

AGGIELIFE

THE BATTALION

Page 3 • Friday, October 3, 2003

Back in Black

'School of Rock' throws comedian Jack Black into a musical, family-oriented film

By James Hissong
THE BATTALION

Few individuals can boast a rising cinematic career, a famous rock band and a first and last name that rhyme. Jack Black is one of those few individuals.

Black's latest film, "School of Rock," directed by Richard Linklater, comes to theaters nationwide today and offers fans of the funny man a new angle of humor.

The movie allows Black to exploit both his comedic and musical abilities. He stars as Dewey Finn, a hell-raising guitarist with delusions of grandeur. Kicked out of his band and desperate for work, Dewey impersonates a substitute teacher and turns a fifth-grade class of high achievers into high-voltage rockers.

To portray his class, several kids were cast as Black's costars as well as his back-up musicians. As a result, this movie has been deemed more of a family film and required Black to approach his responsibilities as an actor in a new manner.

"I couldn't drop any f-bombs, but I had a good time," Black said. "We rocked the hard rock." Owen Gleiberman of Entertainment Weekly labeled "School of Rock" "the most unlikely great movie of the year." In his review, Gleiberman said past images of Black fall by the wayside after watching his latest performance.

"He reaches deep inside his riffing, strutting, head-banging self to give the single most joyful performance I've seen all year," he said. Jack Black's roots are grounded in onstage productions, but as time passed he found himself making appearances on the small screen in

"In the beginning I was kind of a big loser, just living at my mom's."

—Jack Black
musician and comedian

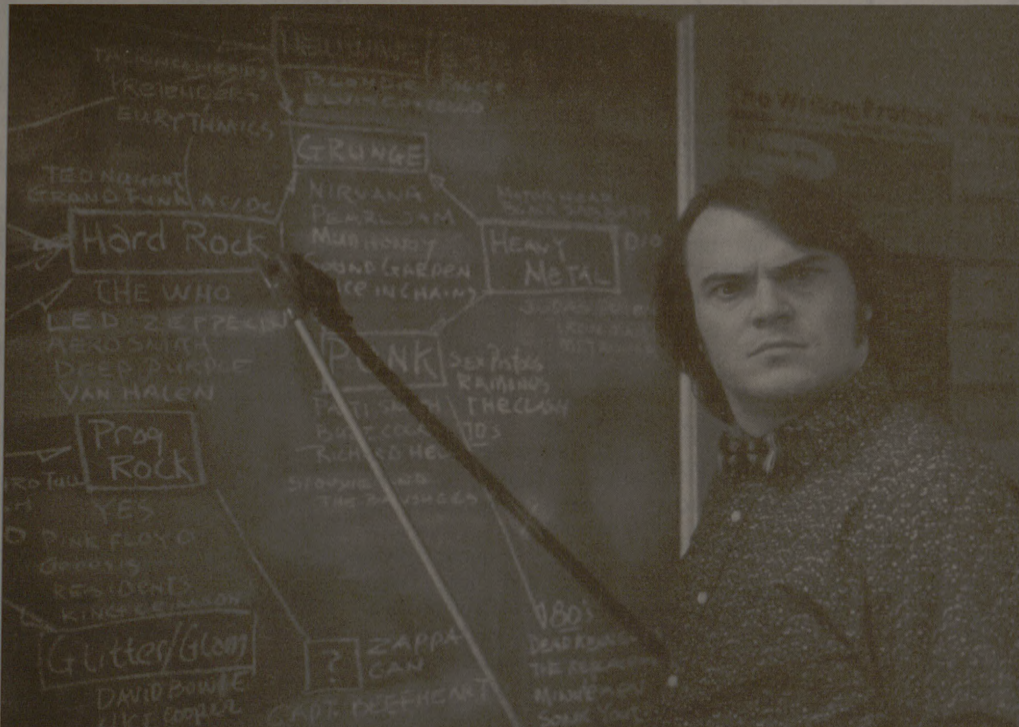


Photo courtesy of Paramount Pictures

Jack Black, in a scene from "School of Rock," teaches his class the roots of rock 'n' roll. The movie, featuring Black in a family-friendly manner, releases nationwide in theaters today.

shows such as "The X-files" and "Touched by an Angel."

While he did not comment on whether his recent popularity and growing cult followings are the direct responses of being fingered by a holy being, he did say that his rise to success was not immediate.

"In the beginning I was kind of a big loser, just living at my mom's," Black said. "Then I started getting music and acting gigs. I did a little telemarketing and was awful at it."

The variety of Jack's talents have led his career to grow into an odd merging of movies and music. Promotions for his latest cinema releases have his face plastered on billboards and Web sites, but screaming fans also fill packed

auditoriums to witness Black as one of two front men for the self-proclaimed "greatest band in the world" — Tenacious D.

For Black, starring in a family film was a step away from his usual screwball comedy genre. He questioned Mike White's script but ultimately decided it was something he needed to do.

He was skeptical about making a family movie but when he thought back on family films like "The Bad News Bears" and "Willy Wonka," he sought to make an equally immortal film in the family genre.

"It's like Mike (White) wrote this script and if the script was a car, he pulled up in a Ferrari that was built for me," Black said. "So, I got in it and I was like, 'I know how to drive this thing. I

know what to do. I'm gonna take it over some bunny hops and I'm gonna floor it and push the nitro button you didn't even know about under the dash."

Living in College Station is slightly out of the Hollywood loop, but if 'bunny hop' means improvisational comedy routines and 'nitro button' is slang for a super-rocking soundtrack, then Black says he and the crew are up to par.

