

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

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The Behrend Beacon

'Abandon' this movie

by Daniel J. Stasewski
staff writer

★★ out of ★★★★★

There's an overwhelming sense of irony in the title of "Abandon." This Hollywood thriller employed an unusual marketing campaign (i.e. the trailer didn't give away the ending) and had a unique premise that promised intense characters and genuine excitement. Plus, it was written and directed by Stephen Gaghan, the screenwriter of "Traffic."

With all this potential, "Abandon" should have been a hit. Unfortunately, every possible opportunity to take this film another level is deserted for a routine narrative, manufactured characters, and the standard predictably unpredictable ending.

After personal problems force him off the job, Detective Wade Handler (Benjamin Bratt) returns from his short hiatus to a two-year old missing person case. The subject is Embry, a young woman who disappeared from the University of Connecticut. Handler's investigation quickly leads to Embry's girlfriend at the time of his disappearance, Katie Burke (Katie Holmes). Katie is already under a ton of pressure with her thesis deadline arriving rapidly and exhaustive job interviews taking up every other moment. She barely even has time to enjoy her high-spirited friends. When Handler starts digging into Katie's past, Katie divulges much personal information, including her paternal abandonment issues. The two even start to form a relationship based on mutual disclosure. That is until Katie begins to see Embry everywhere. Now, Handler must try to uncover the truth behind Embry's seeming reappearance before it pushes Katie completely over the edge.

"Abandon" doesn't start off as a routine film. In fact, the previously mentioned potential is evident in the initial plot

development. The characters start off with solid foundations, enough to keep you interested in them. Katie Burke's mental instability is established early with a fellow student smugly informing Katie of her completed thesis while Katie sits disillusioned at her lap top trying to drum out another sentence. Detective Handler's unidentified problem is also intriguing. However, the moment Handler's past indiscretions are exposed the film's potential begins its rapid evaporation.

Handler is an alcoholic, which I've come to brand as the all-purpose character builder. It's just enough of a dilemma to make a character seem less than one-dimensional, but so done to death it's almost as expected as the gay best friend in a romantic comedy. Once in a while an actor can break the mold and make this hollow character work, but Benjamin Bratt can't do it. Not that I would expect a TV cop turned movie cop to have the range to improve upon an essentially defective character, but Bratt doesn't even let the charisma that makes him a star shine through.

Because Bratt's character fails to be anything more than an alcoholic, it's not necessary to connect with him. Unfortunately, Katie Holmes is also being dragged down by the same plot to make her character seem almost worthless.

Eerie relationship flashbacks, combined with brutal encounters with Embry post-reappearance, are emotionally exhausting for both Holmes and the audience. Even as the rest of the film falls apart around her, Holmes is still able to draw a reaction. But even Holmes can't stand up to the rape of her character by an unjustifiable twist ending. Her performance is wasted along with any remaining potential.

"Abandon" isn't plagued by plot holes or bad dialogue. This film just never becomes what it could have been. Each passing moment squanders a chance to redeem the film until finally the end credits roll and the only thing left is another mediocre thriller that should have given away its ending in the trailer. At least then I would have been able to detach Holmes' character, knowing full well she would be cheated in the end.

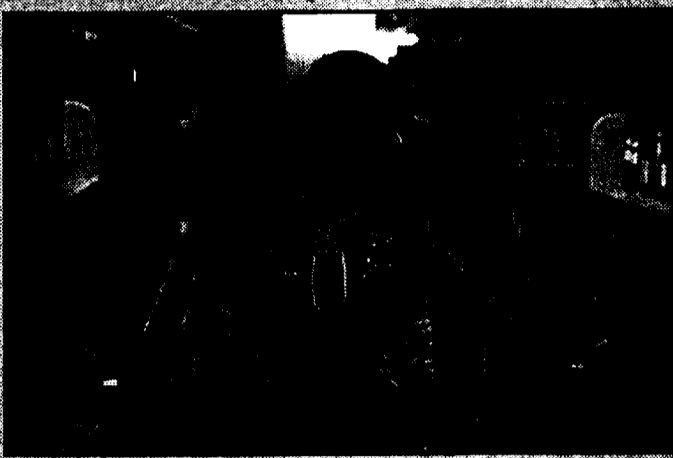


PHOTO FROM COMINGSOON.COM
Katie Holmes searches the Lilly Library for a better script.

