

Standing Ovation

A Review by Tom Sims, Executive Director, Cape May Film Society

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So I arrive at the theater not knowing what film I was going to see for this week's column. So much to choose from, but I knew the independent film "Standing Ovation" was shot in Cape May, Wildwood—and that was all I knew about it. But I decide this would be the film I review.

Up until one minute before show time, I'm the only person in the theater. Just as the lights start to dim, in flood about fifteen tweeners! My first thought, "OMG... What have I gotten myself into?" Next thought, I'm sure they were all pointing toward me saying, "Guess senior citizens get in... like... half price." Had I known even a little about this film, I would have brought my 13-year old, Julia, who is clearly on the older end of the "Standing Ovation" target audience.

This film is about five friends who comprise the "girl power" pop band "The 5 Ovations." Their quest: to make a music video for a competition where the grand prize is one million dollars. Their competition: a vindictive, nasty bunch of older girls who make up the band "The Wiggies." As it started, I knew it was time to dispel any notion that this was going to be anything more than it was... tweener flick.

Although the film saved the best music for later, the songs were somewhat catchy and the dance routines were well choreographed (in a teen pop sort of way). The story moved along well but was overplayed and sent its fair share of mixed signals (like "gambling is wrong, kids, unless of course you're winning..."). Most of the acting was fair with outstanding performances from the lead, Kayla Jackson, and also notable was Najee Wilson. Sure some key moments were implausible, but it was good to see New Jersey's favorite vocal coach Sal Dupree in a lead role and Cape May native Jim Maher in various shots! And of course Beach Theatre's façade had a prominent spot in the film, along with a lot of local scenery.

One scene that clearly stole the show was when a precocious little would-be star, aptly named Alanna Wannabe (played very well by Alanna Palombo) recruited members of the Marmora Volunteer Fire Company to act in her music video—completely adorable!

Of course, I could have saved the protagonists in this film a lot of trouble by telling them they could have had their music video completed by our music video camp! We're making great music videos featuring bands like "Bluebone" and vocalist Kristina Perez. There will be a free screening this Friday, July 23, at 7:00 p.m. at West Cape May Borough Hall. Join us to see the talent right here in our region!