

## Talented Mason Dancers Take the Stage

*Dance Department's Gala Showcases Both Music and Dance*

By **AMANDA LOERCH**  
Staff Writer

Last Friday, George Mason University's Dance Department held an impressive dance gala at 8 p.m. in Mason's Concert Hall. Proud faculty, family and alumni gathered to showcase the best of the best.

The program began with "Reach," composed by Patrick Corbin, former dancer of a D.C. Metro favorite, the Paul Taylor Dance Company. Marjorie Summerall, program coordinator of the dance department, said Mason's Concert Hall is the largest venue so far to host Corbin's piece.

Patrons were delighted with a colorful array of dancers in shirts and Bermuda shorts, delicately evolving stage lights and the bright strings of Philip Glass's "String Quartet No. 5."

Any patron taking the elevator or using the restroom might have noticed an autographed poster for when Glass brought his ensemble and singers to the Concert Hall to perform his interpretation of "Beauty and the Beast" in 1995.

When "Eight Jelly Rolls" began, many people wondered how such a name could match such a piece. The choreographer, Twyla Tharp, who has composed more than 150 dances, arranged the dancers to swing and scat to eight licks, the sounds of composer Jelly Roll Morton, known to be the originator of jazz starting in the 1920s.

In their one-piece tuxedo combos, seven dancers looked as though they were improvising with limbs loose enough to make any patron wonder how it was pulled off with such precision.

After a brief intermission, the dancers concluded the evening with "Gloria," choreographed by dance legend Mark Morris.

Morris' interpretation of one of Antonio Vivaldi's sacred work begins with blackness onstage and only music for the first movement. For 30 minutes, the dancers, in their simple attire, beautifully painted each call and response just as how Vivaldi



GMU Dance Company performed *Gloria*, by Mark Morris, at their dance gala.

composed the instrumentalists to do.

The only step the dance department could have taken to liven up the performance would have been to have live musicians singing Vivaldi's glorious work.

Interestingly enough, the University Singers, who had recently sung under Morris in "Dido and Aeneas," had sung "Gloria" less than five years ago for Morris as well.

Morris worked closely with the dancers on "Gloria" last month while he and his company were at Mason themselves performing his "Dido and Aeneas." To have such a famous figure in the world of dance such an active supporter of Mason dancers, Summerall, also the gala's managing director, said "We're really honored."

Indeed, the entire gala was an honor for faculty, students and patrons alike. As the Friends of Dance described the performance, it was "a repertory company of talented dancers at the start of their profession careers" along with some of the best directors and choreographers in the business.

## Oh My God . . . Kelly!

*Broadside Interviews Liam Sullivan of "Shoes" Fame*

By **KYLE RIDLEY**  
Staff Writer

Becoming an Internet sensation and performing across the country dressed in drag was never the plan for actor-turned-comedian Liam Sullivan. Currently the opening act on Margaret Cho's "Beautiful" tour, Sullivan will play three shows at the Warner Theatre in D.C. on April 10 and 11.

"I just wanted to work as an actor," Sullivan said, more widely known as Kelly, the foul-mouthed, fashion-obsessed character in his "Shoes" video. "I only fell into comedy because I had an ability to play different characters that are kind of on the fringe, that are wacky and strange."

In the year since his famous "Shoes" video, scoring over 14 million views since its debut on YouTube, Sullivan, 34, has won a People's Choice Award, built an internet video empire and gained a cult-like following with his Web site.

"Whirlwind" is a good word for it. I didn't expect anything," Sullivan said of his rapid rise in popularity. "I'm just kind of flabbergasted by it. Not the fame part but just that so many people have responded has been a real high."

A simple walk down the streets of Los Angeles was the spark that ignited the Sullivan "Shoes" sensation. While staring at the ground and watching his feet stamp in his field of vision, Sullivan began repeating the word "shoes" to the beat of his steps.

Sullivan already had the idea for his Kelly character developed and used "Shoes" to jumpstart her career as a recording artist. Using Garage Band software and basic video equipment, he recorded the song and made a video that he planned to show at live performances and submit to film festivals.

"YouTube was an afterthought," said the Norfolk, Mass. native, who attributes Internet sites such as YouTube, MySpace and Facebook for his widespread success.

"It's amazing and it really can launch you. It jumpstarted my whole career," he said. "There's no real gatekeepers anymore. If you want to put yourself out there, it's really easy to do now and you can do it without approval."

Sullivan writes, produces, directs, edits and stars in all of his videos, three of which are on YouTube's top 20 favorite comedy videos of all time. He has sold more than 250,000 singles from his "Shoes" comedy album on iTunes and has had more than 60 million hits on his Web site.

Although Sullivan's stardom may seem like an overnight rise to the top, he has been working in the entertainment industry for more than a decade and recalled playing "Shakespeare in the Park" in Boston when he was 21.

"From that to here is a big jump, but it took a while," he said.

This is Sullivan's second tour with Cho. Last year, he performed in her off-Broadway "Sensuous Woman" variety show.

Cho, whose husband was a costume designer on the "Shoes" video, was one of the first to blog about the video and Sullivan considers her comments to have kicked off the clip's popularity.

"I just fell in love with that video and that character," Cho said. "I really admire him and love his filmmaking. He's just amazing."

Sullivan, a self-proclaimed homebody, is still adjusting to the city-to-city treks of life on the road.

"I have to get used to it," Sullivan said. "It's tough to be in hotels and living out of suitcases, but the show is the payoff."

