

ROCK OF AGES: Constantine brings '80s to Fox Theatre



Image courtesy of Joan Marcus

SHOWS

Rock of Ages

LOCATION: Fox Theatre

DATE: July 5, 2011

OUR TAKE: <<<<<

By Wayne Bishop
Contributing Writer

The hazy Fox Theatre in Midtown Atlanta was filled with an anxious crowd on Tuesday, July 5, in preparation for the debut of *Rock of Ages*, a musical about a wide-eyed rising rock star on the sunset strip set to an all eighties hair metal soundtrack.

As the lights dim, one could make out figures entering the neon sign lit stage and making their way toward a platform in the back to strap on guitars and basses. At this point, much of the crowd was wondering whether to expect just another musical or a flashback concert from 1986. The speculation of the concert idea was only heightened when a bang, bright lights and a shrilling guitar solo opened the night.

Though the crowd was treated to a mini-concert by the live band that made the back of the stage its

home for the length of the performance, the musical itself did not lack an intriguing story.

Set in a struggling bar on sunset strip, a rising rockstar works for a post-hippie era bar owner and his mullet crowned barhand.

The rising star doesn't find his trouble in his performing, but rather in his songwriting, which still seems to revolve back around to the adolescent idea of drugs, sex and rock and roll. The bar itself is also facing destruction due to new city planning ordinances.

As the play so boldly pronounces, no musical is complete without its love story. Introduced here is a runaway Middle America girl with big actress dreams. At her arrival to Sunset Strip she finds herself in the rockstar's bar where love at first sight sets the pace for what will be a troubling love story.

The soundtrack for the musical was all but lacking, pulling out every eighties song from "Here I Go Again" to the strong closing "Don't Stop Believing." Vocally, the cast performed each song strongly and quite true to the originals.

Grittier voices and soprano range male vocals were not left to the wayside in the production.

One should have expected this, however, as *American Idol* contender Constantine Maroulis was cast as the rising rockstar.

The acting was of high quality as well. The cast did a tremendous job of breaking down the fourth wall between the stage and audience, encouraging use of the faux lighters handed out at the beginning of the night, and with clapping and singing along to some of the tunes.

The show brought both the rock along with the sex appeal. With a small ensemble of female dancers along with the few main female characters, the show seemed to heads towards a burlesque feel without ever quite crossing the line. It was done quite tastefully though, and to no sacrifice of the rest of the production.

Rock of Ages held back nothing from the eighties as it brought the audience back in time for an evening of hair metal. Few musicals these days are set to a live metal backing band, burlesque dressed dancers and a struggling rockstar's story.

However, *Rock of Ages* pulls it off magnificently with great taste, making it one show that will surely stick around on Broadway for years to come.

Eating Atlanta

North Avenue Dining Hall

By Michael Valente
Contributing Writer

Capping off the last year of on-campus dining updates, the new dining hall at the North Ave. Apartments is nearly ready to open for regular operations on Aug. 31.

The LEED Gold Certified building is definitely far more impressive-looking than any other on-campus dining option. Most noticeable is that a floor-to-ceiling window, lavishing natural light on its occupants, occupies the entire wall facing North Ave.

The focus here is on seasonal vegetables from local farms, which are from no farther than Tennessee, according to GT Dining Marketing Manager Andrea Preininger.

Vegan and gluten-free options are also significantly improved, with a separate island holding foods like salads, fruit, bread and pastries.

Unfortunately, the distinctions stop there, and once you sit down with your plate, you realize not much about the food has changed. Of the whole range of food available, plates are filled with dishes of the familiar sort: burgers, pizza and ham-and-cheese subs, among other items.

The food stations here include a pizza/pasta counter, a deli, a chef line, a wok and a world fair. The last two stations are not found in either Woodruff or Brittain, and they will bring Vietnamese pho and a rotating array of foods from around the globe, respectively, when they open this fall.

Nearest the front is the pizza and pasta station; no more revolving glass boxes full of cold

pizza. This is good news for those who need a grab-and-go meal.

Behind that is the deli counter, with pre-made sandwiches available on one side and a Subway-like made-to-order option on the other. The ingredients here are quite nice and are a clear example of the dining hall's fresh-and-local foods mission.

