

L.A. Teens Come of Age in Generation Morality Play

Whether by design or merely by coincidence, it's impossible to ignore the fact that *We the Party* is being released the same day as *American Reunion*, the 4th installment in the *American Pie* series. After all, the original *American Pie* revolved around a quartet of horny, high school students competing to lose their virginity before graduation, and we find the testosterone-driven quintet at the center of *We the Party* in pursuit of the same rite of passage shortly before their senior prom.

However, despite sharing that deceptively-identical point of departure, *We the Party* actually proceeds to morph into something far more substantial than males merely bonding around the attempt to mate indiscriminately. For, this inner-city dramedy seamlessly blends that rather raunchy theme with a timely cautionary tale about the pitfalls of failing to plan for one's future. Plus, it has some inspired comedy and a cutting-edge score, featuring performances by a number of emerging hip-hop acts, including Pink Dollaz, The New Boyz and The Rej3ctz.

Unfolding like a 21st Century update of African-American cinematic classics such as *House Party* (1990) and *Love Jones* (1997), *We the Party* might very well come to serve as the seminal adventure capturing the angst and aspirations of the Millennial Generation. Written and directed by Mario Van Peebles, the film stars his son,



CELEBRITY INTERVIEW

by Kam Williams

Mandela, as Hendrix Sutton, a kid more concerned with buying a flashy automobile and finding a girlfriend than with getting good grades and going on to college.

This unfortunate focus frustrates his divorced parents to no end. After all, Hendrix's father (Mario Van Peebles) teaches at his high school, and his mom (Salli Richardson) is the principal. So, the slick slacker has to listen to endless lectures about the consequences of not applying himself academically.

Still, Hendrix's dad's warning that "Minimum effort now means minimum wage later," only falls on deaf ears since the recipient is a teenager with raging hormones. After all, his head has been hopelessly turned by a cute classmate called Cheyenne (Simone Battle). Yet, to land the girl of his dreams, he not only has to compete for her hand, so to speak, with a handsome jock, but he has to convince her "Ro-bro-cop" of a father (Michael Jai White) that his intentions are honorable.

Meanwhile, Hendrix's motley



posse, Quicktime (Moises Arias), Chowder (Patrick Cage II), Que (Ryan Vigil) and Obama (Makaylo Van Peebles) are experiencing their own unique relationship drama during their separate searches for sexual satisfaction. Be forewarned, much of the R-rated humor here ventures to the crude, like when the boys mount a tiny camera on a shoe in order to look up girls' dresses; and the language is both profane

and peppered with the N-word. Look for Snoop Dogg, Tiny Lister and the director's legendary father, Melvin Van Peebles, in supporting roles, although they're not the reason to see *We the Party*. What makes the movie worth its while is its anti-materialistic message that your character, what you are, is of far more import than where you live, what kind of car

you drive, and your sexual conquests.

The African-American answer to *American Pie*!

Very Good (3 stars)
 Rated R for profanity, sexuality, ethnic slurs and teen drug use.
 Running time: 105 minutes
 Distributor: Arc Entertainment

SAVE THE BEST PIECE FOR LAST.

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 FROM THE NOVEL BY LEO TOLSTOY
 DIRECTED BY CHRIS COLEMAN

APRIL 3-29

Katy Serreny and Michael Shapiro in Anna Karenina. Photo by Patrick Winstanley.

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