Sullivan has guest starred on television series such as *Alias*, *Gilmore Girls* and *8 Simple Rules*, but has found performing his own material to be the most rewarding.

He has two notebooks full of video ideas and tries to write every day in order to further develop characters, including those who appear in his current live show.

Despite the steady flow of creativity, Sullivan admits he has felt pressure to deliver on a grander scale and top previous efforts, but is now taking a lighter approach with new projects.



PHOTO BY AMY V. COOPER

## Greeks Hold NPHC Step Show

*The Divine Nine Take Over Harris Theatre for Annual Performance*

By **SHERELL WILLIAMS**  
Style Editor

Last Saturday, The Divine Nine fraternities and sororities of the George Mason University National Pan-Hellenic Council, Inc. held their 2008 Step Show Competition in Harris Theatre. The sold-out show, hosted by Larry Smith of Kappa Alpha Psi, Inc. hosted the show for the second year in a row, featured presentations by Omega Psi Phi, Inc., Kappa Alpha Psi, Inc., Zeta Phi Beta, Inc., Iota Phi Theta, Inc., Sigma Gamma Rho, Inc., Delta Sigma Theta, Inc., and Phi Beta Sigma, Inc.

The ladies Zeta Omicron chapter of Zeta Phi Beta, Inc. and the men of Rho Tau Chapter of Phi Beta Sigma, Inc. won first place. Sigma Gamma Rho, Inc. took second place for the sororities while the Eta Delta Delta chapter of Omega Psi Phi, Inc.

Zeta Phi Beta, Inc.'s JetBlue-themed performance featured bright blue glowsticks and strobe lights as they used a rhythmic array of step formations to win the audience's favor. At one point during the performance, two members successfully traded places on stage while blindfolded. Phi Beta Sigma, Inc. was the final fraternity to perform, but their reenactment of Michael Jackson's classic "Thriller" song and video while dressed as zombies with their chapter colors was well-executed and appreciated by the audience.

Before the competition began, Student Body Vice President Ijeoma Nwatu and Student Senator Nicole Kukuruda presented "Resolution 18," which recognizes 2007-2008 as the first school year in which all nine of the fraternities and sororities of the NPHC are represented on the Mason campus. Mason is one of 62 universities and colleges with all of The Divine Nine and one of few non-historically black colleges and universities. Nwatu and Kukuruda presented Tarek Hbeichi, the president of the NPHC with a plaque that was also given to each chapter along with a copy of the

resolution.

Shortly after, Blair Rhodes of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. on behalf of all Greek Life, recognized Michelle Guobadia, the outgoing Assistant Director for Student Activities Fraternity and Sorority Life for all that she accomplished in her three years at Mason. A tearful Guobadia graciously accepted her gift and the audience's applause before retreating backstage.

Omega Psi Phi, Inc. kicked off the show. Amidst a flurry of kicks and jumps, the fraternity's impressive slow motion routine both impressed and amused the crowd the most during their performance. After a member intentionally fell down, the audience was encouraged to shout "rewind" and watch as the brothers backtracked and re-performed their previous steps.

Iota Phi Theta, Inc.'s routine was partly inspired by Geico's caveman commercials and featured the slogan "stepping - so easy a caveman can do it" on the white projection screen behind the members as they performed. The highlight came when they used one of their members as a jump rope while another jumped over him with ease. Towards the end, they threw rose petals out into the crowd for the ladies and exited the stage to falling white and yellow balloons and confetti.

Sigma Gamma Rho, Inc.'s introduction step was difficult to see through the flickering of the strobe lights, but the sorority bounced back with their impressive and well-coordinated "Sigma ripple." The Kappa Rho chapter of Kappa Alpha Psi, Inc. from Albany, NY represented Mason's Mu Mu chapter in the show with a "Mr. Roger's Neighborhood" themed performance with canes. Delta Sigma Theta, Inc.'s "Rocky" inspired theme had the stage resembling that of a boxing ring with the ladies dressed as boxers.

If you missed this year's performance, be sure to catch next year's and check out [www.connect2mason.com](http://www.connect2mason.com) for a slideshow of photos from this year's competition.



PHOTO BY LAURA FOLZ/ASST. PHOTOGRAPHER

Phi Beta Sigma were one of the winners of the Step Show, held in Harris Theatre on March 29.

The Divine Nine are the historically Black Greek letter organizations that compose the National Pan-Hellenic Council.

You can find out more at their website: [www.nphcq.org](http://www.nphcq.org)

## Yo! MTV Raps Puts The "M" Back in Music Television

*Classic Episodes to Be Aired in Celebration of Twentieth Anniversary*

By **EMILY SHARRER**  
Staff Writer

Let's think back to the time when MTV used to actually play music and not just scripted dramas about the trite lives of rich kids from Laguna Beach.

It has been a long time since shows like *Headbangers Ball* and *Yo! MTV Raps* provided unscripted interviews and performances with popular artists, and actually provided the music that the "M" in MTV stands for. But for the month of April, MTV will interrupt its regularly scheduled crap for special airings of classic episodes of *Yo! MTV Raps* to celebrate the show's 20th year anniversary.

"You really cannot know and see the influence something has had until you have had a few years or a decade or so to reflect back," said Freddy, also known as Fab Five Freddy, one of the first hosts on *Yo! MTV Raps*. "The main reason we can reflect back now is because hip-hop culture is still thriving and still throbbing."

*Yo! MTV Raps* premiered on Aug. 6, 1988 and ended its revolutionary run in August of 1995. The show, which was hosted by hip-hop pioneers Doctor Dre and Ed Lover, along with Fab Five

Freddy, was the first ever hip-hop oriented music show on MTV.