Next is the chef line, which is the buffet-style meal choice typical of all the dining halls. The chicken pot pie and sides that were available for the visit were not quite the same quality as the Student Center's dinner line, but it's a bit of a step above Brittain's and Woody's.

The grill station is next, where chefs are constantly rolling out hamburgers, cheeseburgers, hot dogs and grilled cheese sandwiches. The hot dogs seem to have had an upgrade, as they are slightly bigger; however, they don't quite taste too different.

Lamentably, the meal did not include the Wok station or World Fair, which are set to open this fall. In fact, those seemed like the most interesting offerings of the new dining hall.

Altogether, the food tasted much the same as could be had elsewhere on campus, even though the recipes have been updated and diversified. This is disappointing because GT Dining can do better and has done better recently, with the latest additions to the Student Center food court showing that mass catering can still be interesting, affordable and delicious.

It is upsetting to see that these lessons did not translate to the North Ave. Dining Hall, and overall it is a disappointing experience.

Transformers 3 proves to be nonstop action sequence

FILM

Transformers: Dark of the Moon

GENRE: Action

STARRING: Shia LaBeouf & Rosie Huntington-Whiteley

DIRECTOR: Michael Bay

RATING: PG-13

RELEASE DATE: June 28, 2011

OUR TAKE: <<<<<

By Chris Ernst
Senior Staff Writer

Transformers 3: Dark of the Moon is the latest entry into the summer blockbuster landscape. It distracts bored summer minds very well and even stands just above the current offerings. The story is lackluster and is only there to give reason for the action scenes. The action is awesome and

exciting, truly outstanding and certainly the best part of the film. But over the movie's two-and-a-half-hour run, some may find the literally non-stop action sequences tiring. The cast is mediocre, but with such an uninspired raison d'être, it is almost expected. *Transformers 3* blows the audience away, but not emotionally.

What redeems *Transformers 3* is, unsurprisingly, the action, stunts and effects. While the story is perhaps overwrought, the main focus of the film is solidly not on the story. The non-effects scenes could probably be counted on one hand. On paper, having most of the film be computer-generated sounds like a bad approach. However, most of the characters are robots, and the resulting computer-generated imagery is nothing short of amazing. Chicago is destroyed in an apocalyptic alien attack, robots battle it out in space and intergalactic black holes abound. All these things are fan-

tastically achieved and make the movie what it is: an over-stuffed action monster wielding a plywood story of excuses for explosions. This movie is so full of action that the action can get dull.

While the story is the hallmark weakness of the *Transformers* franchise, this one is better than the other ones, but still not good. It is more engrossing than the previous installments, but is still not the reason anyone would go to see this movie. The script starts out with a revisionist history lesson informing the audience about the real reason for the NASA space program. This tie-in starts the movie off on the right foot, but that novelty soon wears off as typical yelling concerning imminent invasions dulls the audience into a stupor. There are the usual excuses of alien invasion and doom for the human race. The story gets more and more boring as the movie progresses and eventually falls below acceptable standards. The last half



