

Eye on Editorials

Brittany's Seal of Approval (Formerly Disco Roar): Disney Tween Stardom

WITH BRITTANY NEIMETH *Lion's Eye Staff Writer*
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As a huge Disney fan, I will go out of my way to watch the movies they produce, such as the 2007 hit *Enchanted*. Recently, I Netflixed *Another Cinderella Story* starring Selena Gomez, star of *The Wizards of Waverly Place*—a Harry Potter-esque television show on Disney.

Don't misunderstand. I am a huge fan of organized song and dance sequences, but I couldn't help but notice that *Another Cinderella Story* was a variation of *Honey* for tweens. Both movies show the protagonists fighting to pursue dancing full time. I cannot help but wonder what Disney is doing right, though. *Honey* was terrible. One would be hard-pressed to find someone who found that movie to be a classic or even decent for that matter and yet the mini-*Honey*, which went straight to DVD, is doing pretty well.

Is it the Disney name that boosts these tween stars or is it the devoted fans of these starlets that help these films succeed? I believe that it is the later Demi Lovato, Miley Cyrus, Selena Gomez, and the Jonas Brothers that are cool and "hip" as role models for the 8-15 (and older in some instances) starlets that parents approve of. These young stars are stylish and give the tween demographic people someone to idolize and relate to at the same time. It is really no wonder that when Mary Santiago wants to be a pro-dancer Selena Gomez's fans unite but when "Honey" wants to be a pro-dancer...no one cares.

The Jonas Brothers are a better example of how the tween market is breaking boundaries. They had a cover of *Rolling Stone*, which had strange homoerotic incestuous undertones as the boys tugged at each other's shirts suggestively, but that's a new subject completely. The Jonas Brothers are just filling in the hole that 'N Sync and the Backstreet Boys left empty when boy bands went out of style. Now this pop-rock boy band, which pop rock managed to reopen that whole market. Their fan base is also a lot more varied. The concert the Jonas Brothers played at the Bryce Jordan

Center in Happy Valley was filled to max capacity. The 16,000 seats were filled and although the crowd was predominantly female the ages were quite varied. There were those as young as six with their mothers and college-aged students from 18-22 all of which were singing along.

Their popularity is incredible and does not appear to be waning any time fast, but all of these stars are starting the same way (or a similar way) to our favorite mousekeeters. Chastity promises and way too much fame seem to be the formula for disaster. Three years from now will there be a report on E! about Demi Lovato getting married in Vegas to a stranger, or has Disney lost its scandal and found legitimately wholesome starlets? Will the Jonas Brothers wait until marriage or is it just a ploy like the famous girl next door Ms. Britney Spears?

Part of my personal fascination is the waiting. When I was in the tween range, I was never a Britney Spears fan, but once she hit her crazy years and put out the brilliant *Blackout* album (featuring *Piece of Me* and *Gimme More*) I could not get enough of her. Crazy, for me, just adds to their appeal. One could say I am waiting for the moment where history repeats itself and our current Disney starlets follow in the footsteps of their predecessors—Britney, Christina, and Justin. Justin, of course, because he is one of the possible stealers of Britney's virginity and maybe one day Selena will do the same for Nick Jonas.

Things I don't approve of:

Shows claiming to be unleashed and turning out to be quite tame. When the disclosure for a show begins with "No questions were off limits" I expected to find out in-depth why Britney shaved her head. I did not expect to watch her do a five-minute impersonation of her father on the telephone or find out that Southern girls eat cheese grits "the Wheaties of the South" according to Papa Spears, for breakfast. Truly disappointing.

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dorktower

THE END IS HERE

PROLOGUE: So here we are. The end of the semester, as long as I pass my chemistry class my last semester of college. It seems like the end of an era, after a long five years of college, I'm finally going to be forced to grow up. Sadly, at this time when I should be worrying about getting a real job, taking finals, doing term papers, I'm more worried about writing the perfect dorktower to round up the semester. At first I was going to write about my college experiences and list some graduation songs. Then I was thinking about writing about how hard it is to be a white kid in the suburbs. I even considered writing about how no matter how depressed I get in my life for some reason the Muppets can always cheer me up. I still haven't really decided how to finish this column, I decided to end this with some thoughts and I hope these words find you well.