"*Yo! MTV Raps* hit the air right when the Afrocentric movement in hip-hop was getting big," Freddy said. "Groups like the Jungle Brothers helped to set it out and then you had the whole native tongue movement and it was also a direct contrast to Run DMC, Eric B. and Rakim, etc. It was the 'daisy age,' if you will. You can have these extremely different artists standing on the same platform, which was *Yo! MTV Raps*."

Other hip-hop music shows like *106 & Park*, *Rap City* and MTV's current rap show, *Sucker Free*, were all spawned after *Yo!* to keep hip-hop in the mainstream, yet none have been as influential as *Yo!* has proven to be.

Freddy recalled at the time of the show, hip-hop was in its golden era because "there was so much diversity and great and interesting music."

"That's one of the things that's so special about *Yo!*; it showcased so much diversity and balance culturally as opposed to a lot of the music you hear in the mainstream now," Freddy said.

Taking a look down memory lane at vintage episodes of *Yo!* might be good for music lovers, say Freddy and Dre, since yesterday's hip-hop and today's

more manufactured rap sound are definitely not one in the same.

"I used to wonder back in the day, why does every rapper talk about this 'sucker M.C.' and now we know who the sucker M.C.'s are... these sucker M.C.'s are a majority of what gets played nowadays," Freddy said.

"We don't have artists anymore, we have sound machines," Dre said. "You have record company executives telling them 'This is the song that is going to work for you.' We have to get back to the soul of making music, but that may never happen because everything is about the business. But if you are a real artist, you get in your van and you play and you play because that is what you love to do."

So, if current MTV viewers can get past their reality show complex and open their minds to the roots of hip-hop as featured on one of MTV's best endeavors, they will be in for a treat. Rare footage, interviews, long forgotten videos and original freestyling from hip-hop's first superstars are just a few perks. Plus, they might just come away with some valuable rap knowledge and *Yo!* historical tidbits like the answer to Eric B. and Rakim's question, "Could you name this tune?"

The answer to that question in the

first-ever video aired on the show is probably "no" for most viewers when proclaimed rap fans everywhere should know "Follow the Leader is the title, theme, task." And Kanye or 50? Let's not kid ourselves, Tupac or any member of Wu-Tang Clan wins, hands down.

Even if you are not interested in sprucing up your hip-hop knowledge, it is not going to be easy for MTV viewers to miss seeing at least one episode of the acclaimed show, which will air on all of MTV's networks (MTV, MTV2, MTV Tr3s, MTV Jams, MTV Hits, MTV Mobile, MTV Radio and MTV on Demand).

During the month of April, *Sucker Free* will once again become *Yo! MTV Raps* and countdown current hip-hop videos as well as add-in classic videos from LL Cool J, Tupac, Snoop Dogg, Dr. Dre and more every Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday at 4:30 p.m.

The show will also provide commentary from Freddy, Lover and Dre. Also, don't miss the strictly *Yo!* countdown specials on April 28 to 30 at 4:30 p.m. which will show videos, old episodes and a feature on *Yo!* artists then and now. Check out [www.MTV.com](http://www.MTV.com) for full listings.

The series that "helped bring hip-



Ed Lover poses with Dr. Dre on *Yo! MTV Raps*.

hop to the global masses" will also be available online at [www.MTV.com](http://www.MTV.com) with rare pictures, videos and interviews. So, don't take my word for it, feel free to check it out for yourself.

# PRIDE WEEK

## Behind the Scenes of Pride Week

*Pride For All, Not Just the LGBTQ Community*

By **EMILY SHARRER**  
Staff Writer

Since the mid to late 1990s, the Office of Diversity Programs and Services, in conjunction with other campus organizations and offices, has created a line-up of events focused on issues facing LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or questioning) students and the surrounding community.

Although last week marked the 12th year of Pride Week, there are still a couple of lingering myths that need to be cleared up.

First, Pride Week is not just for students who may identify as LGBTQ. Secondly, while the drag show might draw students to the Johnson Center every year in masses, there is definitely a lot more to the week, and to the LGBTQ community, than men in tights and high heels.

What Pride Week is, according to Ric Chollar, Assistant Director of LGBTQ Student Affairs and faculty advisor of Pride Alliance, is a coming together of students of all sexual orientations, races and religions to talk about issues that are integral to all college students.

"It [Pride Week] is to give the whole campus a greater understanding and appreciation of what is wonderful about the LGBT community," Chollar said. "It is to give members of the LGBT community a

chance to be able to celebrate, to be able to come together, to be able to party, to be able to learn the many aspects of community building and it is for all of us to learn from each other."

Chollar as well as Alex Gant, a senior history major, a Co-Chair of GMU Pride Alliance, and Pride Week organizer, feel that Pride Week this year accomplished those goals. Whether for a class, out of curiosity or for the third time, students came out to the events, which tackled issues such as HIV, love and faith to show their support. This year, as with each progressing year, organizers say they have seen a rise in attendance.

"There was not a single event that was less than 25 people," Gant said. "It has been really great and I am happy to see so many people come out, whether they are Pride Alliance members, whether they are just friends and allies or people we have never seen before."

"It has gone from relatively small to well-attended to great," Chollar said.

Planning for the event began in January and boasted more students than had ever been involved in the past, according to Chollar. "The organizations on this campus this week have been amazing," Gant said. "Every organization on this campus has been super supportive and we haven't gotten any negative feedback that I know of this week."

