

MOVIE REVIEWS

JOE STRUMMER: THE FUTURE IS UNWRITTEN

★★★★☆

The opening moments of "Joe Strummer: The Future is Unwritten" show an image of The Clash frontman in the studio, headphones on, waiting for his cue.

In a voiceover, a producer asks Strummer what title he would like to have presented with his name, to which he replies: "I'd like you to write 'Punk Rock Warlord.'"

In this touching and intriguing documentary, director Julien Temple looks at the life of the voice behind hits such as "Rock the Casbah" and "London Calling."

The film itself is like a compila-

tion tape, layering archival footage of The Clash with recordings of Strummer's BBC radio show and fireside interviews with family, friends and sundry celebrities. The soundtrack incorporates a smorgasbord of musical styles, drawing from Strummer's radio picks and popular tunes from his heyday.

And although much of the film's two hours focuses on The Clash, Temple also gives air time to Strummer's other musical projects, The 101ers and the Mescaleros.

Though a bit long at times, "The Future is Unwritten" is packed with rock-and-roll and memories even the uninitiated will find enriching.

-Catherine Williams

BABY MAMA

★★★☆☆

Those going into "Baby Mama" expecting the acerbic-yet-juvenile Tina Fey wit of "30 Rock" or Liz Lemon should look elsewhere.

As an uptight careerwoman who can't get pregnant, Fey ditches the sense of humor and goes for slightly caring and shrill, to varying degrees of success.

Amy Poehler plays the lower-class surrogate Fey hires to carry

her baby and is obviously supposed to be the funny one here, but instead just comes off as gratingly dumb.

Her last-minute redemption is completely implausible to those with any amount of incredulity, and both characters come off as unsympathetic and unbelievable.

Peppered with laughs, the script is hit-or-miss, but the story goes in a surprising direction.

Unfortunately, the ending is too convenient and negates the interest-

ing turns the story was taking.

What was supposed to be the funny-yet-affective vehicle to catapult Tina Fey to mainstream stardom is instead a subpar movie that would have gone straight to DVD had it starred anyone else.

-Rachael Oehring

88 MINUTES

★★★★☆

Al Pacino was once a guarantee for at least a good flick. "88 Minutes" is a sure indicator that times have changed.

The film tells the tale of a forensic psychologist who is being blackmailed and hunted by a murderer he put on death row years ago.

I wouldn't have gotten my hopes up for this film if it weren't for the presence of Pacino.

I should have noticed that the film's writer has also penned such gems as "2 Fast 2 Furious" and "Hollow Man II."

The script is a stumbling mess. It tries to tie moments of the film together with confusing and useless plot progression, but then the "high points" of the story are even worse.

And the supporting cast just plunges this movie further down the drain.

Leelee Sobieski is, of course, terrible as a creepy grad student.

But Alicia Witt outshines even Sobieski with the worst performance so far of the year, as Pacino's assistant who lacks any coherent motivation and is just painful to watch.

Bad script. Bad acting. And Pacino really needs a comb - his hair is just out of control.

-David Bergartt

MUSIC REVIEWS

BOMBADIL
A BUZZ, A BUZZ
LYRICAL FOLK

★★★★☆

Call it snobbery, but I wouldn't consider tales of British anchor-esses or archaic decipherers told through the likes of a minor J.R.R. Tolkien character my cup of tea.

But perhaps it is the eloquence with which Bombadil has woven similar accounts that has sweetened my bitter, preconceived kettle of notions that songs of these sorts are somehow uninspired.

-Benn Wineka

DAVID KARSTEN DANIELS
FEAR OF FLYING
FOLK/ROCK

★★★★☆

It might take a while for it to take hold fully, but there is a triumphant feel to *Fear of Flying*, the latest from David Karsten Daniels.

As horns and soaring guitars catapult Daniels' vocals, the record takes on a palpable urgency that gets at the heart of its force.

It is a different reaction than Daniel's gorgeous 2007 entry, *Sharp Teeth*, inspired.

The reaction isn't as immediate, but when the outpouring of emotion breaks the levee of your heart and comes rushing forth, it's unstoppable.

No one would question his quality of songwriting, but somehow the fact that it isn't as central as on *Sharp Teeth* makes the gems of Daniels' pen that much more affecting.

Even though the path ahead might be perilous, it's totally worth the ride.

-Jamie Williams

Even a narrative about a heartbroken sap who's resorted to cutting himself ("Johnny") sounds toe-tappingly magnificent on *A Buzz, A Buzz*.

The effect to which elegies of loss and marching bar songs are dispersed amongst frank rock is insurmountable.

Each one is delivered in a folk-gusto that makes Bombadil's sound as unduplicable as does the confluence of classically trained piano and baroque-infused instrumentation of the rest of the group.

THE PNEUROTICS
FORTY
ROCK

★★★★☆

As a band known as much for the neighborliness of its members as for its actual music, it's sometimes easy to forget how good The Pneurotics really are. Then comes *Forty* to act as a bold-faced reminder.

Rich McLaughlin's well-worn vocals and meaty guitar - with well placed harmonies from his wife, Mimi - are more than enough to hold up. And in the instrumental "Song For Grace," we see in the subdued finger-picking of an extended acoustic solo, more than just a friendly neighborhood rock band.

Contentment is rare in rock music, but from The Pneurotics, it makes sense. And it's refreshing.

-Bryan Reed

TRIPP
GOOD BOY CHARM
ROCK

★★★★☆

Campus favorite Tripp confirms its talent with *Good Boy Charm*.

With dynamic energy from start to finish, this carefree album certain-

ly will start the summer off right.

Sharp guitar solos blend with Alex Wilkins' laid-back vocals. A lack of ballads leaves emotion that might normally be somber with an optimistically upbeat presentation, making even the most heartbreaking relationship situation seem light.

The LP's universality offers plenty of fun but few surprises.

-Melissa Brown

AMERICAN PRINCES
OTHER PEOPLE
ROCK

★★★★☆

Other People by American Princes is merely adequate. Some of its best moments might be called hypnotic, but there's nothing extraordinary.

The group's talent is evident and the tunes are relatively enjoyable, but elements warranting instant recommendation and heartfelt approval are absent.

It simply yields supporters where finer records garner activists.

Other People is perfectly listenable but keeps the ear pining for something worth going to battle for.

-Edwin Arnaudin

TICKLEY FEATHER
TICKLEY FEATHER
EXPERIMENTAL/POP

★★★★☆

When taken as a whole, it's obvious that Annie Sachs, aka Tickley Feather, is at her best playing short, as she does for the majority of Tickley Feather's debut.

The 20 morsels of lo-fi pop thrive on charming melodies that were built for small samplings. But Sachs has collected too many tracks to form a cohesive whole, so *Tickley Feather* is only fun when taken one bit at a time.

-Jordan Lawrence

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