While "School of Rock" features a soundtrack with a number of established rockers including AC/DC, Cream, Led Zeppelin, The Doors and The Ramones, the title track is an original song performed by Black and his backup mini-musicians.

The group has already played together several times attempting to promote the film, and Black claims that the musical talent these kids express often steals the show.

"I played everything you see me play except the guitar solos," he said. "Well, I played the crappy ones, but I'm not a good soloist. We hired kids that were kind of prodigies. If you're 10 years old and you can play, you're pretty much a prodigy as far as I'm concerned."

The film and its soundtrack are enjoying success now, but Black explained that capturing rocking material with kids was nearly a scientific process.

"We made sure that parents weren't on the set," said Black. "They had to be in a room far away where they could watch what was going on, through a camera. I've discovered you can't rock in front of your parents. You can rock but you can't rock hard. I wanted to rock hard with them, but when you've got your mom right there, how can you rock?"

The future for this movie musician and his famous eyebrows — which he says he works out everyday — is far from certain.

Currently, he and Kyle Glas are working on bringing the story and sound of their band, Tenacious D, to the big screen. "Tenacious D: In the Pick of Destiny" is set for release in the winter of 2004. Beyond that, Black's career is wide open.

"I try not to dwell on what the future holds," Black said. "I just follow my nose, like the Fruit Loops' toucan."

PEOPLE IN THE NEWS

Grammy winning jazz singer takes on the fight against illiteracy

LONG BEACH, Calif. (AP) — Jazz singer Al Jarreau says a recent encounter with a man who couldn't read increased his motivation to help to stamp out illiteracy.

The five-time Grammy winner was selling a car to the man, who asked him fill out the paperwork because he couldn't read. "I was shocked," Jarreau said Tuesday after reading to children at the Long Beach Main Library.

"There are people who can't read a map, can't read a job application, can't read a sign to get where they need to go. ... It's just sad, especially in a nation where education is free." Jarreau, 63, read Chris Raschka's "Charlie Parker Played Be Bop" to a group of third graders. He brought the story of a saxophone-playing boy to life by singing the sounds of different types of saxophones.

The reading was part of a literacy program sponsored by the Verizon Foundation, and Jarreau volunteers as the group's "National Literacy Champion."

The singer also donates a portion of proceeds from his latest album, "All I Got," to the program.

"I have been supporting the fight for better literacy skills since the 1960s when I was in college," Jarreau said.

Motley Crue bassist sues Vans, skateboarding magazine over image use

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Motley Crue bassist Nikki Sixx has sued a skateboarding magazine and the Vans shoe company for allegedly using his image in an ad without his permission.

Sixx, whose real name is Franklin C. Feranna, said in the lawsuit filed Tuesday that the defendants used photographs of him with pro skater Tony Trujillo at a San Francisco ceremony, which Thrasher magazine organized and Vans sponsored.

Sixx said he agreed to present Trujillo with a "Skater of the Year" award at the December 2002 ceremony because he knew Trujillo was a Motley Crue fan.

The 44-year-old musician said he was surprised to see photos taken at the ceremony in an ad for Trujillo's signature Vans shoes. The photo also showed a marquee with the words "Thrasher

Magazine's Skater of the Year Tony Trujillo."

The lawsuit said the ad appeared in Revolver, Maxim, Stuff, FHM, Blender, and Alternative Press.

Hercules, Xena sue Universal Studios to recover money from syndication

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Hercules and Xena are joining forces in a lawsuit against Universal Studios over pay.

"Xena: Warrior Princess" star Lucy Lawless and "Hercules" star Kevin Sorbo filed separate breach-of-contract lawsuits Tuesday accusing the company of denying them money from the adjusted gross receipts of their syndicated shows.

Sorbo and Lawless said they had agreements with Universal entitling them to a percentage of the receipts, but that Universal has improperly reduced the receipts and increased distribution expenses and production costs to deny them the money.

Lawless said she was entitled to 5 percent, and Sorbo said he was entitled to 8 percent.

Universal spokesman Jim Benson said the company hadn't seen the lawsuits and doesn't comment on pending litigation.

PIZZA

PAPA JOHN'S

Better Ingredients • Better Pizza

Friday Special

Pick Your Size **\$12.78**

LARGE 2-Topping & 1 side

SIDES: Breadsticks • Cheesesticks • Chicken Strips • Cinnapie

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
1 LARGE 1-TOPPING	2 LARGE 1-TOPPING	1 EX-LARGE 2-TOPPING	1 LARGE 2-TOPPING & 2 liter drink	PICK YOUR SIDE LARGE 2-TOPPING AND 1 SIDE	FAMILY SPECIAL 1 LARGE 2-TOPPING	ANY LARGE SPECIALTY
\$5.99 pu/only	\$12.99 pu/delivery	\$10.50 pu/delivery	\$11.99 pu/delivery	\$12.78 pu/delivery	\$16.99	\$11.99

Northgate 601 University Dr. 979-846-3600
Post Oak Square Center 100 Harvey Rd., Suite D 979-764-7272
Rock Prairie 1700 Rock Prairie 979-680-0508

Sunday: 11 a.m. - midnight
Monday - Wednesday: 11 a.m. - 1 a.m.
Thursday: 11 a.m. - 2 a.m.
Friday & Saturday: 11 a.m. - 3 a.m.

OPEN LATE

MSC Film Society presents two films Fri. Oct. 3

LEGALLY BLONDE 2

9:30pm in Rudder Auditorium

MATRIX RELOADED

6:30pm in Rudder Auditorium

Tickets available at Rudder Box Office

Admission is \$1 per movie for students and \$2.50 per movie for all others