

Will disco ever die? 54 sounds death knell

By Jonathan Carter
FEATURES FILM CRITIC

It's late in the era of 1970's nostalgia. The general 70's nostalgia that began a few years ago is inevitably concluding and now has a sort of late 70's/early 80's disco theme that influenced *Boogie Nights*, *The Last Days of Disco*, and now *54*, from first-time director Mark Christopher. Unfortunately, instead of sending 70's nostalgia out with a bang, the predictable and dull *54* merely sounds its death knell.

The title refers to Studio 54, nightclub and center of the universe for the subculture of drugs and decadence that arose during the 70's. The film follows ordinary guy Shane (Ryan Philippe),

fuses to be Rubell's 'special friend'), and Julie (Neve Campbell) a soap star who wants bigger and better roles. Most of them idolize Rubell, another ordinary guy who had some luck, but Rubell knows that his precarious empire could collapse irreparably at any moment.

54 tries to be a 90-minute ensemble piece, and obviously that doesn't work. Character conflicts (and actually, some characters, like Julie) come and go quickly, pointlessly, and without resolution. The conflicts might have been thrown in so the characters wouldn't appear as complete clichés, but most of them had such brief parts that I couldn't even tell if they were clichés. The only character who has enough screen time for development is Shane, but he's banal and unaffectionate and ends up seeming like a nonentity even though he's the main character and narrator.

For all that the real Studio 54 stood



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who catches the eye of the club's owner, Steve Rubell (Mike Myers), and gets a sought-after job tending bar at 54. Soon he descends into its dangerously excessive world. Along the way he meets others trying to make it: Anita (Salma Hayek), who dreams of being a singer, her husband Greg (Breckin Meyer), who wants to be a bartender at the club but is too short (and also re-

for, *54* is a pretty tame movie. Its scenes of drugs and sex have become all but commonplace in Hollywood, and the film doesn't go the extra mile to elicit any shocked reaction from the audience. Near the film's end, Shane comments that the corporations that took over the club "made everything safe and dull, the way corporations do." Looks like something similar happened to this movie.

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Pigface: new album "will almost make you dizzy"

By Daniel Snyder
STAFF WRITER

rating* * *

A New High in Low saw Pigface moving into many different musical directions while continuously maintaining an indus-

Running on empty/Super glued to the t.v./Dreaming of prosperity...." Hanzel und Gretyl sincerely do the song justice.

But it is Bagman's remix of "You Know...." that really got me excited. Bagman is a master at piecing together wicked jungle



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trial-based sound.

With *Below the Belt*, the remix companion to *A New High in Low*, Martin Atkins continues to experiment with the main concept he initially set out to achieve, an industrial band with interchangeable members. The result, another Pigface album which bears little resemblance to previous efforts.

Below the Belt begins with Curse Mackey's remix of "Radio Bagpipe." The track commences with the pounding of a very steady and synthetic bass drum enwrapped in a swirling and very distorted bagpipe. As the track progresses, other strange and spacey sounds begin to revolve around the beat before all fading out only to reveal a synthetic orchestra playing a very low-key yet wonderful melody underneath the layers of constructed noise. Then the orchestra stops and the noise resumes. This is a sign of things to come.

The better tracks on the album include Lee (Sheep on Drugs, Bagman) Fraser's remix of "More Methylated," Quoit's remix of "More," and Resident Phase Shifter's remix of "Metal Tangerine."

"Kiss King," remixed by James Galus, is truly incredible. Galus takes all of the brilliant elements of the original, Atkins' powerful drums, Ogre's hypnotic sitar, Mary Dee Reynold's sensual vocals, and sonically enhances them with a bassline so fluid, it really makes the song move.

The remix of "Nutopia" by New York's Hanzel und Gretyl is equally tremendous. They add a much more upbeat drum beat but keep many of the original vocals. Lyrically, the song pays homage to the late Allen Ginsburg, "I saw the best minds of my generation/

beats (his first album, *Wrap*, is better than a lot of Goldie's tunes), and the interpretation here of "You Know...." will almost make you dizzy. Break after break, the drums are relentless. And then

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