ONCE UPON A TIME IN A GALAXY FAR, FAR AWAY: For as long as I can remember I've always loved to write. A lot of people don't believe me when I say this, but I've been wanting to be a screenplay writer ever since I was five years old. It was when I came to college that I first started working my craft and signed up for the newspaper. In my freshman year, I really wanted to be an editorial columnist... but not about political issues or even anything serious, I instead wanted to lighten up the mood. Sadly it took until this year to finally see this goal begin with dorktower. And now, it might be over. Hopefully I will be able to find time to continue writing these post-graduation, but if I don't, please know that it's been fun and I appreciate every reader I have.

MAKE 'EM LAUGH: As a child I never had many friends. My best friend was my grandfather. When he was taken away from me after a long battle with cancer, I was absolutely devastated and spent months crying myself to sleep. It was in retrospective that I started to think about all the messages he had given me. The most important message being that no matter what is going on in the world, no matter how depressed or stressed out you might be, we (as in the collective we) need to be able to laugh. If I could leave this campus and give anyone a message, it is this. While studying for finals week or completing projects and term papers... don't forget to give yourself some time to laugh. In these days of *Old School*, *Zack and Miri Make a Porno*, and *American Pie*, it's easy to forget how perfectly touching the classics are.

SOME DAY WE'LL FIND IT THE RAINBOW CONNECTION: One of the best examples of classic comedy that can always cheer me up is watching reruns of the *Muppet Show*. Perhaps it's because when I was grow-

ing up my grandfather would sing me "Rainbow Connection" by Kermit the Frog, but I've always and will continue to have a soft spot in my heart for the Muppets and everything Jim Henson. Another thing I've picked up from my grandfather is my taste in music, while I love to listen to lots of new music (I just picked up the new *Streets* album as well as the new *Punchline* album both of which I highly recommend). I always tried to take time to listen to Louie Armstrong and Johnny Cash.

A DREAM IS A WISH YOUR HEART MAKES: A question I've often been asked by fellow students, friends, family members and random strangers is "what do you plan to do after college?" Before, I used to jokingly answer "well I'm studying liberal arts so I guess work at Burger King", or be slightly honest and say "I have no clue but I want to make movies". Over the last few months I've really started to simply say "I want to follow my dream." I think it's important for every person who reads this to understand something. No matter what happens in your life, never let go of your dream, follow it with all your heart. Even if you want to be a rock star and instead spend your life working a nine to five, don't ever forget what you desperately dreamed of growing up to be. Nothing is more attractive than someone who doesn't let go of their childhood dreams and goals. I still watch old cartoons and home movies dating back to 1990 because I don't ever want to forget those fantastic memories.

REMEMBER, GEORGE—NO MAN IS A FAILURE WHO HAS FRIENDS: Recently my girlfriend broke up with me. Just one day after our break up, she had a new boyfriend. I learned a giant lesson from that which is this: Relationships come and go... but your friends will be there forever. Don't ever forget that friends are more important than anything else (I even include family, work and money in this). Never allow work to take away your time from your friends and furthermore never let drama destroy a friendship, but also be careful to not allow people who claim to be your friends take advantage of you.

EPILOGUE: So this might be my parting words or maybe I'll be writing this column next semester (hopefully as alumnus and not a chemistry failure). I want to leave you with this final quote from the Jimmy Stewart film *Harvey* (released in 1950): "Years ago my mother used to say to me, she'd say, 'In this world, Elwood, you must be' - she always called me Elwood - 'In this world, Elwood, you must be oh so smart or oh so pleasant.' Well, for years I was smart. I recommend pleasant. You may quote me."

The Lion's Eye



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