"In my opinion it is probably the best pride week in terms of the spectrum of different things that we have done," Gant said.

Though new events or variations on events like this are put on each year, there is one thing that has remained the same for at least the six years that Chollar has been in charge and that is the putting up of signs around campus displaying the names and stories of either LGBTQ people or allies.

Together, the committee chooses people of different races and from different time periods that are role models of sorts for the LGBTQ community. This year there were over 100 signs around campus.

"In some ways I think that's the most powerful activity of Pride Week for a number of reasons. It is a project where a bunch of levels of people get something out of it the people who are working on the project learn our history and what people that have come before us have gone through. It is also something where faculty staff and students who would not ordinarily choose to come to a program are also being exposed to learning about the community," Chollar said.

Even more important than being entertained, students who attended Pride Week had the chance to come away with some humbling knowledge about people they may have misjudged in the past.

## Discussing Love in Many Colors

By **NICOLE OCRAN**  
Assistant Style Editor

"Tell us your name and one word that describes how you are in a relationship."

After junior integrative studies major, Brian Picone, read the "Safe Space Statement," Pride Week got off to an encouraging start with events like "Love in Many Colors," a discussion about diversity of love and the struggles and triumphs in crossing all boundaries and backgrounds.

The Office of Diversity Programs and Services and Student Activities sponsored Pride Week, which hosted the event last Tuesday with an introduction from facilitators SA Associate Director Lisa McCalla and SA Communications Specialist Corrine House.

The event was well-received with an attendance of about 30 people, including students and faculty members, all of whom remained actively involved in discussions, rather than debates and group activities.

The Pride Alliance Secret's Out Project, which is modeled after Frank Warren's PostSecret, was on display with anonymous statements exhibited on display boards, giving anyone and everyone the chance to get something off of their chests.

Questions and topics were posed to everyone in the room to answer, such as, "When did you first realize you were in a relationship?" and "What identities do you bring into your relationships?"

Responses to these questions were detailed and involved memories of past relationships and intimacies. However, when the question "What do you like about yourself in a relationship?" was asked, the answers proved to be less descriptive and were broken down into one word or one sentence responses.

Students and faculty were broken into groups at the end of the session to draw pictures of the common obstacles, such as ageism, sexism, racism, religion, physical disabilities and mental disabilities, they have to face in relationships.

Many thanks and appreciations were given to the facilitators after the event.



Students make a poster at Love in Many Colors, where relationships of many kinds were discussed.

## Mason Drag Show Wows Crowd

*Kings and Queens Give "Fabulous" Performances*

By **EMILY SHARRER**  
Staff Writer

The most anticipated and acclaimed event of Pride Week came and went this past Friday night, but left the people who witnessed the drag queens' and kings' on-point performances plenty to rave about until next year's show. Remixes and original tunes by popular artists like Cyndi Lauper, Miley Cyrus, Madonna, Gwen Stefani, Chris Brown, Britney Spears, Michael Jackson and more, roared through the Johnson Center Atrium and had the audience's bodies swaying, toes tapping, lip syncing and heads bobbing along with a long list of drag queens and kings from Mason and the D.C. area.

Hosts Reann Ballslee and Oliver Clothesoff, (Ryan Allen and Mason alum Claire Gault respectively) introduced performances by several area drag queens throughout the show. Ophelia Bottoms, to the audience's delight, opened the show outfitted in a rainbow colored duct tape corset, a large red wig, and chunky heels reminiscent of Dorothy from the Wizard of Oz's ruby slippers.

As the show continued, audience members' mouths gaped, they laughed, and stared in wonder as Reann Ballslee, Oliver Clothesoff, Regina Jozet Adams, Brianna Spice, Kim Chi, Jezzibell Bottoms, E-Cleff, Macy Penny, Brenda Tittlesworth, Jake Wolf and Esmerelda Kane Jaymes went on to give over-the-top performances in some very revealing costumes.

When people inched up to the stage to hand their favorite performers dollar bills, they were greeted by the kings and queens with private dances or had the pleasure of getting their hands

— or faces — playfully pulled to certain body parts to the shock and laughter of the students in attendance.

The highlights of the performance included Regina Jozet Adams' mocking Britney Spears' "Gimme More" performance at the 2007 MTV Video Music Awards (complete with sparkly black two piece) and E-Cleff doing spot on impressions of Chris Brown and Michael Jackson during "Wall to Wall" and "Billie Jean."

Also, Brianna Spice, a first-time drag show participant, danced to "Who Do You Think you Are?" by the Spice Girls, then throwing massive amounts of condoms into the audience toward the end of the show.

And, as expected, the finale was — to use the word of the night — fabulous. It featured Reann and her drag daughters who are all second-time performers and only choose to perform once a year for the Mason Drag Show.

The last number began with Macy Penny and Kim Chi doing the Britney Spears and Christina Aguilera parts of the song "Like a Virgin" as performed by the starlets and Madonna at the 2005 MTV VMAs. Before they had their chance to kiss however, Ballslee switched into the song "Hollywood" and eventually Brenda Tittlesworth came and broke it down to a couple lines from "Work It" by Missy Elliott.

The audience left just as excited as they had come and the performers were happy that so many people showed up to show their support sporting signs and applauding and cheering.

"I am so happy people always come out and support us every year for the drag show. It's something that the community looks forward to, even outside of the Mason area," Gault said.

Macy Penneys (Austin McFarland) did an impression of Britney Spears.



