive, and background screens showing psychedelic, surreal imagery give the scene a curious appeal.

Another performance art display features midgets spouting odd phrases, including "My soul is an island - my car is a Ford." Situations like this show "She's All That" has a little bit more than just worthless cliches.

But as in so many teen movies, "She's All That" eventually ends up at that apex of the high school existence - the prom. This is where it becomes nothing more than an amalgamation of other movies.

A "Pretty in Pink," widowed-father moment of wisdom is what gets Laney there in the first place; a "Can't Buy Me Love"-style reconciliation follows.

But the prom is where the most enjoyable and surprising scene awaits - that happens to be its own compound of other movies.

As Usher Raymond deejays, a surreal dance extravaganza overtakes the dance floor that is parts "Dirty Dancing," "West Side Story," "Grease" and "Can't Buy Me Love."

But after that, the movie settles into tripe once more, its fate sealed - with a kiss, of course.

NIFP holds first public exhibition

■ Educational shorts from the '50s and '60s will be the feature of tonight's show.

BY LIZA HOLTMEIER
Senior staff writer

Share in the earth-shattering misadventures of a brother and sister striving to improve their - posture?

It may not seem like the stuff of which films are made, but tonight topics such as posture habits will be common fare at the first "Mad Movie Night."

The event, which includes two screenings of a variety of shorts, is sponsored by the

Nebraska Independent Film Project and held at the downtown mock-Parisian cafe, Club 1427 at 1427 O St.

"This is funny, odd, nontraditional stuff," said NIFP member Erik Anderson, who contributed a few films for tonight's screenings. "The people who come don't have to learn anything. The films are just for fun."

Tonight's films include wacky, off-beat shorts such as "The Wizard

of Speed and Time," a 1970s film about a kid who has the ability to move freely through the space-time continuum.

"It shows what special effects were like before computer animation," said NIFP member Dorothy Booraem.

NIFP will also screen a variety of social-training films made in the 1950s and '60s. Just like "Posture Habits," these films were made to teach adolescents better manners and personal hygiene.

One film, "How Quiet Helps at School," illustrates the connection between academic success and the decibel level in the classroom. Shots of a rowdy, free-for-all class are con-

trasted with shots of children sitting at attention in an eerily silent classroom.

NIFP borrowed the films from Paul Eisloeffel, the moving image

archivist at the Nebraska State Historical Society.

"They show how motion pictures were being used to indoctrinate us to behave a certain way," Eisloeffel said.

Though the films were not meant to be humorous, Eisloeffel said, they

Film Preview The Facts

Title: "Mad Movie Night"
Where: Club 1427, 1427 O St.
When: Tonight at 7 and 9 p.m.
Cost: No Charge
The Skinny: The Nebraska Independent Film Project presents an evening of zany film shorts.

are when their message is viewed today.

"You can't possibly imagine kids going to the lengths these kids do just for good posture," he said.

Booraem said the films were interesting because they were used as an educational medium.

"It's just really interesting how different the youth culture was and how adults tried to talk to them through film," she said.

This is the first NIFP event open to the general public. NIFP holds annual workshops for Nebraskans in the film industry on topics such as lighting for film.

But this year, NIFP decided to hold an event to get more people involved.

Members expect the NIFP regulars to attend and hope the event's location at Club 1427 will draw more college students.

Said Anderson: "Other than that, we have no idea who or what will show up."

"You can't possibly imagine kids going to the lengths these kids do just for good posture."

PAUL EISLOEFFEL
Nebraska State Historical Society archivist

Haydon exhibit to feature photos of jazz greats

Duke Ellington. Ella Fitzgerald. Frank Sinatra. Billie Holiday.

They are the icons of jazz. And this month, the Haydon Gallery displays some of their most intimate performance moments.

Friday night, the Haydon Gallery, 335 N. Eighth St., opens "The Art of Jazz Photography," featuring photographs of some of jazz's greatest stars.

"In these photos, you can feel the movement. You can almost hear the

music," said Anne Pagel, the gallery's director. "(The artists) do know how to capture the personalities and the sound in their imagery."

To complement the jazzy heat created by the photographs, the gallery will have live jazz performed by Lincoln pianist John Carlini during the opening reception.

"We wanted people to hear the sound while seeing the images, as if they were there," Pagel said.

The exhibit features about 40 works by 11 different photographers. Highlights include Bill Gottlieb's "Billie Holiday," which is now on a

Dropped Notes The Facts

What: "Art of Jazz Photography" reception
Where: Haydon Gallery, 335 N. Eighth
When: Friday, 7 to 9 p.m.
Cost: No charge
The Skinny: Jazz band provides soundtrack for photo exhibition

U.S. postage stamp. Friday's opening reception lasts from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. and is free to the public. The exhibition continues until Feb. 27.

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