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HOME THEATER

"Garage Days"
Starring Kick Gurry
Fox Searchlight

ROBERT SAUCEDO

It's fitting that a movie about a would-be rock band would have all the depth and profundity of a music video. "Garage Days" is a pretty film to look at, featuring a kaleidoscope of visual effects and unusual editing techniques, but the plot lacks the substance it needs to elevate itself beyond the cute flick that it becomes. It may be a shallow film with more emphasis on visuals than story, but it is for that exact reason it becomes highly entertaining and thus, like most music videos, highly re-watchable.

Freddy (Kick Gurry) has dreams of grandeur for his band. He fantasizes about the day that his band will make it big and play to sold-out crowds of screaming girls all craving his body. The problem is, the band lives in a Sydney suburb with virtually no way to get discovered, a problem magnified by the manager's ineptitude.

Desperate for a gig, a chance encounter brings Freddy and his band a little closer to his dream when he meets Shad Kern (Marton Csokas), the manager of Australia's most popular band. On the verge of a possible breakout for the band, Freddy must struggle to prevent his band from breaking up due to internal conflict. Infidelity and midnight kisses lead to a battle of bed mates as emotions clash and relationships are broken and created.

Perhaps the most shocking thing about the film is its director. Alexander Proyas has left behind the dark and brooding Gothic style of previous films "The Crow" and "Dark City" to bring to life the most vibrant and colorful film of his career. There are more colors in the first five minutes of "Garage Days" than in both of his previous works combined.

Proyas has shown a real knack for creating memorable images that, once inserted into your mind, do not leave.

"Garage Days" is filled with many similar images, in fact, that with each subsequent viewing, more will be discovered. From a bizarre and wickedly funny drug trip scene featuring a pair of snake-headed parents dancing to the late Rick James' "Superfreak" to a desperate plea from a baby substitute melon, the film contains amazing visuals that when combined with a great mix of pop hits will be sure to resonate with an MTV generation. The use of different film speeds, unusual angles, and breakneck-speed jump cut editing all work together to craft a fast-paced experience that will leave audiences smiling.

The actors are all easily likeable but, unfortunately, their characters never evolve above an inoffensive cliché. There's the tough chick bass player, the perpetually high wild and crazy drummer, the mentally disturbed suicidal Goth groupie lead guitarist, and a stumbling, bumbling mess of a manager. Despite the characters' predictability, the chemistry and charisma of the cast makes it hard to do anything but enjoy watching them jab and verbally stab each other while struggling to move beyond the emotional drama of stolen lovers and infidelity. (Plus, it's always fun to watch a film featuring a cast with Australian accents.)

The DVD features a slapped-together ensemble of extras that won't offer too much interest to the casual fan. There is a running commentary by Proyas, a collection of deleted scenes that offer no question as to why they were cut, a "backstage pass" that is basically a well-edited piece of promotional fluff, a collection of interviews from the cast and crew that offer no real insight beyond the usual self-congratulatory applause one finds on DVD interviews and a never-ending montage of outtakes featuring a collection of minor goofs that cause the actors to crack up.

Iraq

Continued from page 1A

The airstrikes, in the eastern and southern parts of this city, targeted a militant "command and control headquarters" that has been coordinating attacks against U.S. and Iraqi forces, the U.S. military said in a statement.

"Initial assessments indicate there are no noncombatant casualties," the U.S. statement added. "Enemy casualty figures cannot be confirmed."

Hospital officials said two people were killed in the attack but did not say whether they were insurgents.

Late Tuesday, U.S. jets dropped several bombs and tank and artillery units fired rounds into Fallujah in retaliation for militant attacks on Marine positions outside the city, said Marine spokesman Lt. Col. T.V. Johnson.

Despite the formal end of the U.S. occupation on June 28, the interim Iraqi government has lost control over key Sunni Muslim cities such as Fallujah, Ramadi and Samarra. The commander of the U.S. 1st Infantry Division said his troops and their Iraqi allies would regain control of Samarra before Iraq's general election expected in January.

Maj. Gen. John Batiste said he was confident that a combination of diplomacy, U.S. aid and Army intimidation would persuade the city's 500 insurgents to give up. Otherwise, he said, the Americans would use force.

However, Gen. Richard Myers, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, acknowledged that it could be months before U.S. and Iraqi authorities are prepared to take those cities back.

During the Sadr City fighting, U.S. warplanes flew over the sprawling neighborhood —home to some 2 million people. American tanks deployed in key intersections. Ambulances with sirens wailing rushed the wounded to hospitals as plumes of heavy, black smoke rose over the mainly Shiite neighborhood.

U.S. forces appeared to be carrying out most, if not all, of the fighting.

Save

Continued from page 3A

from which a good portion is spent on beverages and snack food. "Be careful about how much money you spend eating out, and remember it can really add cost. In fact, they may be the most expensive part of a fast-food meal," said Nancy Granovsky, professor and Extension Family Economics Specialist. "Get into the habit of ordering regular tap water with ice and lemon or lime to accompany your meal, and you will save a lot of money in the long-run."

The studies also included research that showed most students will form brand and product allegiances for the first time during their college years

"Be price sensitive. Comparison shop to save money," Granovsky said. "Know the community and check Consumer Reports Magazine or its online version."

Granovsky has many helpful observations for the majority of students who believe they are saving money when buying items on sale.

"Beware of sales," she said. "There are no savings if you buy things you would not have purchased unless on sale."

For some college students, budgeting money could be a first-time experience this year, Granovsky said.

"It may sound hard, but it's not impossible," she said. "(Budgeting money) means knowing what you can spend and knowing when you've spent too much."

She suggests keeping records of what you have spent and keeping your checkbook balanced, which will help students from going overboard.

"Avoid racking-up extra costs needlessly," Granovsky said. "And always set a little money aside for emergencies."

For more information on budgeting, economizing and managing credit, Granovsky suggests contacting the Financial Aid office at 845-3236 or checking out its Web site at http://financialaid.tamu.edu/.

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