

TOM'S TOMFOOLERY OF CINEMA

By Thomas LeClair
Film Critic
tjl191@psu.edu

RAY *****

Universal Pictures presents a film directed by Taylor Hackford. Written by Taylor Hackford and James L. White. Running time 152 minutes. Rated PG-13 for depiction of drug addiction, sexuality and some thematic elements.

Stop the race for the Oscar; the contest is over! Jamie Foxx WILL be the winner for Best Actor because his portrayal of Ray Charles Robinson is absolutely amazing. The mannerisms, the voice, the actual presence of Charles are apparent in Foxx's portrayal. It is as if Foxx became Charles. The film shows Charles starting a musical career in Seattle and his meteoric rise to stardom in the 1960s. He mar-

ries, fathers a child, and succumbs to and breaks free of promiscuous sexual activity and drugs. Throughout the film are flashbacks of his childhood, in which he deals with his brother's tragic death and goes blind at the age of seven.

Sharon Warren plays Aretha, Charles' mother, and she gave a heart breaking performance. There were times when the feeling of just wanting to reach through the screen and helping Charles was overwhelming, but Aretha was always right. "I will help you do it once, twice if you need it, but there will be no third time. It's a cruel world and nobody will reach out and help you." Her acting should also be recognized with a nomination.

While playing in nightclubs, Charles tries and becomes addicted to heroin. Charles promised his wife, Della Bea (Kerry Washington) that what he

does on the road will never come into his house again. Unfortunately, situations happened, and the addiction got worse, but Charles pulled it all together to save his wife and family.

The film, helmed by veteran director Taylor Hackford (An Officer and a Gentleman), is a masterpiece. Instead of going through the hassle of trying to recreate cities in America in the 60s, Hackford used stock footage, which gave a more classic feel. The montages of neon signs cross-fading over the film as Charles progressively gets more and more famous also gave the film the look and feel of films in the 1960s. The acting is remarkable, especially Foxx and Washington. Foxx will win the Academy Award, but Washington would make an excellent choice for Best Supporting Actress. The moment of truth and recognition

that Charles acknowledges is one that will never be forgotten by the audience.

Everything in this film just felt right. The acting, editing, directing, it was a marvelous experience. This is also the Hackford's best film, normally a director of stories with harsh characters and situations. He has been in the business for over a quarter century and finally broke his mold with this film. Ray Charles lived a tough life, but his vitality and musical proficiency gave people entertainment and joy. This will be a highly decorated film come February when the award ceremonies conclude. Hackford turned a stunning biography into a captivating film. Despite the brief sexuality and the moments of drug usage, this is a spiritually and emotionally fulfilling experience; EVERYONE needs to see this film.



Photo courtesy of Yahoo Images

Jamie Foxx stars as Ray Charles in the Universal Pictures movie *Ray*. The movie portrays Charles' life and music career.

Hershey features wide selection of holiday activities

By Alyson Davis
Staff Reporter
amd367@psu.edu

It is just about that time of year again. The thoughts of snow, decorating Christmas trees, singing carols, and Santa Claus fill the air. This is the time that young and old get together and celebrate the holidays. Whether they get together at home or on vacation, everyone enjoys each other's company.

Of all the places families travel on vacation, guess where they travel to the most. The right answer would be to get out of this cold weather and travel somewhere tropical. However,

believe it or not, a majority of families travel right here to Hershey. Stunned was my only reaction. I could not believe how many people come here when it wasn't even the summer. I work for the Hershey Entertainment and Resorts Company and I make reservations for people who come in to Hershey and take part in all the activities we have offered. There are holiday activities that I learned of that I didn't even know existed and were offered to those out-of-towners. I'm here to enlighten you and maybe even give you ideas for your friends and family.

To begin my holiday tour of Hershey, let us focus on the main attraction people come to

Hershey in the first place for, Hershey Park of course. Starting the weekend of November 19th is Hershey Park's Christmas Candyland. Hershey Park is decorated in over one million Christmas lights. Candyland also features the 50-foot tall Kissmas tree that is decorated with Hershey Kiss shaped ornaments, and dancing Christmas lights that dance to different holiday tunes. There are rides open at this time; however, there are only select rides open, mostly geared toward the younger children. At Hershey Park you can also visit with Santa and his nine live reindeer, take in the Christmas show at the Music Box Theatre, and shop at the different holiday stores throughout the park. Admission to the park is free of charge and they run everything on a pay as you go policy. Each ride is worth a certain amount of tickets. Tickets can be purchased for \$0.75 for an individual one, \$12 for a booklet of 20 tickets, or \$14 for a wristband that can be used to ride the rides unlimited times.

Hershey's Sweetlights is another big Christmas attraction. Sweetlights premieres on November 15th and runs all the way to New Year's Day. Drivers wind through two miles of wooded trails where there are over one million lights on 600 different animated displays. Rates for Sweetlights are \$15 per car and the location is off of Route 39



Photos courtesy of www.hersheypa.com

Christmas Candyland is one of the many attractions Hershey has to offer during the holiday season.

and Boathouse Road, directly behind the Hotel Hershey.

