

STUDENT LIFE

Life is 'Viewtiful'

By Nick Hammond
staff writer

Early screen shots of "Viewtiful Joe" revealed little about the enigmatic superhero except his fondness for skin tight clothes and a curiously flamboyant demeanor. However, it was enough to pique the curiosity of all who saw them.

As soon as "Viewtiful Joe" made its debut, however, curiosity vanished. In its place was utter bewilderment and joy, as the game blasted us with a game experience second to none, and it did it with style.

As Viewtiful Joe, we tore through seven stages filled with more action than a stack of Stallone flicks. Apart from an overwhelming sense of style, it had a combination of satisfying gameplay and maddening difficulty that distinguished Viewtiful Joe" from most games today. And as you might guess, "Viewtiful Joe 2" keeps up with the tradition.

Like its predecessor, "Viewtiful Joe 2" slaps conformity in the face and unleashes a storm of unremitting action drenched in the same brand of funky chic. It's fun, it's fast and it's hard. "Viewtiful Joe" plays much like the classic fight of old in that you run around from left to right smashing everything in sight. What made Viewtiful Joe so remarkable was the execution and combination of classic elements with daring art style. The game looked funky and controlled like a dream, letting players execute artful combo attacks with ease. And it's the same in "Viewtiful Joe 2."

Using the same roster of VFX powers as in the first game, namely Slow, Mach Speed and Zoom, you'll devastate swarms of enemies once you're exterminated in the ways of the game. You become a whirlwind of pain, delivering hyper-stylized attacks with gusto. With over 40 different enemies, you'll need to find ways of tackling each wave after wave of hostiles effectively and consistently. Fortunately, beating the living snot out of everything in sight is just as viscerally fantastic as it ever



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Viewtiful Joe returns with fast, fun action and receives help from the first game, Sylvia.

was.

This time, Joe's got a little game. His girlfriend from the first game, Sylvia, returns in force here. Hiding beneath her skin tight suit and flashy sense of vicious femininity lay a flurry of devastating punches and kicks. Not to mention laser pistols, which fire jumbo shots of blue energy.

Once Sylvia picks up another gun and starts dual wielding, she dishes out an immense amount of damage. She also has exclusive ownership of VFX Replay, which lets her record her actions and play them back to deliver three times normal damage. This ability may sound cool, but it delivers little damage when you think about how much VFX juice it takes to power the move. Replay is visually impressive, but apart from being required to solve a few puzzles, it lacks the indispensability of both Mach Speed and VFX Slow.

Making its debut along with the Replay ability is the all-new "V-Touch," which lets you swap characters at the touch of a button. You choose a character before heading into a level, but you can switch charac-

ters mid-level using "V-Touch." Doing so triggers a cooling animation showing Sylvia or Joe's juggling in from the sides of the screen and throwing the other into the foreground.

Like the rest of the game, timing here is critical. Trading characters at the wrong time leaves you at the receiving end of pain and suffering. For example, since Joe is the only one who can use Mach Speed, he's the only character who can extinguish himself when on fire.

All sequels should be this fun. "Viewtiful Joe 2" conjures the same level of extreme entertainment as the first, while expanding the formula by introducing new moves, enemies and vehicles. If you hated the first, then don't bother with this one. But if you're a normal, healthy human being, then you loved the first one. If that's the case, then it looks like it's time to bust out those red tights and blue mini skirt, because "Viewtiful Joe 2" delivers exactly what you want: a super stylish, extremely challenging and riveting time in Movie Land. Henshin-A-Go-Go Baby!

Organizations participate in community service

By Maggie Causgrove
staff writer

Community service is beginning to really branch out over the Behrend campus this year. Many organizations and groups here on campus are actively becoming involved and participating in acts of service to benefit the greater Erie community. These organizations are numerous.

Some of the participating groups include Greek life as well as residence halls here on campus and the residence advisor class offered during the semester. This is a wonderful way to become involved both with the student body as well as help to make a difference on the university grounds.

According to Kelly ShROUT, Coordinator of Community Service and the Smith Chapel, "every organization in one form or another is involved in community service projects."

The Center for Service is an association on campus where students who are interested in becoming more involved in the greater community can go and find service projects of interest to them. The center provides an online catalog and file cabinets filled with different nonprofit organizations in Erie County that students can get active with.

ShROUT stated, "The center also has two memberships to greater organizations. The first is called Breakaway which provides an alternative to breaks and the second is called C.O.O.L (Campus Outreach Appreciation League) which deals with civic engagement and active

community relationships."

This past year Penn Behrend placed first in the Second Harvest Food Bank drive for the most active participation in the college category and technical institutions, beating out the other area universities and opportunity schools.

"Organizations on campus such as THON and those involved with the Second Harvest Food Bank raised \$18,000 and served around five thousand hours of service time this past year," said ShROUT.

ShROUT also stated, "I absolutely hope more Behrend students will become involved in community service projects. I don't think it's too much to ask if each student gave twenty hours of service a semester. We have something for everybody here on campus."

It is important to note that any student on campus can become involved with community service projects, even those not involved in a specific organization or group here on campus. The Center for Service will try to funnel those students who want to participate into an organization of interest to them so that they can become part of group community service projects.

Organizations for example include: Reality Check, Labor of Love, the service fraternity, Alpha Phi Omega or even after school tutoring positions are of availability to interested students. Anyone interested should contact either Kelly ShROUT in the Smith Chapel, by email, kaw148@psu.edu, or their Residence Advisor Coordinator here at Behrend.