The Shindig jams with Behrend on Wednesday

by Kevin Fallon
interim editor-in-chief

The Shindig can't get enough of itself. The band has played more than 60 shows since forming in 2001. At one point it was the most played live band in Erie, taking to the stage up to 12 times a month. Its goal is to play 100 shows by 2003. This Wednesday at 8 p.m. the Shindig

to say if you turned on (the radio) you can hear what we play."

The band promises a high energy performance, due mostly to the stage presence of its two female singers, Heidi Engel and Laurie Roberts.

The singers really take over the stage. They have a great stage presence, they're always moving," said Sadlier.



PHOTO FROM ROCKERIE.COM

The Shindig: "We're a fun-time band."

will come one step closer to reaching its goal when it plays Bruno's at Behrend. Though the schedule may be grueling at times, the band members said it wouldn't trade in their rock star lifestyle.

"It is fun. It's the easiest job I'll ever have," said bassist Rick Sadlier. "We've really gotten to know each other. It's like a family. Those are some of my best friends."

The Shindig plays a mix of blues, classic rock, and modern country. The band attributes its sound to its diverse influences, which include Noel Reading of the Jimmy Hendrix Experience, Stevie Ray Vaughan, and Phish.

"We all really enjoy older music... We all brought different flavors to the album," said Sadlier. "The majority of our songs are danceable, party rock and roll. We like

"They're following in a great tradition of female singers. Guys usually stand up there and scream but these girls actually have real voices."

The Shindig newest self-titled CD captures the rock and country vibe. The album produced by Trevor Huster, who is known for his work with Pat Monahan of Train.

"He was really professional," said Sadlier.

"We put our trust in him and he came out with a great product."

Basically, the Shindig just wants to have fun and rock out.

"We're a fun-time band," said Sadlier. "If you like oldies but also want a little more modern, we provide that. We're a band for all occasions."

Good Charlotte may be 'Young and Hopeless,' but its music isn't half bad

by Josh Wilczynski
contributing writer

Although twin brothers Benji and Joel Madden of Good Charlotte look identical, the band's two CDs couldn't be more different.

Good Charlotte's latest release, "The Young and the Hopeless," is 46 minutes of pure fast-paced pop punk at its finest. The musical and lyrical aspects of the CD show just how much this Maryland foursome has improved in the two short years since its self titled first release. The sounds are more energetic, a little softer, and a lot catchier. The only thing that has not changed is the honesty and emotion that are found in all of Good Charlotte's songs.



For Good Charlotte, it's good to be bad...or something like that.

"The Story of My Old Man" is the best track on the CD. It focuses on the twins' alcoholic father and how he abandoned them when they were only fifteen. "My Bloody Valentine" is a morbid song, based on Edgar Allan Poe's "The Telltale Heart," demonstrates just how far people will go in the name of love. "The Anthem" is a song of teenage angst and rebellion that one has when trying not to be a puppet of society.

The Madden twins formed the band and the name Good Charlotte was taken from one of their children's books. With little money and even fewer resources, this band slowly and patiently clawed its way into the main-

stream.

The band released its first self-titled album in January 2000. Several of the songs, such as "Little Things," "East Coast Anthem," and "Motivation Proclamation" achieved success through MTV popularity. With this CD, Good Charlotte put itself on the road to stardom. It also yielded two years of playing in the Vans Warped Tour.

"The Young and the Hopeless," on Epic Records, is an enhanced CD that

contains 14 audio tracks, the music video for "Lifestyles of the Rich and Famous," and behind the scenes footage of the band.

Good Charlotte is currently touring the United States, and Benji and Joel can be found hosting their own TV show, "All Things Rock," on MTV. The band was also recently featured on the cover of Alternative Press, and their new song "The Anthem" can be found in the EA Sports Madden NFL 2003 video game.

"The Young and the Hopeless" is a must-have for all pop-punk fans.

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