

Slater pumps up volume, teens in latest movie

By CAROL GLENN

"Being a teen-ager sucks," Mark says. "That's the point. You have to be strong to survive it."

This is the concept of the provocative new movie "Pump Up the Volume" which concentrates on the anxieties of high school teenagers.

Christian Slater (known for his roles in "Young Guns II" and "The Legend of Billie Jean" plus numerous TV specials) portrays the riveting character Mark.

Mark has recently moved from New York to Arizona where his father has accepted the position of school commissioner.

Trying to make the transition easier, Mark's father buys him a shortwave radio so that he can communicate with his friends back in New York. Due to the lack of listeners, Mark gives up and instead uses the radio to produce his own local radio show.

He turns on the knobs every night at 10 and uses the radio to voice his thoughts on sex, teachers, parents, suicide and school.

Using a unique perverse style and an original call name, "Happy Harry Hard-On," he entertains his listening audience with progressive, obscene rap music.

By day he is a shy, self-conscious, lonely high schooler; by night he is a wild, crazy and outspoken disc jockey.

The majority of the teen-agers at the school listen to him, and he ends up becoming some sort of leader or god to them. The teens look up to him. They listen to him and do what Happy Harry says. Little does he know the impact he has on other teen-agers' lives and the extent of his listening audience.

It's not until a suicide occurs that Happy Harry realizes the power he possesses. He contemplates taking his show off the air, until a female friend, Nora (Samantha Mathis), encourages him to continue broadcasting and to disclose the corruption that exists in the school system.

As Happy Harry says, "Truth is a virus. Talk hard."

The parents and school administrators of the community want Happy Harry taken off the air. They think he is gaining too much power in the minds of the teen-agers, but Mark continues airing his program.

This movie is amazing. Nearly everyone in the audience will be able to relate to this plot. Mark represents an attitude everyone in high school would like to possess, but it's just not accepted by society.

We are taught to be conformists not unique individuals.

Mark inspires the teen-agers to stand up, be counted and to take action against the wrongs in the society.

Too often individuals get slapped down when trying to correct the problems in this world. A perfect example of this is the recent 2 Live Crew controversy, where our conservative society attempts to abridge our freedom of speech and of the press.

The movie's soundtrack includes music by Concrete Blonde, Soundgarden, Peter Murphy, and the Cowboy Junkies. They are perfect selections for this movie. They make your foot start tapping and gives the audience the urge to stand up and speak out in society (kind of like the inspiration you get from "The Eye of the Tiger" in "Rocky IV").

This movie is rated "R" for its partial frontal nudity and the extensive use of profanity that laces nearly every scene.

While watching this motivational and inspiring film, you know that teen-agers will always be faced with traumatic experiences. It's all part of growing up. Puberty and adolescence are just phases you have to live through.

As the movie points out, "So be it."

Theater Focus: Aggie Players

Company opens season with tale of comic couples

By JOHN MABRY

In the face of today's rising gasoline prices and 60-cent cokes, the Aggie Players' production of "Non Si Paga! Non Si Paga! (We Won't Pay! We Won't Pay!)" is a particularly appropriate season opener, premiering tonight at 8 in the Blocker Fallout Theater.

The play, written by Italian playwright Dario Fo, is a political farce. It deals with two Communist Italian working-class couples who struggle against the skyrocketing cost of putting food on the table. How obstinate Giovanni, his scheming wife Antonia and their friends Luigi and Margherita juggle their money allows for the play's comedy.

The play was first performed in 1974 in Milan. An English translation was performed in New York in 1979 as a demonstration against the U.S. government's denial of a visa for Fo because of his leftist political leanings.

"Our whole purpose is to understand how other people think and feel," director Dr. Michael Greenwald, professor of theater arts, said.

"We're not advocating Communism, just as we don't support a monarchy over a democracy when we perform a Shakespeare play, which, by the way, was something that Shakespeare believed in... Many of the aspirations of the characters are things we agree with... I'm sure there are a lot of things in the play even the most conservative Aggies can relate to."

Sophomore theater arts major John Flores said, "It's not really political. It's about people being fed up with other people jacking up prices. The fact that they're Communists has nothing to do with it."

"Even though it politically arouses you, it really is a purely entertaining piece that uses a lot of the old vaudeville style," assistant director Mary Ellen Brennan, senior theater arts major, said.

"The play is like one long 'I Love Lucy' episode," junior theater arts major Christie Vela O'Connor, who plays Antonia, said. "Everyone's had

a great time adding lines and little comic bits during the rehearsal process. Some are cheap gags, but they're really funny."