PHOTO BY LAURA FOLTZ / ASST. PHOTOGRAPHY EDITOR



PHOTO BY LAURA FOLTZ / ASST. PHOTOGRAPHY EDITOR

Kim Chi (Justin Fogata) performed at the Drag Show held in the Johnson Center Atrium.



Oliver Clothesoff (Claire Gault) dressed as Dr. Frank-N-Furter from Rocky Horror Picture Show.

PHOTO BY LAURA FOLTZ / ASST. PHOTOGRAPHY EDITOR



PHOTO BY LAURA FOLTZ / ASST. PHOTOGRAPHY EDITOR

Esmeralda Kane Jaymes, local DC performer, accepts a tip from an audience member.

Esmeralda Kane Jaymes is a usual performer at Freddy's.



PHOTO BY LAURA FOLTZ / ASST. PHOTOGRAPHY EDITOR

# Stop-Loss Gives Insight on Soldier Life

Impact of Iraq War on Fictional Families Make Movie Magic

By ROSS BONAIME  
Staff Writer

In *Stop-Loss*, director Kimberly Peirce's follow up to her 1999 critically acclaimed debut *Boys Don't Cry*, shows the consequences of the war in Iraq in a way that many recent films have tried but failed.

In the last year, *Rendition*, *Lions For Lambs*, *Redacted* and countless other films have attempted to show not only the problems with the Iraq conflict, but also the effects it has on the soldiers involved. However, *Stop-Loss* is the first to do it effectively.

*Stop-Loss* focuses on Brandon King and Steve Shriver, two childhood friends from Texas, played by Ryan Phillippe and Channing Tatum, respectively, who return home from their tour of duties in Iraq.

In spite of this, King is ordered by the Army to return back to Iraq. When he refuses to do so, King goes on the run to try and find any way he can to get out of going back to the horrors he so recently left behind. Surprisingly, the film turns into a road trip filled with families hurt by the war and tragic tales from the frontline as King searches for his freedom that he feels he is due.

Phillippe does a nice job as King, who must deal with the effects that the war has had on him and the struggles with getting back to a normal life. Phillippe's acting has not improved much since *Flags of Our Fathers* or *Crash*, but does show some additional depth.

One of the biggest revelations is Tatum, who is mostly known for lighter fare in films

like *She's the Man* and the *Step Up* movies, shows real emotional depth as Shriver. These two life-long friends are also an interesting contrast as they show two different schools of thought on the war.

The supporting cast features a bevy of talented young actors, including Victor Rasuk of *Lords of Dogtown* as Rico Rodriguez, a soldier and friend who is injured in King's and Shriver's final conflict in Iraq. *Elizabeth: The Golden Age's* Abbie Cornish, plays Shriver's girlfriend and King's escape buddy, Michelle.

However, one of the most understated performances is by Joseph Gordon-Levitt as Tommy Burgess, whose life is the military, yet is still torn apart by it. Gordon-Levitt has really matured over the years and with films like *Brick*, *Manic* and *The Lookout*, along with *Stop-Loss*, he is showing that he is one of film's best young talents. It is just a shame that he is so underused in this film.

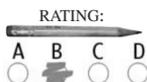
Much like in Peirce's previous work, she does not water down the events, but shows them how they truly happened. Her use of handheld footage from the perspective of the soldier and flashbacks told throughout the story really flesh out the story of what happened to these men. The look and feel is similar to both the television show and the movie *Friday Night Lights*, yet never seems quite as epic. The film does sometimes almost slip into melodrama and gets close to being predictable, but it always picks itself up and goes one way when it looks like it will go down the well-trodden paths.

*Stop-Loss* is able to show the audience the facts of the war with a narrative story, without making them feel like they are



Joseph Gordon-Levitt and Ryan Phillippe star in *Stop Loss*.

being preached to, which has been a problem with many Iraq films before. *Stop-Loss* is all about supporting the troops, but it denounces the war and the president for reasons that are completely relatable. The film finds humor in the pain and tries to relieve the tension as to not keep the audience stressed out completely through, yet it does show the human suffering that is at the core of the Iraq war. *Stop-Loss* is an effective, heartbreaking film that entertains, but also questions whether or not undying loyalty is completely possible.



# Superhero Needs to be Rescued

A Comedy That's Not Funny

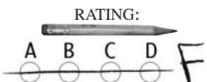
By ROSS BONAIME  
Staff Writer

Every few months, a new parody movie comes out that recycles the same jokes, but puts them in a new environment. This month, that release is *Superhero Movie*.

Drake Bell from the hit Nickelodeon TV show, *Drake and Josh*, plays Rick Riler, the down-on-his-luck loser who is in love with his beautiful neighbor and whose life pretty much mirrors Peter Parker's in every way. The main difference, however, is that instead of being bitten by a spider, Rick is bitten by a dragonfly, which turns him into the superhero – yup, you guessed it – Dragonfly. Rick tries to win the girl and help make the world a better place, while also visiting Professor Xavier at his school, meeting up with the cast of the Fantastic Four and reminiscing of the *Batman Begins*-like death of his parents.

*Superhero Movie* follows the same outline as the other films similar to this like *Epic Movie* and *Date Movie*: make as many random pop culture jokes as possible, while keeping a barebones plot together with a loose story line and feature cameos from the usual suspects like Pamela Anderson and Leslie Nielsen. These jokes, such as fart jokes and prat falls that most parody movies are accustomed to, are weak and just tired. Someone needs to tell writer and director Craig Mazin that a minute long fart is not comedy, it is just pathetic.

