

## Hollywood Marketing Triumphs with Two Bad Movies: "Rock Star" and "The Musketeer"

Written by Mike Schulz

Tuesday, 11 September 2001 18:00

---

- [Buy Photoshop CS4 Down & Dirty Tricks \(en\)](#)
- [Buy OEM Understanding Adobe Photoshop CS4](#)
- [Buy Cheap Imagineer Systems mocha Pro v3.1](#)
- [Buy OEM Lynda.com - Joomla! 2.5 Essential Training](#)
- [Download Nik Software Complete Collection Ultimate Edition MAC \(32-bit\)](#)
- [Buy OEM Adobe Presenter 9](#)
- [Buy Xilisoft Video Converter Ultimate 5.1 \(en\)](#)
- [149.95\\$ Adobe InDesign CC \(Full LifeTime License\) cheap oem](#)
- [Discount - Intuit TurboTax Premier 2008](#)
- [Buy Cheap Adobe InDesign CS5.5 MAC](#)
- [Buy OEM Adobe InCopy CC MAC \(Full LifeTime License\)](#)
- [Buy 4Media DVD Ripper Platinum 5 \(en\)](#)
- [Buy OEM Adobe Captivate 5 MAC](#)
- [Buy OEM Lynda.com - Flash Professional CS6 New Features](#)



### **ROCK STAR and THE MUSKETEER**

If you were to guess based solely on their previews, you'd probably imagine Stephen Herek's *Rock Star*

to be a kitschy, affectionate look at heavy metal in the '80s – like

*This Is*

*Spinal Tap*

played straight – and Peter Hyams'

*The Musketeer*

to be a brisk reinterpretation of the Alexandre Dumas classic with a martial-arts bent –

*Crouching Tiger, Hidden D'Artagnan*.

In truth, though, those marketing geniuses in Hollywood have hoodwinked us yet again. *Rock Star*

turns out to be a heavy-handed morality play about the evils of excess,

*The Musketeer*

's Asian-style swashbuckling lasts all of 15 minutes and is horribly filmed, and neither movie is anywhere near as fun as their trailers would indicate.

## Hollywood Marketing Triumphs with Two Bad Movies: "Rock Star" and "The Musketeer"

Written by Mike Schulz

Tuesday, 11 September 2001 18:00

---

Of the two, *Rock Star* is the lesser disappointment, crummy though it is. At least it starts well. Set in the mid-'80s, the film introduces twentysomething Chris Cole (Mark Wahlberg), a copy-machine repairman who lives for the heavy-metal band Steel Dragon and who's the talented lead singer for the group's Pittsburgh-based tribute act, Blood Pollution. Chris has reinvented himself as the spitting image of Dragon's frontman, Bobby Beers, and when Beers is ousted from the band, the remaining members of Dragon find Chris and hire him to replace their star performer. (Implausible as this may sound, the plot is based on true experiences surrounding the group Judas Priest, which did indeed hire an unknown to take over its lead-singer position.) So Chris and his girlfriend/manager Emily (Jennifer Aniston) head to sunny L.A., where fame and fortune await, and where they learn the inevitable pitfalls involved in a life of sex, drugs, and rock 'n' roll.

*Rock Star* is a lot more enjoyable *before* they get there. Though you can tell early on that director Herek isn't going to have the visual sense or imagination the material requires (his credits include *The Mighty Ducks* and the live-action remake of *Dalmatians* 101

, if that gives you any idea of Herek's "style"), there's some wit in the '80s costuming and design, and Chris' scenes with his family are light and amusing; in a nice switch, Chris' hipster parents are ultra-supportive of their mascara-wearing younger son and look at their oldest, a police officer who digs Air Supply, with mild disdain. But as soon as Chris and Emily step off the plane, you can feel the movie taking a wrong-headed turn. It starts when the duo actually meets Beers, who turns out to be a glum, no-longer-closeted gay man, and their looks of "This isn't what we thought it would be" are too pronounced to ignore: We're going to be told, yet again, that heavy-metal music is indeed the highway to hell. From then on, we know exactly where the movie is going to take us in every scene; sensible Emily is going to be repelled by the excess of it all, while new star Chris will lap up the fame and drugs and adoration until – dum dum dum!

