

FILM REVIEWS

‘Mortdecai’

Any film credited with its own “mustache wrangler” really should have been much more fun than Johnny Depp’s latest misfiring action-comedy. Mostly set in contemporary England, but aiming for the zingy retro feel of a vintage Peter Sellers or Terry-Thomas feature from the Swinging Sixties, “Mortdecai” is an anachronistic mess that never succeeds in re-creating the breezy tone or snappy rhythm of the classic caper movies that it aims to pastiche.



Depp

Despite a heavyweight cast and the solid directing skills of A-list screenwriter David Koepp (“Jurassic Park,” “Panic Room,” “Spider-Man”), this charmless farce ends up as another black mark on Depp’s recent track record of patchy pet projects. “Mortdecai” is based on the first in a series of irreverent comic novels by Kyril Bonfiglioli, a British author of Italian and Slovenian heritage. Published in the 1970s, the books chronicle the amoral antics of aristocratic British art dealer Lord Charlie Mortdecai (Depp), who is aided on his drink-sodden adventures by his thuggish but resourceful and sexually irresistible manservant Jock Strapp (Paul Bettany).

The final set piece, which takes place at an upmarket London art auction house, brings all the characters and subplots together in an orgy of cartoonish violence and triple-cross deceptions that quickly becomes tiresome. For all its minor offenses against taste and decency, the sole unforgivable sin that “Mortdecai” commits is one that would leave its rakish anti-hero aghast. Because the film that bears his name is ultimately a frightful, crashing bore.

Rated R for “some language and sexual material.” 106 minutes.

‘The Boy Next Door’

No good adulterous affair goes unpunished in Hollywood movies. The latest proof is J.Lo starrer “The Boy Next Door,” a gender-reversing B-movie spin on “Fatal Attraction” that sets suburban family values against that one night of misguided, irresistible passion. An economically told popcorn pic built from horror-movie tropes, the film stars Jennifer Lopez and Ryan Guzman as, respectively, the world’s most glamorous high school teacher and its oldest 19-year-old.

As counterprogramming to awards-focused prestige titles, it offers January moviegoers some guilty-pleasure thrills and laughs, while falling way short of its potential on both the dramatic and the camp fronts. Still, given the star power and the lurid material, the wide release is sure to score at the box office.

Rated R for “violence, sexual content/nudity and language.” 90 minutes.

‘Wedding Ringer’

The first version of the script for “The Wedding Ringer,” a new comedy about a friendless schlub who rents a best man for his big day, was written back in 2002 — a fact that partly accounts for the whiff of stale leftovers that hangs over the movie from start to finish.

Several films have indeed been there, done that — or variations of that — in the 12 years since, including “Bridesmaids” and “The Hangover,” which all but redefined the pre-marriage debauchery sub-genre.

But a certain derivative, deja-vu quality isn’t the only sin this lazy, numbingly routine, very occasionally amusing comedy commits. An odd-couple bromance spiked with gross-out humor of a mostly unimaginative sort, “The Wedding Ringer,” starring Kevin Hart, largely fails to accomplish its most basic mission: making us laugh.

In the age of Judd Apatow and smarter raunch, it takes more than fat dudes, penis jokes and dogs with wandering tongues to make us guffaw in spite of ourselves. Frankly, we’ve seen it all before.

Rated R “for crude and sexual content, language

Symphony fuses with local indie band

By TAMMY MALGESINI
East Oregonian

Billed as a concert of lush, symphonic pop country, local indie band James Dean Kindie & the Eastern Oregon Playboys are again collaborating with the Oregon East Symphony.

The harmonious intermingling of the two groups first occurred in 2010. Opening the 25th season of the Oregon East Symphony, the Playboys — which featured front-man J.D. Kindie, along with Peter Walters, who juggles guitar, saxophone and drums, Brian Baird, bass player and back-up vocalist, and lead drummer and percussionist Matt Van Sickle — enjoyed the fresh and new experience.

Bringing a new audience to the symphony, Kindie deemed the 2010 show a success.

“For the audience, it’s a slightly more formal setting for a rock-pop band and a looser atmosphere for a symphonic concert experience,” Kindie said.

Fusion, the upcoming concert, is Saturday, Jan. 31 at 7:30 p.m. at the Vert Auditorium in Pendleton. The Playboys will perform songs from their latest album, “Many Splendored Things,” accompanied by the symphony with arrangements composed by the album’s producer, Sean Ogilvie of Musée Mécanique. The Dakota Brown Band will open the show.