Nothing in *Superhero Movie* seems original at all. These pre-packaged parody movies have just become a copy of a copy of a copy. The idea is a good one, but it should have come out about three years ago and the way it is executed is just sad. A film like *Superhero Movie* needs to be more like *Walk Hard* or *This Is Spinal Tap* than *Meet the Spartans*. Hopefully, the creators of these parody films will realize how tired their schtick has become and try to make a parody that is actually funny and original, instead of recycling ideas. Unfortunately, *Superhero Movie* fails to be memorable and just ends up being another wasted parody that could have been something interesting.



# Run, Fat Boy, Run

A Race to The Finish Line: 26.2 Miles Toward the Past

By ROSS BONAIME  
Staff Writer

With Simon Pegg's newest film, *Run, Fat Boy, Run*, Pegg ditches the hilarious parodies like *Shaun of the Dead* and *Hot Fuzz* that made him popular in the States and attempts to make an original and unique romantic comedy. Thankfully, his brand of comedy translates well into his newest venture.

Pegg plays Dennis, a women's clothing store security guard, who runs away from his pregnant fiancé, played by Thandie Newton of *Crash* and *The Pursuit of Happyness*, on their wedding day and his newfound responsibilities. Five years later, he realizes his huge mistake when his ex-fiancé

becomes involved with Whit, a seemingly too perfect boyfriend performed by Hank Azaria of TV's *The Simpsons*, and decides to fix the horrible mistake he made and get back his girlfriend and his five-year-old son. To do this, the out-of-shape Dennis decides to take Whit on in a 26.2 mile marathon. Not only is Dennis running towards the finish line, but unbeknownst to him, he is also running towards the maturity he ran away from for so long.

While Pegg may not seem like an ideal romantic lead, his role as the lovable loser Dennis adds a level of depth that Pegg has not had in previous roles. Azaria is also deliciously evil as the films antagonist. But the real scene-stealers are Dylan

Moran as Gordon and Harish Pate as Mr. Ghoshdashtidar, who are Dennis' trainers for the big race. Their characters add to the already overwhelming cast of adorable characters.

*Run, Fat Boy, Run* shows the combined comedic prowess of Pegg, director David Schwimmer of *Friends* and Michael Ian Black of *Ed*. Together, they make an adorable and funny film, even if the last third of the film is a bit too formulaic and predictable. However, that does not take away from the sweetness of the film. If *Rocky* was a comedy for losers, *Run, Fat Boy, Run* would be it.



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# LIFE IN A. MINOR

## TWICE THE FUN: TOP TEN DOUBLE-ALBUMS

Before the 70+ minute CD came along, artists who had managed to make more music than their typical LP records could hold were forced to expand. The result? The double album. Usually, I find that most double LPs were produced by bands with great track records. The Beatles, Bob Dylan, Led Zeppelin and Stevie Wonder all had double LPs. Most bands, even some of the greats, never managed to put out a double album. So, this week I salute those bands that did. And please, if you haven't checked out a single one of these albums do it as soon as you can. These albums may be twice as long, but they're also twice as good and twice as classic.

### 10. Led Zeppelin, *Physical Graffiti*

I may only be putting this album here for nostalgia's sake, but when I take a step back from my well-loved copy of this CD, I begin to realize that it really is a good album. Zeppelin manages to break their "Stairway to Heaven" mold in more ways than one, going back to their folk roots with songs like "Bron-Yr-Aur" and also keeping with their towering rock sound during tracks like "The Rover" and "Custard Pie." I really think that *Physical Graffiti* is a good glance at a Led Zeppelin that was approaching the end of their prime, but still had a ton of great music to get out.

### 9. The Smiths, *Louder Than Bombs*

I guess technically this is sort of a "greatest hits" album for Morrissey and the boys, but that doesn't stop it from being both a double album and completely awesome. I fell in love with this album the day I bought it, and it's the double LP responsible for sparking my unhealthy addiction to The Smiths. But beyond my own nostalgic reasons, I find that *Bombs* is a good survey of the band's work. It's got everything from emotional pop tunes to coming-of-age story songs to ballades like "Asleep," possibly the saddest pop song I've ever heard.

### 8. The Wu-Tang Clan, *Wu-Tang Forever*

Not only are you constantly reminded during classic songs such as "It's Yourz" and "Triumph" that Wu-Tang put out a double LP, but these songs themselves make the album really, really good. The beats, the lyrics, the rhymes all flow openly and go together. It's hip-hop at its finest, thanks to classic artists like Ol' Dirty Bastard, the RZA, Method Man, Raekwon and tons of others. It's a classic album even beyond the world of hip-hop, and weighing in at more than 2 hours, it's also a pretty long one. Regardless, you can never get bored with it. The saga continues, Wu-Tang.

### 7. Pink Floyd, *The Wall*

Not only is this classic a double LP, it's also a concept album and a movie. It pro-

duced hits like "Another Brick in the Wall Part II" and "Comfortably Numb," but at the same time it tells a pretty psychotic story of a man who builds a mental wall between himself and the world. Throw in the collaborative genius of Roger Waters and David Gilmour and you've got *The Wall*. Definitely a really lengthy, philosophically deep musical experience.

### 6. Bob Dylan, *Blonde on Blonde*

As far as I'm concerned, Bob Dylan makes this album great on the first track with "Rainy Day Women #12 & 35." But because the one-track album doesn't sell very well, Bob gave us the rest of *Blonde*, arguably his best album. It's a masterpiece through and through, crammed full of that nasal, folk-driven electric rock only Dylan can do. When the 14 minute final track, "Sad Eyed Lady of the Lowlands" comes on side four, it's a feeling that can only be achieved by hearing such a well-developed album.