– it's almost too late to turn back.

*Rock Star*

is like a Disneyfied version of the worst aspects of

*Boogie Nights*

, with heavy metal replacing porn; its incessant moralizing and pat resolutions drain any interest you might have in the subject matter.

Speaking of *Boogie Nights*, it's pretty obvious what the filmmakers wanted when they cast Wahlberg in the lead: a Dirk Diggler who keeps his tight leather pants on

. And Wahlberg does indeed give this new film that aw-shucks, gee-whiz earnestness that made him so endearing in

*Boogie Nights*

' first hour; the absolute best moment in

## Hollywood Marketing Triumphs with Two Bad Movies: "Rock Star" and "The Musketeer"

Written by Mike Schulz

Tuesday, 11 September 2001 18:00

---

### *Rock Star*

comes when Chris poses with Steel Dragon for his first photo shoot, and despite his attempts to look like a badass rock star, the sweet kid just can't stop grinning at his good fortune. But

Wahlberg's

### *Boogie Nights*

performance worked because his character eventually

*changed*

; when Wahlberg does his naive-kid-from-Pittsburgh thing after being in the band for more than a year, still acting surprised that his heroes aren't all that heroic, you want to slap him. He's just too damn cherubic for the role. (Too bad Timothy Olyphant, who plays Chris's hometown best friend and has the right mixture of devilry and sweetness, wasn't assigned Wahlberg's part.)

Aniston fares no better. Her performance never makes any sense – she has nothing to play

*but*

Sensible Girlfriend – and she's so ill-served by the material that the scene in which she finally leaves Chris comes after a title card that reads "Six Months Later"; we never find out what happened in those six months to finally make her pack her bags. (With the drunken orgies and pill-popping that we'd previously witnessed, what could it have been that we hadn't already seen?)



Despite a good, grungy performance from Timothy Spall as Steel Dragon's seen-it-all manager, *Rock Star*

is an almost childishy simple and foolish movie, one that has nothing new to say about its subject matter. It is not, however, a complete desecration;

### *The Musketeer*

is. Anyone who thought the Dumas material could be treated no worse than the dippy 1993 version of

### *The Three Musketeers*

(directed, ironically enough, by

### *Rock Star*

's Stephen Herek) hasn't yet sat through Peter Hyams' vision, in which D'Artagnan (Justin Chambers) attempts to avenge his father's death while joining the fabled Musketeers, wooing a fair maiden (Mena Suvari), and saving the Queen (Catherine Deneuve) from impending death.

Oh yeah, and occasionally performing fight choreography like he was starring in a 17th Century version of

### *The Matrix*

.

I'm all for adding modern touches to period material – the European peasants chanting "We Will

## Hollywood Marketing Triumphs with Two Bad Movies: "Rock Star" and "The Musketeer"

Written by Mike Schulz

Tuesday, 11 September 2001 18:00

---

Rock You" in *A Knight's Tale* was just fine by me – so there shouldn't be any harm in *The Musketeer*

's flights of martial-arts fancy. But there is harm when these scenes are presented as badly as they are here. Every fight sequence is flash-edited to death. There's no chance to enjoy the battles because the cutting is so frenzied that you barely grasp who's doing what and to whom, and they're all shot by Hyams in his typical darkness (as usual, he also serves as his film's cinematographer); the stylized action is incoherent. By the time you get to the one scene that *isn't*

badly lit – a fight between D'Artagnan and his rival (Tim Roth, oozing cartoon malevolence) on a series of precariously placed ladders (!) – you've lost all interest in the movie.

So beyond these action set-pieces, what's left? Flat pacing, ridiculous dialogue, one of the most derivative musical scores I've ever heard (David Arnold's opening fanfare is so reminiscent of John Williams' themes, *Superman* in particular, that Williams should seek a lawyer immediately), and, in pretty-boy Justin Chambers, the most charmless lead performance by an actor all year. Dumas must be rolling – make that leaping, spinning, and cartwheeling – in his grave.