Since Ogilvie was immersed in the music, Kindie said he was the



Graphic contributed by J.D. Kindie

James Dean Kindie & the Eastern Oregon Playboys unite with members of the Oregon East Symphony for a collaborative concert of symphonic pop country.

obvious choice for writing the symphonic accompaniment.

For Kindie, the opportunity to perform with an orchestra provides an ever-expanding experience. He initially started out playing by himself with just a guitar and singing.

“There’s only so much space you can fill up with a voice and guitar,”

he said.

Performing with a four-piece band, Kindie said, helped in fleshing out the sound and creating a richer experience as a composer and songwriter. Adding the orchestra brings even more to the palette, he said.

“It takes it to a new level with more instruments,” Kindie said. “It

WHAT TO DO

Music

Cherry Road Gang

•Saturday, Jan. 24, 9 p.m. to 1 a.m. No cover
•Wildhorse Sports Bar at Wildhorse Resort & Casino, off Highway 331, Mission.

Tyler Scruggs

•Saturday, Jan. 24; 9 p.m. to midnight. 21-and-over. No cover
•Hamley Saloon, 8 S.E. Court Ave., Pendleton

Cabin Fever Concert

•Sunday, Jan. 25; 3 p.m.
•American Legion Hall, 325 W. Second St., lone
\$15, advance tickets required (purchase at lone/Hepner branches of the Bank of Eastern Oregon Dutch Oven Dessert Show. John Wambeke & Friends take their musical variety show on the road to lone. Includes the lone pep band.

Nick Jaina

•Friday, Jan. 30, 7 p.m. All ages. No cover.
•Great Pacific Wine & Coffee Co., 403 S. Main St., Pendleton

Scott Wilson

•Friday, Jan. 30; 9 p.m. to midnight. 21-and-over. No cover
•Hamley Saloon, 8 S.E. Court Ave., Pendleton

4More

•Friday, Jan. 30; Saturday, Jan. 31, 9 p.m. to 1 a.m. No cover
•Wildhorse Sports Bar at Wildhorse Resort & Casino, off Highway 331, Mission.

Fusion

•Saturday, Jan. 31; 7:30 p.m.
•Vert Auditorium, 480 S.W. Dorion Ave., Pendleton
www.oregoneastsymphony.org

\$20/adults, \$15/students, seniors, \$45/family. James Dean Kindie & the Eastern Oregon Playboys reunite with the Oregon East Symphony & Choral for an evening of lush, symphonic pop country. Dakota Brown opens the show.

Lively Music Company

•Saturday, Jan. 31; 9 p.m. to midnight. 21-and-over. No cover
•Hamley Saloon, 8 S.E. Court Ave., Pendleton

Expertease

•Friday, Feb. 6; Saturday, Feb. 7, 9 p.m. to 1 a.m. No cover
•Wildhorse Sports Bar at Wildhorse Resort & Casino, off Highway 331, Mission.

Night life

Melonsville Comedy Festival

•Saturday, Jan. 24, 8 p.m.
•Hermiston Conference Center, 415 S. Highway 395
www.melonsvillecomedyfestival.com

\$35. Headliner Brad Upton, along with Seattle-based comics David Crowe and Duane Goad. No-host bar available and food to benefit Special Olympics.

Wednesday Night Live!

•Wednesdays, 8 p.m.
•Jan. 28: Comedy hypnosis show

•Feb. 4: TBA
•Wildhorse Sports Bar, Wildhorse Resort & Casino, off Highway 331, Mission.

Digital Karaoke

•Thursdays and Saturdays, 8 p.m.
•The Pheasant, 149 E. Main St., Hermiston

Mac’s Trivia Night

•Thursdays, 8 p.m. No cover
•Mac’s Bar & Grill, 1400 S.W. Dorion Ave., Pendleton
21 and older. Teams of 2-8 compete in trivia contest with other teams. Live host and prizes.

Wine tasting

•Fridays, 4-8 p.m.
•Sno Road Winery, 111 W. Main St., Echo.

Open Mic

•First/third Friday each month, 8 p.m. to midnight
•The Packard Tavern, 118 S.E. Court Ave., Pendleton
www.facebook.com/groups/pendletonopenmic

Karaoke

•Fridays 8 p.m. (9 p.m. if game on)
•Riverside Sports Bar, 1501 Sixth St., Umatilla

DJ and dancing

•Fridays, 8 p.m.
•The Pheasant, 149 E. Main St., Hermiston

Theater, stage & film

Koontz Manor Murder Mystery

•Saturday, Jan. 31; 7 p.m.
•Sno Road Winery, 111 W. Main St., Echo
Single/\$25, couple/\$40.