### 5. Stevie Wonder, *Songs in the Key of Life*

What explanation could I give that would possibly do justice to Stevie? The hits from this album alone, "Isn't She Lovely" and "Sir Duke" are still some of my favorite songs ever. They're catchy, as well as musically deep. "Village Ghetto Land" has a synthesized string quartet feel, fitting in on an album that shows an artist expanding his understanding of music.

### 4. The Clash, *London Calling*

*London Calling* is one of those albums I learned track for track. I got it for Christmas one year, and really only liked one or two songs. Then, I discovered three or four more. Then, five and six, and pretty soon I was swimming in this album's awesome punk power. Highlight tracks: "Jimmy Jazz," "Guns of Brixton" and "Death or Glory." I really shouldn't be picking only three, but that's really all I have room for. This album is a pure classic, and if you don't own a copy, put down the paper and go buy one.

### 3. The Who, *Tommy*

Kind of like Pink Floyd's *The Wall*, *Tommy* is really a concept album, proving to Pete Townshend that he could write himself a pretty awesome rock opera. It's a pretty sweet story and flows with the music really well, but if you want to understand really what The Who was getting at here, go rent the Woodstock DVD. The Who played most of the album at that show, and the album's climax, "We're Not Gonna Take It," came just as the sun was rising over Woodstock, New York. But I guess that's just a fun fact, because the music on this album really does speak for itself.

### 2. Outkast, *Speakerboxxx/The Love Below*

I believe I was still in high school when the "Hey Ya" craze swept the nation before it finally faded away, but I never left that group of people who have a profound love for that catchy song. I loved it so much, I bought the entire double album it resided on. Little did I know that I was in for way more than a catchy pop number. Outkast members Big Boi and Andre 3000 each made one of the discs on the album, and while Big Boi's side is chock full of great, funk-driven hip-hop, it's Andre 3000 that almost takes the cake. His disc, *The Love Below* contains some of the greatest funk, jazz and pop from the last 10 years.

### 1. The Smashing Pumpkins, *Mellon Collie and the Infinite Sadness*

Are there words to describe a masterpiece? This powerhouse is two discs of sublime musical genius, spanning the well-developed talents of the Smashing Pumpkins. I'm pretty sure this was the only album I ever needed when I was 16-years-old, because it nearly spans the entire spectrum of human emotion through the veil of 1990s heavy alternative. I'd begin to speak about notable tracks, but every single track on the album is solid and almost every one holds a special place in my heart.

## Making the Band 4's Day 26

### Good Tracks Overall, But Twenty Dollars Can Be Better Spent

By DEENA SMITH  
Copy Editor

I would like to start off by saying that I am not a *Making the Band* fan. Over the course of the four seasons that have aired on MTV, I have probably seen a total of five episodes. However, I was forced by a roommate to watch the season finale of *Making the Band 4*, which piqued my interest of the new band, Day 26, and their first self-titled album that was released on March 25.

"I'm the Reason" is a great track to start the album with, because it is one of those tracks that you can dance and sing to in the mirror. The next track is the group's first single, "Got Me Going," is not one of my personal favorites, but seems to be steadily rising the charts. It is upbeat and gets you moving, but it doesn't really do anything for me.

The next three tracks are

not even really worth discussing. None of them are songs that would make you want to stop and actually listen.

"Come With Me" is a well-composed song, but it doesn't seem to fit the image that Day 26 is trying to put out there. The song seems better suited in the pop genre rather than R&B.

"Co Star," "Come In (My Door's Open)" and "Are We in This Together" are all pretty good songs with a smooth melody. Each has a rhythmic, easy-going feel to them that compelled me to listen to them again.

"What It Feels Like" describes exactly what it sounds like: sex. The song is actually a little too vivid and sexual (but what isn't these

days?) for my taste. However, it does have a little romantic side to it, so it may be something you enjoy listening to with your significant other.

"Since You've Been Gone" — no, not the Kelly Clarkson song — is another one of my favorites and is a great apology or make-up song. Day 26 also performed this song during the season finale, so I would venture to say that this is going to be their next single.

If you are looking for a good song that says you appreciate your significant other, "If It Wasn't For You" is a great choice. The group really shows a stronger lyrical side. This song expresses gratitude to a lover for keeping the men on track and guiding them in the right

direction.

"Ain't Going," the only track that features Danity Kane, doesn't really strike any chords with me. However, I like how they are promoting their career in a song, expressing that they are not going to be another one hit wonder boy band and have brought something new to the R&B genre.

The last track, "Exclusive," is a great way to close out the album. It has a good dance beat and allows each of the five members to have their own time on the mic.

I am proud of Day 26 for not having a lot of cameos on their first album, which P. Diddy is known for. This allows listeners to get an entire album of what Day 26 is all about and to really get to know them as musicians.



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# Definitely Not Your Parents' History Lesson

*The Reduced Shakespeare Company Performs 600 Years of American History in 6,000 seconds*

By **SHERELL WILLIAMS**  
Style Editor

It's not often you see performers spitting water at audience members and hitting them with fish at the Shakespeare Theatre Company in Washington, D.C., but attendees of the Reduced Shakespeare Company's production of "The Complete History of America (abridged)" should anticipate more laughter than learning.

Sharp and witty, the scripted show's informal, light-hearted atmosphere and occasionally inaccurate portrayal of some of the biggest moments in America's history make it worth the \$40 cost of admission.