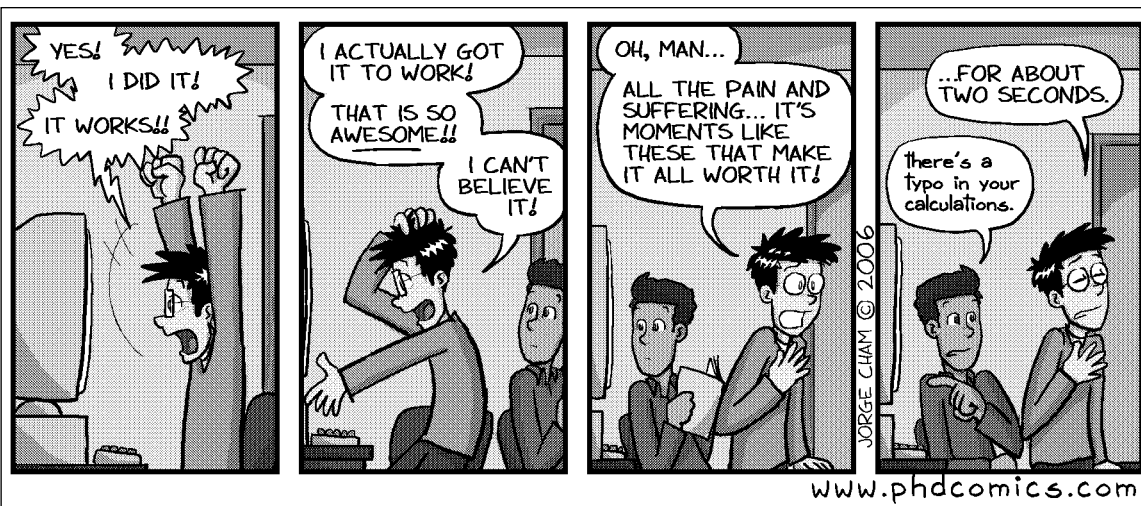
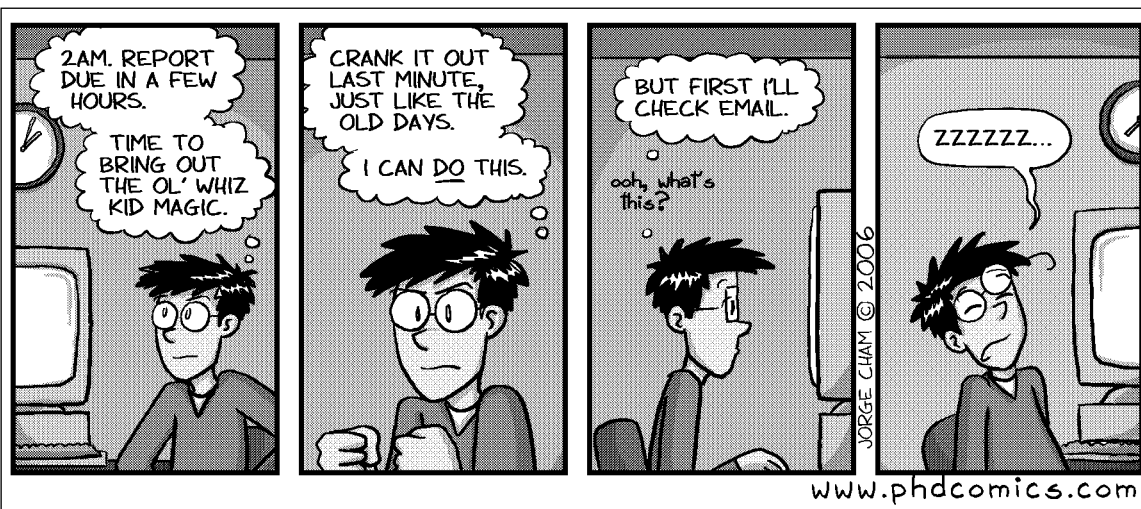
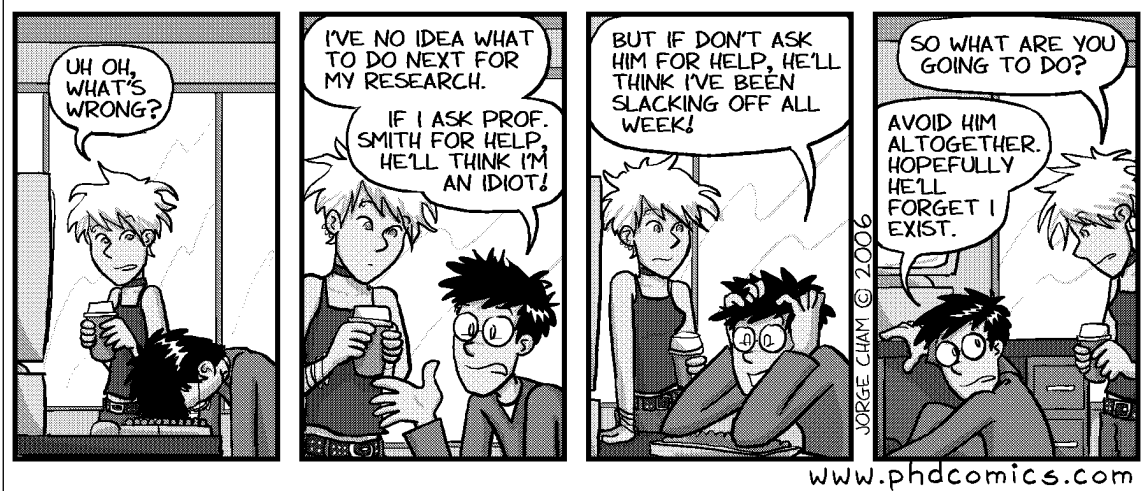
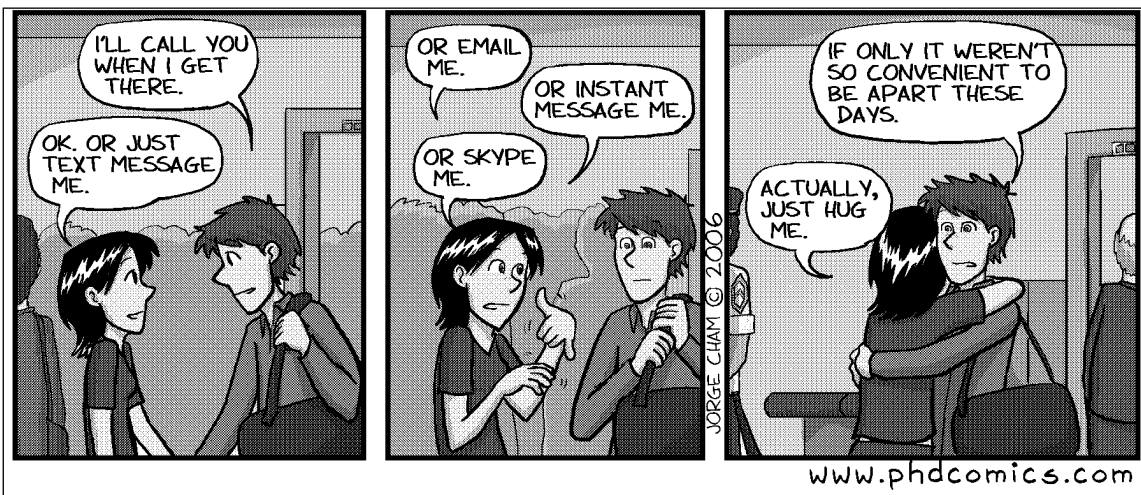
Image courtesy of Paramount Pictures

