Grease: Merely an enjoyable movie

By Gordon Haff

I went into Grease with a certain amount of prejudice, or to be more precise, an extreme dislike of anything that had ever been connected with Saturday Night Fever. I had some slight hope that 50's music and Olivia Newton-John would make up for John Travolta.

As it turned out the movie was a pleasant surprise. Indeed the worst parts of the movie had nothing to do with John Travolta (who was excellent in his role as Danny) but rather with some quite unnecessary carryovers from the Broadway version of Grease. While some of the original songs were quite good and did help convey a feeling of the 50's, other numbers ranged from stupid to outright nauseating. The worst example of a song in the latter category was "Beauty School Dropout," a surrealistic sequence seemingly stuck in solely to bring Frankie Avalon into the film. The film could have done without.

These few songs, however, while detracting from the movie certainly don't ruin it. The choreography and sets of "Greased Lightning" make up for any nausea worked up while watching the patter songs. As might be expected with John Travolta, the main dance sequence in the gym is well done. The dancing does begin to look a little like disco at times but I suppose in a musical a little suspension of disbelief is always a useful companion. It certainly has its funny scenes and the hokey parts can be pretty much laughed off. The film never asks to be taken seriously.

Don't go in expecting a great movie, rather sit back and enjoy the 50's.

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