"America (abridged)" takes over 500 years of American history and condenses into 90 minutes of comedic gold. In less than two hours, performers Austin Tichenor, Jerry Kernion and Dominic Conti accomplished what history teachers have been trying to do in schools for decades—make history fun.

Dressed in suits and sneakers and armed with simple props conveniently placed behind a large American flag in the center of the stage and their explosive comedic talents, the trio explained and

mostly exaggerated all the memorable parts of America's history like Abraham Lincoln's assassination and Watergate. Tichenor, Kernion and Conti raced through the years beginning with the discovery of America and ending with more recent events like the war in Iraq and the current 2009 presidential elections.

During the second act, Conti dressed as Senator Barack Obama and wore a pair of huge ears while Kernion mimicked Hillary Clinton in a blonde wig and pink suit. Kernion did a great job replicating several of Clinton's mannerisms as did Conti as Obama, winning both of them raucous laughter during their dialogue. Audience participation was encouraged here as members were allowed to ask each candidate a question.

All three had equal time on the stage as they performed in various different segments. The show kicked off with Conti and Tichenor mimicking a conversation between Amerigo Vespucci and a woman named Sophia, played by Conti, who toted an oversized prop of a fish across the stage as they spoke about Amerigo's expeditions. No more than a few minutes into the show, the late arrivals of a few ticket holders brought the show to a halt and gave all

three men the perfect opportunity to interact with the audience and showcase their improv abilities.

In another crowd favorite, Kernion portrayed Lincoln in a reenactment of his assassination that showed Tichenor holding an oversized cut-out of a gun. Conti gave the bullet movement as he stalked across the stage over towards Kernion and popped the inflated balloon that was serving as Lincoln's head.

Despite being a show about the history of America, there were plenty of jokes about familiar celebrities such as Whoopi Goldberg, Beyonce and Carrie Underwood to keep the show from seeming dated.

RSC was started in 1981 and since its creation, the company has toured all over the world, most notably in London's Piccadilly Circus and in other countries such as Holland, Ireland and Sweden.

Their latest tour of Washington, D.C. began on March 11, 2008 and will continue through April 13, 2008. Tickets are still available for all performances through April 13. Prices range from \$40 to \$53 and can be purchased at the Shakespeare Theatre box office in Harman Hall or online at [www.shakespearetheatre.org](http://www.shakespearetheatre.org).



The Reduced Shakespeare Company performs the last 500 years of history in 90 minutes at the Landsburg Theater.



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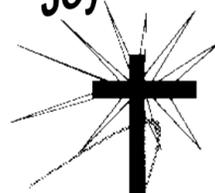
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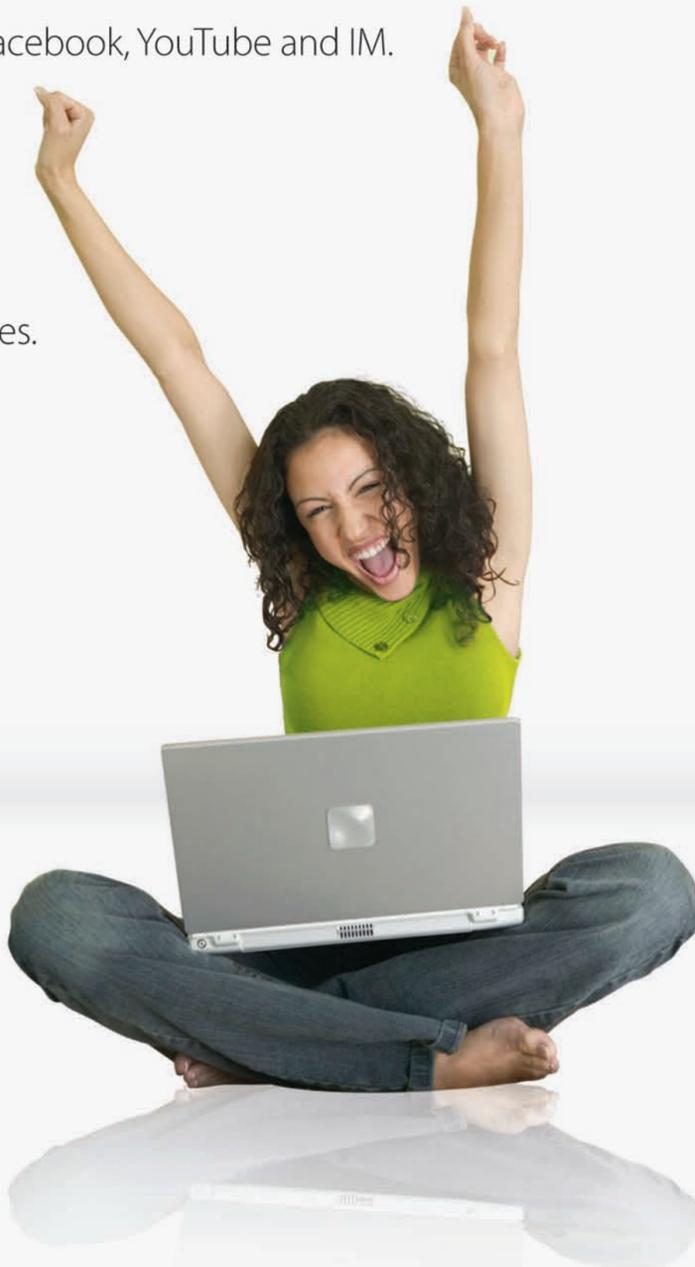
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