

Features

Coyote Ugly for rainy day Storytelling art revived

Bridgette Odom
Staff Writer

Coyote Ugly lives up to the hype of its trailer. The movie is just as exciting, loud and fast-paced as the promotional clip makes it seem.

The concept for the movie came after the owner of the real bar was featured in an article in Gentlemen's Quarterly magazine. However, this is not a case of life imitating art; in fact, the real bar is actually a hole in the wall with a grungy clientele.



COURTESY OF CARMIKE CINEMAS
Coyote Ugly is not a bad film, but save your money and rent it later.

As advertised, the romantic comedy is yet another coming of age in New York City tale, and there is not much originality in the story or characters.

The plot is predictable, as is the gratuitous sex scene. However, there is something that makes you feel happy when you leave the theater. I secretly felt like it would be fun to be a Coyote for a day.

Violet Sanford (Piper Perabo) is a naive 21-year-old aspiring songwriter who wants to make it big in the music business. She leaves her small hometown in New Jersey and a desperate and helpless single dad, played by John Goodman, to find her niche in the tough-and-tumble city.

Violet is full of ambition and talent yet she must overcome her one obstacle, stage fright. She believes

that the reason her mother did not make it in the business was that she could not perform her songs, so Violet too thinks that she cannot perform her own music.

As Violet struggles to get her demo tape into the hands of powerful music executives, she becomes desperate for money, and thus decides to investigate a position as a bartender at the Coyote Ugly bar in the meatpacking district of New York City.

Lil, played by Maria Bello, is the hard-nosed owner of Coyote Ugly who, despite her harsh exterior, gives Violet a night to audition for the job and christens her 'Jersey.'

A timid and starving Violet shows up for her first night and is intimidated by the voluptuous and seductive Coyote Ugly staff.

The Coyotes are not only bartenders, but they dance for the crowd on top of the bar, all while half clothed.

The sappy story of a young, pretty girl finding her place in the world is just an excuse for attractive barely-dressed women to dance around on a bar.

As if all of the Coyotes are not supermodel-gorgeous enough, literally, Kevin O'Donnell (Adam Garcia), a young Tom Cruise look-alike with a sexy Australian accent, takes an interest in Violet and her music.

Violet quickly becomes sidetracked with the notoriety and wealth she is earning at her new "day" job and lets her musical aspirations take a backseat. She convinces herself that even if her songs are good, she just cannot perform them. However, she is told repeatedly that she must perform her songs in order to be noticed.

Although Violet thinks that she is too anxious to sing for a crowd, she does so one night when chaos erupts in the bar. Cammie, Rachel and Lil are being manhandled by the drunken crowd, and the only way Violet knows to get the attention of the crowd is to sing along with the jukebox playing "One Way or Another" by Blondie.

A few bars of the song are enough to tame the crowd and to give Violet a taste of performing.

It seems unrealistic that a drunken crowd of sexually charged men will stop beating on each other just to hear an Alanis Morissette-like performance by an unknown kid from New Jersey, but it happens.

As time goes by, Violet's performances become a regular part of the Coyote Ugly experience, but she still thinks that she is still fearful to sing her own songs.

There is a real Coyote Ugly in New York City, but it is not as glamorous or popular as the flashy Hollywood version. Go figure, nothing is as it seems in the movies anyway.

Although there are some cheesy parts, this is an overall good movie. It has a sweet love story and a "go for your dreams" message with a happy ending.

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PHOTO BY WALTER FYLER
Chuck Parham, part of the storytelling group that meets every third Monday, regales a group with a tale.

Casey Blankenship
Staff Writer

Members of the Asheville Storytelling Circle met to discuss business and share stories with each other Sept. 18 at the Harvest House. "Everybody has a story to tell," said Sharon Bares, a member of the Asheville Storytelling Circle.

Students who want to feel a sense of community with others can find no better place than participating in one of the meetings. It is a great way to meet people and hear some wonderful stories.

"It has been said that you do not know where you are going if you do not know where you are from, and stories are something that connect us," said Bares. "There always seems to be this little core, this little center of hidden truth that crosses all boundaries in storytelling."

The storytellers formed about five years ago from a group of about eight to 10 people interested in storytelling, according to Bares.

"We accept tellers, people who want to be tellers, people who just want to listen, people who just want to support us, the whole gamut," said Bares. "And now we have 46 members. So it has really grown."

"The very nature of storytelling is community-based," said Laura Facciponti, assistant professor of drama at UNCA and storytelling member. "It is all about community people coming together and listening to each other's stories."

We live in a technological society where we have become a passive

audience, according to Facciponti. "Storytelling takes getting involved with imagery," said Facciponti. "It takes sitting and listening and imagining what the storytellers are describing and that is so valuable to everybody. We

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need that, and unless we keep working on it, we are going to lose that ability."

"When you tell a story, you feel really good because it is a catharsis, and it is a sharing of your life that is saying 'my experiences are as valid as any myth or any story out there,'" said Facciponti.

"Coming together and people sitting quietly and listening, accepting and giving stories," said Facciponti. "That is what it is about."

The storytelling circle meets every third Monday of each month to review business and tell stories. These meetings are open to the public, according to Bares.

The organization also sponsors storytelling events and workshops.

"We have lots of nationally renowned members here in town," said Bares. "They are able to attract some big names, and we try to sponsor at least one national teller to come in and give a workshop every year."

People tell stories about the mountains, Jewish faith, history, Native American culture, personal stories and Jack tales, which feature the

character Jack from such stories as "Jack and the Beanstalk." Some people add music or puppets to their stories, according to Bares. "The story style and subject are as varied as the people," said Bares.

Today most people get their stories from the television, movies and video games instead of asking for stories from parents and grandparents, according to Bares.

"We are lucky if we know five generations," said Bares. "If you do not tell their stories when those people die, then those stories are lost."

"You have got to go out and ask and most of the people today are not asking," said Bares. "Personal stories are what connect us, and that is why I got involved in storytelling."

The storytellers will perform at Tellabration Nov. 19 from 3-6 p.m. at the Folk Art Center.

Tellabration is an international celebration that began as a way to increase community awareness for storytelling. Tellabration is normally held the weekend before Thanksgiving at various festivals worldwide to help create a fellowship network of storytellers, according to the Tellabration Web site.

The Cultural & Special Events Performing Arts Series will present Mountain Echoes Storyfest featuring writers and storytellers April 27-29.

"It is just a wonderful event where families and the elderly could come," said Facciponti. "We are always trying to do outreach and bring communities to the university. Students need to hear the stories and help tell the stories."

Brewfest

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much of the beer available at your local grocery store, while several years ago the pickings were much sparser.

Speaking of pickings, bluegrass has won a new generation of

"newgrass" adherents strikingly different from the traditional audience.

Most of the audience was young, white, and cosmopolitan (I did not see anyone drinking out of Mason

jars, although I was looking). A telling point in the evening was when the Yonder Mountain String Band suggested we all visit their Web site and download some free music.

Robert Pinsky, the Poet Laureate of the United States, will speak on Thursday, Oct. 5 at 8 p.m. in Lipinsky Auditorium

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