hour of the movie is unnecessary.

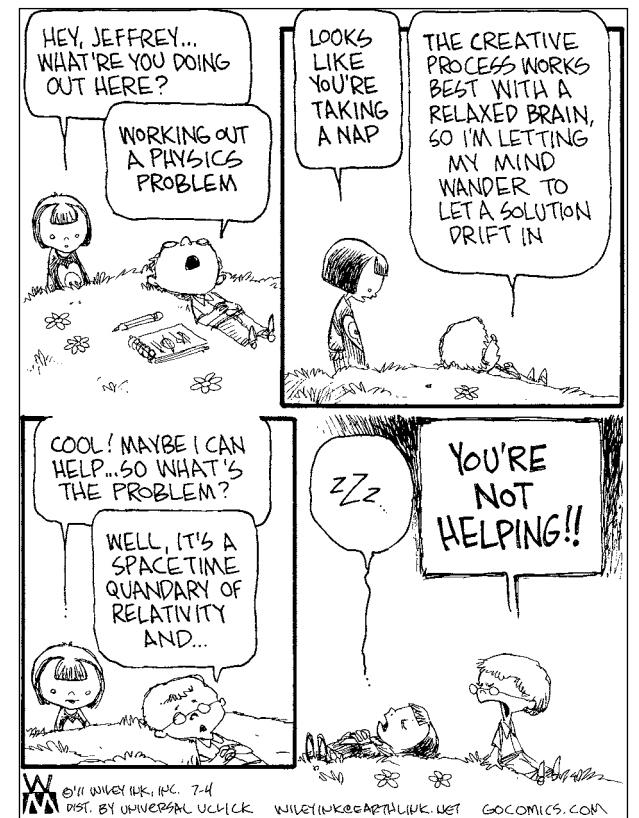
The "New Megan Fox," also known as Rosie Huntington-Whiteley, looks more terrestrial than the previous model. Her acting skills are about on par for a character of her archetype, but that's probably not really the reason she was hired. Her face moves, and she looks good with Shia. In fact, no one is showing off their acting chops in this Cannes non-winner as the story decidedly serves the action sequences.