Why pleas from entertainers fall on deaf ears

By Chris Jones
Chicago Tribune
(KRT)

Bruce Springsteen was forced to surrender. Sharon Stone's instincts moved few beyond the Democratic base. And while a victory for John Kerry in the presidential election of 2004 was declared of titanic importance by Leonardo DiCaprio, no less, the 29-year-old's partisan powers of persuasion proved as unable to move the Republican iceberg as the rapping of Eminem or the jottings of Tony Kushner.

As America's arts professionals, a group of overwhelmingly if not exclusively Democratic persuasion blinked miserably out through their constricted tears on Nov. 3, they were confronted with what looked like their colossal and confounding failure to influence and persuade their fellow Americans of the value of the artistic world view.

"I think everybody's just reeling from the defeat," said Sherry Lansing, the chairman of the Paramount Motion Picture Group and an active Kerry backer from Hollywood. "Now we just have to reassess what good we did and what effect we had."

Maybe the answer is no good at all and no effect whatsoever.

But the significance of the election of 2004 goes far beyond the oft-cited generality that people are sick of being told to do by Hollywood celebrities with big mouths.

There's evidence that the issues go deeper than that.

Plenty of high-art types stuck their hands into the political dirt during this presidential campaign without achieving the desired result. In Chicago, a slew of anti-George Bush plays showed up in recent weeks, from "The Bushie Plays" in Evanston to "W!" at the Bailwick Arts Center. There were no anti-Kerry plays on the radar.

Rick Cleveland, a writer and producer of HBO's "Six Feet Under," decamped for Ohio, where a vote that did not go his way. On Broadway, as always, Bush got ridiculed eight times a week from the stages of "Avenue Q" and "Hairspray."

Bush still won the majority of the popular vote, suggesting there's nothing more politically useful for a Republican candidate than Broadway opprobrium.

Behold a strange paradox.

The 2004 election turned mainly on cultural issues, as distinct from matters of economics or public policy. Yet the vast majority of those who think of themselves as cultural profession-

als, Mel Gibson and some like-minded others notwithstanding, found themselves firmly on the losing side.

In an election that many arts people saw as being of cataclysmic importance, that clear disconnect spawned a lot of soul-searching in studios, offices, screening-rooms and theaters over the latter half of the week.

Many reported they were severely depressed. Many said they just couldn't understand what looked like a majority refutation of their core values. Many admitted they didn't know many Republicans.

In the election, both sides featured endorsements from arts figures, Ron Silver, Toby Keith and Arnold Schwarzenegger all campaigned for George W. Bush. But Kerry had far more vocal figures from the arts on his side than did his Republican opponent. And even though one cannot discern the precise level of artistic influence (or lack thereof) in this campaign, Kerry's defeat adds juice to the argument that arts figures now are more of a liability than a strength for a politician.

Especially a Democratic politician.

The salient question now is why. And the truth might be tough for artists to swallow.

"Nobody votes because a cultural figure tells them to vote," says Curtis Gans, the director of the Committee for the Study of the American Electorate in Washington, D.C. "They just don't persuade anyone."

"People are now sick of celebrities taking political positions," says Darrell West, director of the Taubman Center for Public Policy at Brown University and the author of a recent book called "Celebrity Politics." "People tend to want them to stick to music and culture."

In other words, West argues, non-Democrats are perfectly willing to tolerate Springsteen singing about the angst of a working-class guy as a part of his everyday art, even to learn from him, but are determined to tune out the moment he makes an explicit endorsement of Kerry. Ergo, that endorsement is a mistake.

"There's a difference between debating ideas and music in art and the endorsement of a particular politician," West says. "Endorsements always are interpreted in more partisan terms. Celebrities should just write a check and shut up."

In West's view, one lesson from this week's election is that artists have more influence when they stick to their art and avoid partisan politics.

Yet that also doesn't make much sense.

If one buys the irrefutable argument that Schwarzenegger, the neophyte politician, only was electable as a consequence of the fame of



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Bruce Springsteen sang at Former President Clinton's library opening yesterday.

Schwarzenegger, the macho actor, it should follow, not losing, clout.

But that was California, not the South. And while it's possible Kerry benefited from Springsteen's Ohio appearances, Gans argues that it's one thing for arts figures to run for office themselves, but entirely another for them to use their fame to promote someone else.

"Celebrities can run for political office very effectively," Gans said. "But there's a resentment when they try to persuade people how to vote."

"We are now reaping, in election results, the consequences of the colossal reductions in arts in education," Woods said. Then again, the ongoing definition of the arts—especially opera, theater and classical music, as appealing only to people with higher levels of education creates its own set of problems. Maybe the arts need to see themselves as something other than a liberal interest group and develop a broader appreciation for conservative thinkers in their midst.

Consider the matter of religion. In Tuesday's

election, people of an evangelical persuasion tended to be on the other side of the political aisle from people of the artistic establishment.

That's also creating a pause for thought in artistic circles. Finally, arts advocates are beginning to figure out that they need to get churches to see themselves as a part of the arts community.

Over at the Chicago Humanities Festival, executive director Eileen Mackevich has decided the time is ripe to offer more programs such as science fiction without obvious ideological controversies.

"After all this," she said, "I think people are ready for an escape."

That may well be the case. But it still doesn't do much to assuage the feelings of people such as Judith Mayne, who teaches film theory and women's studies at Ohio State.

Mayne sees plenty of access for the political extremes, Michael Moore's "Fahrenheit 9/11" showed up in plenty of mainstream theaters in Ohio, and conservative commentators also got wide exposure in local theaters and lecture halls, but little evaluation thereof.