

# 'Girls and Boys' disappoints 'Fantasia' a rehashed classic

By Samuel McKewon

Staff writer

**Film: Boys and Girls**  
**Director: Robert Isocove**  
**Stars: Claire Forlani,**  
**Freddie Prinze, Jr.**  
**Rating: PG-13**

"Boys and Girls" is yet another teenage romantic comedy written and directed by men, who nearly without fail fall below the efforts of women. The film treats women in the same problematic way that men treat women in real life.

The idea is idolatry, both in art and in real life. "Boys and Girls" is just another movie where the men stay strong in the winds of a fickle woman who must learn to see her Romeo in a proper light. It's accurate, in that this is how men see women: as whimsical, careless human beings who choose their partner according to the time of the month.

The woman in this case is Claire Forlani. Forlani, who played a mature young heiress in "Meet Joe Black," recedes to a commitment-shy, coltish college student role here. Her Jennifer is such an archetypal role - bright, sunny, shallow - that it becomes very clear very quickly just how her character will shake down.

That leaves us with Freddie Prinze, Jr. as Ryan, the bespectacled engineering major who plays Jennifer's foil. Prinze is in his third and final movie of this genre, a trilogy he says he made for this teen generation to reference in hard times. Considering the previous efforts (the so-so "She's All That" and the disastrous "Down To You," one of worst movies of the decade), teenagers' standards cannot be high in his mind.

"Boys and Girls" is not the worst of the three movies, but it is certainly the least ambitious. A two-pony show would be the best description of the film, as Prinze and Forlani taunt and tease each other as best friends for most of the movie. Finally, the relationship steers into deeper waters. That's when the predictable chauvinistic joke of the film is pulled. It's Jennifer who gets the cold feet, when all Ryan ever wanted was fairy tales and lollipops.

Under certain circumstances, this plot line can work. But not in a comedy, and even less likely in a cheap, romantic comedy. Jennifer is a likable flake at best. Ryan is, at worst, a control freak that just needs to loosen up a bit to achieve perfection.

The movie then tacks on a sidekick for Ryan in Hunter, a buffed-up Jason Biggs from

"American Pie." Biggs has so many different names in the movie that it becomes confusing as to which one is real. His role is not funny. Nor is his long stint cameo, in which he is surrounded by four models in the back room of a store. The scene was cut out of the movie, presumably because the filmmakers had no possible avenue of including it.

In retrospect, none of the film is interesting or even mildly amusing. The characters are marginally nice people. They have nothing better to do but fall in love and study for tests we never see them taking.

When a moment of romantic inspiration finally strikes on the world's most famous bridge, it sticks out as painfully contrived. It's as if the scene deserves to belong in a stranger, more complicated movie.

One other thing in "Boys and Girls" belongs somewhere else, too - a small, rather good performance from Heather Donohue,

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 July 17: TBA  
 July 24: Canada's World Footbag (hacky sack) Championship  
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 August 7: National Smile Week

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 June 29: The Toasted Ponies  
 July 6: Pheromone Pholk  
 July 13: Baby Needs Shoes  
 July 20: Amy Williams  
 July 27: Nebraska Jazz Orchestra  
 August 3: Terri Jo Dahlquist and Molly Ruhlman  
 August 10: Nebraska Brass

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 July 19: It Happened One Night  
 July 26: MASH  
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 August 9: Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid

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