While the story may not be great, and the acting perhaps is not the best, the movie stands solely on the action and effects. This can work for some audience members and totally turn off others. But for the target audience, this movie is fantastic. It is solidly better than the previous installments but objectively is still not a good movie. The movie makes no effort to be anything it is not, and focuses on what it is, which is why it succeeds.

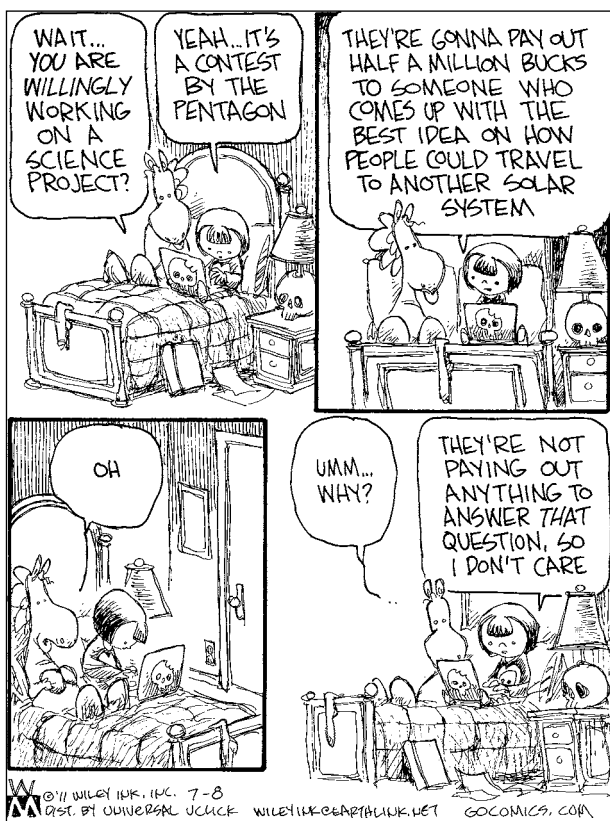
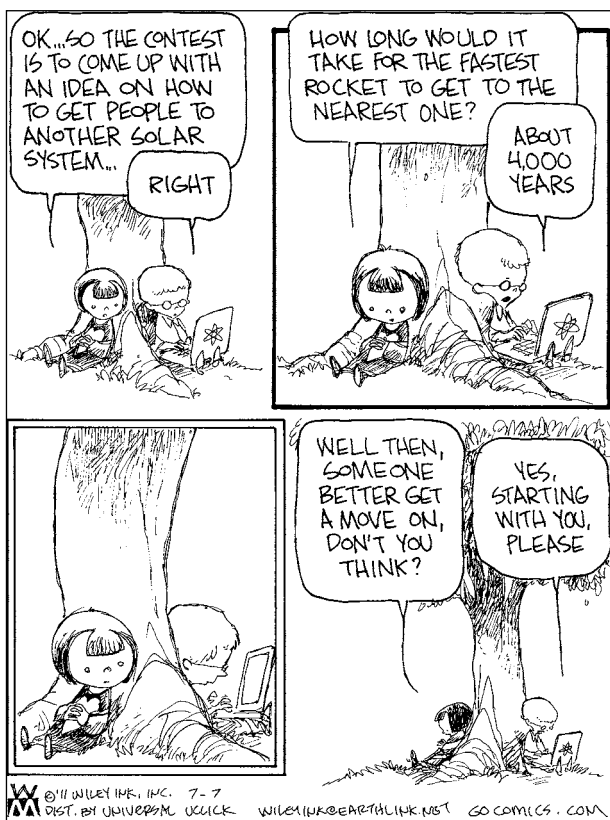
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