"If this were 'I Love Lucy,' my character would be Ethel," senior theater arts major Lanell Pena, who plays Margherita, said. "I let Antonia boss me around, so I'm more of an accomplice than the instigator."

Unlike the typical four-week rehearsal period for Aggie Players shows, Non Si Paga! Non Si Paga! was only three weeks in the making.

"On one hand it's been very instructional," Greenwald said. "We've had to make some very quick choices, which is typical of the real world, where time is money. The actors have had to come in so focused because they knew they were under the gun."

"The cast are directors themselves," Brennan said. "They make it so easy for me because they have such good instincts and take direction so well... I can say with all honesty that something new comes up at every single rehearsal."

Pena said that "Non Si Paga! Non Si Paga!" should be just as much fun for the audience as it is for the actors.

"It's a very energetic show," she said. "We'll probably wear out the audience before the night is over. There's a lot of slapstick kind of humor that people may not be used to seeing."

Other cast members include Al Alford, senior theater arts major from Belton as Giovanni, and Jon Burke, senior theater arts major from College Station as the man-of-all-faces.

In addition to tonight's opening performance, "Non Si Paga! Non Si Paga!" will be performed on Sept. 14, 15, 18, 19, 20, 21, and 22 in the Fallout Theater in Blocker 144. Two matinees will be performed on the 15th and 22nd at 2 p.m.

Tickets are \$5.00 for the general public and \$4.00 for students. For information and reservations, call the Rudder Box Office at 845-1234.

Photos by Sondra N. Robbins

(Above right) Antonia (Christie Vela O'Connor) displays her groceries for her friend Margherita (Lanell Pena). (Right) Giovanni (Al Alford) explains finance to his wife Antonia.



WEEKEND HIGHLIGHTS

Panjandrum plays at Front Porch tonight

Following Ten Hand's sellout show last week, Houston's Panjandrum, another funk-based band, provides the dance and groove entertainment at the Front Porch Cafe tonight.

Panjandrum (pictured left) returns to Bryan-College Station after several shows this spring and summer at the Front Porch and Waivers.

The group has benefitted from the exposure of opening for Ten Hands, and were awarded second-place this spring for Best Urban-Contemporary Band in the "Public News" reader's poll, an alternative magazine in Houston.

Admission for tonight's show is \$5. For more information, call the Front Porch Cafe at 846-LIVE.

Texas singer releases new tape Saturday

Folk-blues performer Dana Cooper is releasing his latest tape, *Something's Gotta Give*, to Bryan-College Station Saturday night at the Front Porch Cafe.

Cooper, a veteran of the Texas club circuit, established himself while performing with Shake Russell. Together, Russell and Cooper spearheaded the folk and blues network in Houston in the late '70s and early '80s, culminating their effort with a trio of releases for MCA/Southcoast.

Cooper and Russell split several years ago to pursue solo careers, but perform together on occasion.

Still tied to the Texas circuit, Cooper is hoping something gives and that his perseverance pays off. Regardless, Cooper delivers folk and blues at its best.

Admission for Saturday night's show is \$6. For more information, call the Front Porch Cafe at 846-LIVE.

Latin American musicians perform Sunday

Los Folkloristas, a Latin American musical group, will perform in the Rudder Theater Sept. 16.

More than 100 instruments help form the music of Los Folkloristas, which refers to its collection as a "valuable cultural heritage and most cherished tool."

The instruments have been gathered by the group from over a dozen countries during the group's 25 year history.

Formed in 1966 in Mexico City, the seven-member group of singers and musicians has mastered a variety of musical styles. Their instruments, along with their music, have been obtained through first-hand studies in the countries of Latin America. Group members spent countless hours with village elders and regional masters of local styles to capture the historical music.

Often a piece is saved from extinction through the group's efforts to locate that "last old campesino," who still sings the music his grandfather taught him.

Among the instruments the group uses are guitars, violins, flutes, drums, rasps, rattles and reeds.

The more unusual items include a water drum from the Yaqui Indians of Northern Mexico. The instrument is actually a large gourd that has been hollowed and floats in a tub of water. When struck with a rubber-wrapped stick, it produces a very deep bass sound.

Sponsored by the MSC's Committee for the Awareness of Mexican-American Culture, the group will take the stage at 2 p.m. Tickets are available at the Rudder Tower Box Office. For more information about the program, call 845-1515.