Wine, hors d’oeuvres, intrigue. Seating is limited, contact 541-376-0421, info@snoroadwinery.com

“Memphis The Musical”

•Tuesday, Feb. 3, 8 p.m.
•Toyota Center, Kennewick
www.ticketmaster.com
\$47-\$67. From the underground dance clubs of 1950s Memphis comes a musical that bursts off the stage with explosive dancing, irresistible songs and a thrilling tale of fame and forbidden love.

“Beauty and the Beast

•Register by Friday, Feb. 6
•Hermiston Parks & Recreation, 180 N.W. Second St.
www.hermistonrecreation.com

\$50/residents, \$63/non-residents. Youths from third through 12th grade are invited to register for a community drama class. The twice weekly sessions (Mondays/Wednesdays from 4-6:30 p.m.) will conclude with a pair of performances April 28-29.

Hot tickets

•Ultimate Elvis Night. Saturday, Feb. 14 at Wildhorse Resort & Casino. \$85 per couple for dinner/show or \$20 each for show only via www.wildhorseresort.com. Features Elvis impersonator Justin Shandor.

•“Mama Mia.” Thursday, March 19, Toyota Center, Kennewick. Reserved seats on sale Jan. 23 (\$59.50-\$82) via www.ticketmaster.com.

•So You Think You Can Dance-Live Season 11 Tour. Wednesday, Feb. 4, 2015, Toyota Center, Kennewick. Reserved seats (\$50-\$65) via www.ticketmaster.com.

•Sasquatch Music Festival. Memorial Day weekend, Gorge Amphitheater, George, Wash. Reserved seats (\$325 and up for 4-day pass) via www.livenation.com.

•Foo Fighters. Saturday, Sept. 12, Gorge Amphitheater, George, Wash. Reserved seats (\$45-\$75) via www.livenation.com.

Want to get your event listed in our calendar? Send information to tmalgisini@eastoregonian.com, or c/o Tammy Malgesini, 333 E. Main Street, Hermiston, OR, 97838.

Festivals

Eagle Cap Extreme Sled Dog Race

•Jan. 21-24
•Wallowa County
www.eaglecapextreme.com
Events free except awards banquet. Race Central & Kids’ Corner at the Joseph Community Center; Vet checks (which provide opportunities to meet dogs and mushers) Jan. 21 at 9 a.m. Main Street, Joseph and 1 p.m. Main Street, Enterprise; Banquet Saturday at 6:30 p.m. at the Joseph Community Center (cost \$20/adults, \$8/ages 5-12).

Tri-Cities Family Expo

•Jan. 23 noon-8 p.m.; Jan. 24, 10 a.m.-5 p.m.
•TRAC Center, 6600 Burden Blvd., Pasco
www.tcfamilyexpo.com
\$5/adults, \$3/seniors, military with ID, \$1/kids. Sponsored by Kadlec Regional Medical Center, the event features vendors, entertainment (clown act, Ronald McDonald magic show, clogging) and activities (dentistry for kids, dance connection, dance party and Zumba) for all ages and a youth mentoring seminar.

Mom and Baby Expo

•Saturday, Feb. 7; 10 a.m.-5 p.m.
•Three Rivers Convention Center, 7016 W. Grandridge Blvd., Kennewick
www.momandbabyexpo.com
\$5/adults, free/12 and under. Donate a package of diapers for free admission. Vendors, toddler nutrition, car seat safety, cloth diapers

Art

ArtWORKz

•Monday - Saturdays, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.
•Tamástsiik Cultural Institute, near Wildhorse Resort & Casino.
www.tamastsiik.org
\$10/adults, \$9/senior citizens, \$6/youths, free/5 and under or \$25/family of four. In its fourth year, the youth art show highlights area youth artists. Awards reception is Saturday, Feb. 14 at 1 p.m. Runs through Feb. 28.

“All Things Bright and Beautiful”

•Monday-Thursdays, 11 a.m.-2 p.m.
•Betty Feves Memorial Gallery, BMCC, 2411 N.W. Carden Ave., Pendleton.

Free. Gallery also open by appointment by calling 541-278-5952. Runs through Feb. 19.

“EOU Staff Exhibition”

•Monday-Fridays, 11 a.m.-4 p.m.
•Wednesday, Jan. 14 gallery talk; 5-7 p.m.