ZooAmerica is open daily. There are over 200 animals that represent the five different regions of North America. Despite what many people may believe, the animals are out and visible. Admission is a ticket fee if the person accesses the zoo from inside Hershey Park, or a person can go to the zoo entrance and pay a different fee if Hershey Park is closed at the time of their visit.

The Hershey Museum is also open daily and year round. At the Museum a person can learn the history of the town, learn about the Native Americans that inhabited Pennsylvania, and learn about the Pennsylvania Dutch. Admission is \$3 for children 3-15 years old and \$6 for adults 16 years and older.

Hershey's Chocolate World is also open on a daily basis. A person can enjoy the tour ride, Factory Works, Hershey's Trolleyworks, and the Really Big

3-D Show. Admission is free of charge into Chocolate World, but a separate fee is required for the 3-D Show and Trolleyworks.

As you can see, Hershey has a lot to offer for the holidays. They all begin within the next few weeks and run until New Year's Day. So if you have family coming in from out of town and need something to do while they are visiting, there is always plenty to do right here in your very own hometown.



Hershey's Sweetlights is a new attraction that was added last year. It features two miles of trails with animated displays.

Bob Dylan plays to multi-generation crowd at Messiah College

By Nat Melnicove
Staff Reporter
ncm128@psu.edu

Imagine a line snaking along the sidewalk from Olmsted to the CUB. That is what greeted Bob Dylan fans at Messiah College. Known to be a very punctual band (the start time was 8 p.m.

sharp), they started playing twenty minutes late, and there was still a line of mellow, happy souls waiting to get in.

Bob Dylan and His Band made an unusual stop on their current college campus tour. Between Columbus, Ohio and Pittsburgh, Dylan and his band-mates rolled into tiny Grantham, PA for a blis-

tering sold-out show at Messiah College on Saturday, November 6.

The Rock and Roll Hall-of-Famer mixed a set list of hits from the sixties and seventies, some lesser known songs from the eighties and a handful of songs from his more recent albums. With over 500 songs and 40 albums in his arsenal, there was no shortage of material. Since 1988, Dylan has played no less than 100 shows per year.

With 1600 tickets sold, the small Brubaker Auditorium, actually a gymnasium, appeared to be capable of holding another 500 people. Brubaker is the smallest venue on the current tour. Many fans were worried that the acoustics of the gym would be unfriendly to the band's sound. Greg Wicklem, a Dylan concert regular, said, "All in all it was a great show. The acoustics in the small hall were surprisingly good."

From Messiah students to baby boomers, dread-locked hippies to conservative old-timers, the crowd was a diverse sampling. Yet, for as great as Dylan and his

band sounded the crowd was not very energetic. By all accounts there was more dancing and revelry at PSH's International Dinner, held the same night.

Long-time Dylan fan Alex Leik agreed. "Too bad the Grantham crowd couldn't be more enthusiastic," Leik said. "(That is) my only complaint on an otherwise above average night."

Dylan resembled the futuristic cowboy he played in the Larry Charles movie *Masked and Anonymous*. The entire five-member band wore black and all but one wore a hat.

The set was simple, with no front-man, as Dylan allowed the skills of his band to take the spotlight. This was especially evident in the incredibly powerful electric guitar solos of Stu Kimball and Larry Campbell. Dylan often could be found on the side hammering the keys and whalin' away at the mic. He gave instruction and kudos to his band-mates through quaint head nods.

Much to the surprise of someone at their first Dylan concert, he did not pick up a guitar all

night. Nor did he lament about any politics or war. Dylan played the keyboard, which fit in perfectly with the overall sound. He grabbed the harmonica for "The Times They Are A-Changin'," "Mr. Tambourine Man," "Po' Boy" and "Tweedle Dee and Tweedle Dum."

Nine albums were represented in the sixteen-song set list. 2001's *Love and Theft* boasted four songs, including "Lonesome Road Blues" and an all-out jam version of "Summer Days." He also performed the crowd favorite "Love Sick" from his Grammy award-winning 1997 album *Time Out of Mind*.

The band played some updated versions of old hits, including the encore of "Like A Rolling Stone" and "All Along The Watchtower." "Saving Grace," from the 1980 album *Saved*, made its regular visit to the stage. Many in attendance thought this song was played because that album coincided with Dylan's rumored conversion to Christianity and the fact that Messiah is a Christian college. However, veteran Dylan

concert-goer Leik said, "This has been a regular song on the set list since Spring 2003." He jovially reminded, "Folks, Bob doesn't know where he is night after night, and probably doesn't care."

In the end the audience was impressed with the performance. Leik, who has attended 41 Dylan concerts, said, "You come to appreciate the many incarnations of 'His Band' that you have been able to see."

"His Band" definitely stole the show, though Dylan's voice has a strong range, even if it is still hard to understand. The driving beat of drummer George Recile stood out to hard-core Dylan fans. Veteran bassist Tony Garnier was his usual all-encompassing, yet non-descript self. Known to be the musical director for Dylan, Garnier prefers a subtle approach when on stage.

Despite the lackluster energy of the audience, Bob Dylan and His Band played with passion. Wicklem loved the band's energy. "I've never heard Bob and his band sound better."



Photo courtesy of www.staleywise.com

Bob Dylan, poet and musician, 1967.