

Movie Review:

The Prestige: A secret all must know



by Chrisi Gaskill
Staff Writer

The Prestige
Dir. by Christopher Nolan
Warner Brothers/2006



“Are you watching closely?” The opening line of the phenomenal movie *The Prestige* gives the first clue: pay good attention, or you just might miss something.

The film’s cast includes well-known actors Michael Caine, Christian Bale, Hugh Jackman, and Scarlett Johansson, but the list doesn’t stop there. The appearance of David Bowie and Andy Serkis, two actors *not* advertised in the previews, can only be described as a fantastic surprise. As for the story, I was on the edge of my seat for over half of the film.

We begin with what magicians call the Pledge and the first stage of a successful magic trick; we are shown something ordinary. The movie opens with a death, followed by a murder trial. In fact, the entire atmosphere fairly rings of a murder mystery with its out-of-place hints and flashbacks

within flashbacks. Alfred Borden (Bale) and Robert Angier (Jackman) are partners in the business of magic until an on-stage death quickly sets them against one another. Rivalry becomes dangerous when the chance to upstage turns into bloody and vengeful humiliation.

Angier is the better of the two magicians with his flashy showmanship and his beautiful assistant, but Borden wants to make the audience *think* rather than charm them. When Borden displays a new trick that can only be described as “real” magic, Angier becomes obsessed with discovering Borden’s secrets. Cutter (Caine), Angier’s inventor and manager, warns Angier of his obsession, but to no avail. Here we find the Turn, or the second stage in which the said ordinary is made extraordinary.

Angier ends up in America—Colorado actually—where he comes face to face with Nikola Tesla (Bowie) and his assistant Alley (Serkis). It is here the “real world” comes a little into focus and a rivalry between Tesla and Thomas Edison is slightly explored. Tesla also counsels Angier against obsession, but agrees to help him in any case.

To continue further with the plot would ruin the ending, so I must keep secret the Prestige, the last stage of the magic trick where the extraordinary is returned to its original state. I will say, however, be prepared for a veritable cornucopia of shocking twists.

With a prestigious cast (pun intended) and an incredible story, *The Prestige* is a must-see film. This movie’s sudden, unexpected turns will instill such a desire to know the truth of all the secrets it will keep just about anyone entertained. And remember, watch closely.

Junior Brown opens to a different sound

by Zack Harding
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Junior Brown
Opening: Shane Pruitt Band
The Handle Bar,
Greenville, S.C.



Junior Brown in concert

Photo by Zack Harding

If there is one thing that my attendance at Junior Brown’s Oct. 12 show at Greenville’s The Handlebar has taught me, it is that preconceptions of music are often worthless.

I’ll be the first to say that I am not a fan of most country, even though—like all music genres—there are many great artists and songs. So, when a friend decided to take me along to go see Junior Brown, I wasn’t really ready for what I was going to experience.

The Shane Pruitt band opened up, delivering a solid set of good, but everyday, electric blues. The crew began tearing the equipment down and setting up for Junior Brown, and I couldn’t believe my eyes.

Junior Brown’s band uses the least amount of equipment of any electric band that I have ever seen: only two small amplifiers, one bass, one guitar, one snare drum and one cymbal. This was going to be minimalist music at its finest.

A flash of amusement hit me as the band entered the stage, all wearing suit and tie—Junior in a cowboy hat, of course. I was quickly drawn into the moment as they started playing the swinging honky-tonk sound that Junior is known for. It was amazing watching Junior tear it up on his double necked “guit-steel,” one part electric guitar, one part pedal steel slide guitar.

Junior would constantly and efficiently switch between the two pieces of his instrument, playing as two separate musicians.

Most of his set featured traditional country styled tunes, but not the slow “crying in your beer” type of songs, nor the commercialized pop country of modern times. He played big crowd-pleasing hits, including “Highway Patrol” and “My Wife Thinks You’re Dead,” which features his super deep baritone voice.

A couple surprises were in store for the night, including a perfect mariachi tune with Junior singing in impeccable Spanish. Other great tunes included a blazing blues instrumental, during which Junior pretty much upstaged his opening act, and finally, a surf rock number that sounded like the Ventures.

Much is to be said of the bassist and drummer as well. The bassist, though never taking a leading position, always played very solidly. For only having a two-piece drum set, the drummer was amazing. His musicianship was excellent, and he created many different sounds with limited resources.

In the end, Junior tossed his pick out to the crowd and playfully pretended to throw his “guit-steel” out, a very funny moment.

This was definitely a guitar show, or maybe it was a “guit-steel” show; either way, Junior Brown has to be one of the most talented country guitarists alive today. For a unique and highly enjoyable experience, I suggest letting go of preconceptions and enjoying a little Junior Brown.