Written by Jeff Ignatius
Wednesday, 29 October 2008 02:49

The theatrical success of *High School Musical 3* begs a question: Was Disney too slow to capitalize on the success of the original, which drew an audience of nearly 14 million the first two nights it aired in January 2006?

High School Musical 2, after all, got 17 million pairs of eyes with its American television premiere. Maybe it was about building the brand, but that seems like a lot of ticket cash foregone to me.

With an average movie-ticket price approaching $7 (according to the National Association of Theatre Owners), the second sequel got about 6 million asses in seats in its opening weekend. *Senior Year* also topped this week's Box Office Power Rankings by a wide margin, and it was the only release in the top 10 to be Rotten Tomatoes-approved "fresh."

But keep a couple of deflating facts in mind:

- That Hannah Montana/Miley Cyrus concert movie from earlier this year drew $31 million its opening weekend on fewer than one-fifth as many screens. And it got better reviews.
- *High School Musical 3* had a per-screen average less than $2,000 more than the lowly retread *Saw V*.

I wouldn't want those damned kids to get even bigger heads.

About Box Office Power Rankings

Box Office Power Rankings balance box office and critical reception to create a better measure of a movie's overall performance against its peers than gross receipts alone.

The weekly rankings cover the 10 top-grossing movies in the United States for the previous weekend. I assign equal weight to box office and critical opinion, with each having two components. The measures are: box-office gross, per-theatre average, Rotten Tomatoes (RottenTomatoes.com) score, and Metacritic (Metacritic.com) score.

Why those four? Box-office gross basically measures the number of people who saw a movie in a given weekend. Per-theatre average corrects for blockbuster-wannabes that flood the market with prints, and gives limited-release movies a fighting chance. Rotten Tomatoes measures critical opinion in a binary way. And Metacritic gives a better sense of critics' enthusiasm (or bile) for a movie.

For each of the four measures, the movies are ranked and assigned points (10 for the best performer, one for the worst). Finally, those points are added up, with a maximum score of 40 and a minimum score of four.

For more Box Office Power Rankings, visit CultureSnob.com/bopr . Culture Snob is the Web site of *Reader* Managing Editor Jeff Ignatius.

Box Office Power Rankings: October 24-26, 2008

Box Office Ranks		Critics' Ranks			
Rank	Movie	Last Week	Gross	Per T	

Rotten Tomatoes

Metacritic

1	***High School Musical 3: Senior Year***	-	10 ($42.0M)
2	***The Secret Life of Bees***	1	5 ($6.1M)
3	***W.***	2	4 ($5.1M)
4	***Pride and Glory***	-	6 ($6.3M)
5	***Saw V***	-	9 ($30.1M)
5	***Body of Lies***	4	2 ($4.1M)
7	***Beverly Hills Chihuahua***	5	7 ($6.9M)
8	***Quarantine***	6	1 ($2.6M)

8	***Max Payne***	7	8 ($7.6M)
10	***Eagle Eye***	8	3 ($5.1M)