•Nightingale Gallery, Eastern Oregon University, La Grande
www.eou.edu/art/faculty

Free. Features the works of Eastern Oregon University visual arts professors, including Peter C. Johnson, sculptural ceramics; Susan Murrell, abstract installations and painting; Cory Peeke, remnant-imagery collage; and Michael Sell, photography. Runs through Jan. 30.

Kids + Art = Fun!

•Saturday, Jan. 31; 1-4 p.m.
•Tamástsiik Cultural Institute, near Wildhorse Resort & Casino.

www.tamastsiik.org
Free. Pepsi Primetime@the Museum, held in conjunction with the ArtWORKz youth show and competition. Kids can drop in during the afternoon and participate in different craft stations for a hands-on art-making afternoon. Participants will leave with one or more of their very own creations.

Peterson’s New Year’s Show

•Tuesday-Sundays, 10 a.m.-6 p.m.
•Peterson’s Gallery and Chocolatier, 1925 Main St., Baker City

www.petersonsgallery.net

Free. Features most requested artists in 2014, including Paul Hoelscher, a painter from Baker City; Pattie Young, a metal artist from Boise; and Terri Axness, a painter and ceramic artist from Haines. Runs through Jan. 31.

Heritage Station Museum

•Tuesday-Saturdays, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.
•108 S.W. Frazer Ave., Pendleton
www.heritagestationmuseum.org
\$5/adults, \$2/student, \$4/seniors, \$10/family.



J.D. KINDLE
Comment

Portland musician Jaina writes about creative self-doubt

Self doubt is a stage of an artist’s development that tends to receive little attention. Semi-autobiographical novels like James Joyce’s “The Portrait of the Artist As A Young Man” and Henry Miller’s “Tropic of Capricorn” describe one’s life decisions made in bad faith before romantically discovering an almost divinely bestowed creative talent. However, the experience of devastating failures and the loss of faith in one’s own abilities after discovering one’s vocation is rarely explored. Portland songwriter Nick Jaina’s first book, “Get It While You Can,” seeks to fill in those gaps.

For well over a decade Jaina has been consistently releasing albums; first with his cult Portland band The Binary Dolls and then under his own name on a variety of Pacific Northwest indie labels. In recent years he has branched out into composing works for modern ballet troupes and even a one-man stage show. Penning a book feels like a natural progression for the multidisciplinary artist. Or perhaps it is a reaction to feeling an unease and dissatisfaction with the progress of his career as a songwriter.

“Get It While You Can” contains all the aforementioned stages associated with an artist’s bildungsroman — awkward formative experiences, an epiphanic realization of Jaina’s



Photo contributed by Nick Jaina

purpose and subsequent artistic triumphs — but the self-doubt, frustration and the measuring of what “success” means to an individual artist versus their audience (as particularly well illustrated in the recounting of a concert performance at Folsom Prison) functions as the book’s overarching theme.

In the book, Jaina’s life is in thrown into a tailspin after a lackluster show in Tacoma by the theft the acoustic guitar he had played since his teens. From there he re-examines the series of events that led him to pursue writing music and comes to terms with how his career as a songwriter has taken shape. These scenes take place in a variety of locales — from an aborted stint at California State University in Monterey Bay, working a series of mundane jobs in Portland, attending a Vipassana meditation retreat in Washington, embarking on cross-country tours, and finally retreating to Colombia to work on this very book. Occasionally Jaina

reflects on the similar crises of faith suffered by some of his musical heroes (Johnny Cash and Nina Simone) while watching video clips of them on YouTube.

It wouldn’t be entirely accurate to label “Get It While You Can” as a memoir. It was originally intended to be a compilation of previously published writings for the webzine Somnambulist entitled “Unsent Love Letters” as well as an assortment of essays. Those essays eventually evolved into the chapters that make up the bulk of the book. Portions of “Unsent Love Letters” are interspersed throughout and, while they are tender and at times humorous musings on romantic relationships, their presence tends to disturb the rhythm of the rest of the book. The story behind his artistic development and coming to terms with success — or the lack thereof — is the more compelling part.

Although most Nick Jaina performances are exceptional concert experiences, his appearance in Pendleton this Friday will stand out from the rest. The performance of his songs paired with readings of excerpts from “Get It While You Can” will provide a rather unique telling of the story behind the music that goes one step beyond the typical “VH1 Storytellers” mode.

Nick Jaina performs at the Great Pacific (403 S. Main, Pendleton) at 7 p.m. on Friday, January 30.

James Dean Kindie is a singer-songwriter and musician and Pendleton resident. You can contact him at jamesdeankindle@gmail.com